

THE BEAT

Quarterly Newsletter of  WINDOM AREA HEALTH



Confidence Regained After Heart Complications

Pictured (Left to Right): Susan Doeden with Lacy Krueger, Cardiac Rehabilitation Coordinator.

Life can throw many twists and turns at you, which Susan Doeden of Jeffers, MN, experienced earlier this year when she had an unexpected heart attack. “I did not see it coming. I didn’t know I had heart issues and a lot happened all of a sudden.”

Through Cardiac Rehabilitation at Windom Area Health, Susan was able to make healthy progress and regain her confidence and motivation to live life to the fullest.

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Medical Building Progress August to October 2024

One year into the Medical Building project and there has been so much progress! From summer to fall, concrete work on the stairwells and floors has been completed and the project has moved into framing, taping and mudding, and drywall installation. The exterior of the building is fully insulated, with the metal panels being placed, as well as great progress with the parking lot construction. To keep current on continued progress on this project, make sure to follow the Windom Area Health Facebook page.



Pictured: View of progress as of 8-6-2024. Exterior framing and installation of insulation panels was ongoing. Ductwork and plumbing work was occurring and the Northeast parking lot was still being worked on.



Pictured: Progress as of 10-29-2024. Metal panels are being installed on the exterior of the building, with drywall projects occurring throughout. The West parking lot is now in progress!

Wellness Center News

The school year has started, and Kid's Choice is in full swing for the 4th graders of Windom, Heron Lake, Mountain Lake Public, and Immanuel Lakefield. Jessica Schmit, Mental Health Manager, Abby Kipfer, Registered Dietitian, and Makayla Grev, Community Health and Wellness Manager, enjoy teaching students about myPlate and healthy habits each month!

Our annual Spooky Path event, held as a Drive-Thru this year due to construction, was SPOOK-tacular! Thank you to those who donated to the event and all the families that visited to get treats – you made the night so FANG-tastic for all involved. We are very excited for Halloween in 2025, as the construction will be completed and the Spooky Path event will be back on the Be Well Path for an extra GOURD time!

With just a month and a half left in the year, we have lots of exciting news to share. The Wellness Center crew is planning to host a Turkey Trot 5K in Windom in 2025! Save the date for November 15th of 2025 for the 1st Annual Turkey Trot hosted by the Windom Area Health Wellness Center.

The week of December 16th-20th will be our Open House week full of SNOW much fun! Stop by for a discounted rate on memberships, a sneak peak

of the new Wellness Center layout designs, try out a new class, sign up for the 2025 Weight Loss Challenge, and enter for a chance to win a prize.

Thank you for making our new Fitness Specialist, Devin Homer, feel so welcome! He fits right in with the Wellness Center crew and the members. He truly has a passion for the people and an eagerness to bring new services to our Wellness Center and the community of Windom. Together, Devin, Lindsey, and Makayla are excited to move to the fourth floor of the new building and provide a brand new Wellness Center experience for the community of Windom and beyond. The Wellness Center crew hopes to see you around, but for now, have a TREE-mendous Holiday Season!

If you have questions, concerns, or ideas for the Wellness Center, call 507-831-0672 or e-mail Makayla at makayla.grev@windomarehealth.org.



WELLNESS CENTER
Windom Area Health

OPEN HOUSE

December 16th-December 20th

Stop by for membership discounts, sneak peeks at the new layout designs, and enter for a chance to win prizes!



Confidence Regained After Heart Complications CONTINUED

Fears and Uncertainties

For Susan, the surprise of the heart attack marked a significant turning point in her life. She was rushed via ambulance to Sioux Falls, where she had a stent put in. Following the heart attack, there were



Pictured: Susan discussing her journey through her heart event and Cardiac Rehabilitation.

many questions and concerns from her and her family, consisting of her husband and six children. Susan shared that she experienced a lot of fear and uncertainty following her heart event, “I didn’t have much

information about what had happened to me and I was scared. Could I get up and clean my house? Do I sit down? Am I going to have a heart attack in the middle of vacuuming or mopping the floor? I just didn’t know what was safe to do.”

Luckily, her Cardiology team provided her with the next step in her healing journey. Susan explains, “I had the stent put in and then they recommended I do Cardiac Rehabilitation, so I jumped in and did it!”

Choosing Care

Choosing a location for her Cardiac Rehabilitation was very straightforward. “I chose to use the services at Windom Area Health (WAH) because they were closer for me. Much more convenient than driving to Sioux Falls from Jeffers three days per week!” The shorter travel time allowed her to dedicate more of her day to other important activities, such as spending time with her family, or enjoying her hobbies of reading and crocheting. Susan shared, “Crocheting is a hobby, but I call it therapy because it’s very therapeutic for me!”

A Supportive Team

When at Cardiac Rehabilitation, Susan worked primarily with Lacy Krueger, Cardiac Rehabilitation Coordinator, as well as additional certified team members who helped her throughout her time in the program. Susan had high praise for the entire team she worked with, “Everyone was friendly, polite, and non-invasive. They encouraged and motivated me.”

Her tailored program consisted of work on the treadmill, NuStep, and some light weights for arm strengthening. Over the weeks, she saw progress as her exercises were slowly increased, “They added a little faster pace to the treadmill, then a little more incline, and added more resistance on the bike.” In addition to her exercises at her appointments, Susan was also given an exercise log to take home and fill out as she did her workouts throughout the week on her own. She explained, “I felt responsible for filling it out, which meant I actually had to exercise at home and record what I was doing. It helped me be accountable.”

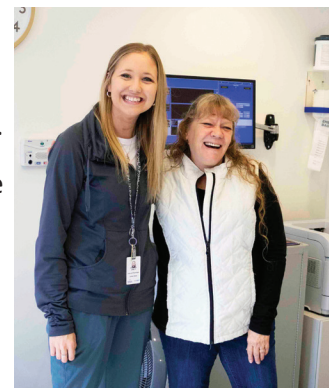
Susan also emphasized the sense of safety her care team provided her, allowing her to build up her confidence again. “Knowing they were monitoring my heart during my exercises, monitoring everything, so if something did go wrong I was in the hospital and I would be okay. They gave me that feeling of safety and it encouraged me so that I was able to do more at home again,” she explained.

Momentum and New Goals

When she graduated from the Cardiac Rehabilitation program, Susan received a free month membership to the Wellness Center at WAH and left with a renewed sense of confidence. Her main priority is to maintain the progress she made through Cardiac Rehabilitation and continue that momentum moving forward. “My goal is to get stronger and go hiking locally this coming spring. It’s something new for me!”

She added, “My life has improved a lot since going through the Cardiac Rehabilitation program. I don’t think I would have started working out on my own or extended myself as much as I have.” The program made a very positive impact after life threw her for a loop with her unexpected heart attack.

“I would recommend the Cardiac Rehabilitation program at WAH to others. Everyone was great: friendly, upbeat, encouraging, and motivating. It was such a good experience.”



Pictured: Lacy and Susan catching up after her graduation.

Mental Health Initiatives Receive 2024 MHA Award

Windom Area Health (WAH) was selected as a recipient of the 2024 Innovation in Patient Care Award from the Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) for the implementation of the Mental Health Walk-In Clinic and collaboration with community partners to provide educational opportunities regarding mental health and reducing stigma in the Windom area.

Based upon Community Health Assessments, surveys, and word of mouth, residents of Cottonwood and Jackson Counties continuously cited mental health and lack of resources and providers as one of their top priorities for the last several years. Recent statistics also noted that the combined suicide rates are higher in the rural counties than the overall state average, thus verifying that mental health is and should be a top public health priority in the region. In fact, 39.5% in Cottonwood and 30.8% in Jackson per 100,000 people have demonstrated incidents of depression.

In light of this, WAH made it a priority to address the mental health crisis in the area. With input from various community partners, the Mental Health Walk-In Clinic was established. Through grant funding and a financial investment from WAH, the clinic opened in May of 2023 on a limited basis. Throughout 2024, there was a focus on expanding the services and hours of operation provided by the clinic to ensure the service is continuing to grow to meet the needs of the community. WAH provides walk-in crisis management and outpatient therapy coupled with two psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners for assessments and medication management. The Mental Health Walk-In Clinic has been able to provide support for over 100 patients since opening.

In addition to direct patient care, WAH has also worked with community partners on educational opportunities to open discussion and share resources throughout the area about mental health. These have included free lunch and learns and other Stigma Free partnered events. Working with the Windom Area Schools, WAH was able to put on a free parent-focused mental health event discussing current challenges children face today and how families can provide support and open conversation



Pictured (From Left to Right): Brenda Muller, Jessica Schmit, Meridee Paulson, Tabitha Bosire, and Brianna Joel with the 2024 MHA Innovation in Patient Care Award.

about mental health and wellbeing. Participants in the event completed pre and post evaluations, reflecting an increase from 88.9% to 94.1% in understanding that taking care of their mental health is equally important as taking care of their physical health. Additionally, there was a staggering increase from 33.3% to 52.9% in parent confidence in discussing mental health with their child.

The impact that the Walk-In Clinic and the community outreach opportunities have had led to the honor of receiving one of three 2024 Innovation in Patient Care Awards. According to the MHA, the award “honors hospitals that have developed or implemented creative, new methods and models of delivery of patient care.” It focuses on those initiatives that are providing growing and sustained progress, a spirit of collaboration with others, and a focus on continuous improvement for patient care.

The Mental Health Walk-In Clinic will continue to evolve to meet the needs of the surrounding community as it moves forward. There will also be ongoing education and awareness initiatives focused on mental health and wellbeing, as well as reducing stigma, in the area. Now more than ever before, the need for mental health services is on the rise, and WAH is committed to serving that need through collaboration, education, treatment, and medication management.

Congratulations to the Mental Health team for receiving this well-deserved recognition of the amazing work they are doing for their patients and the wider communities!

Exciting Foundation Events, New Funds, and More

We have had an exciting past couple months! Our Golf Tournament on August 23rd raised over \$8,000 to support the launch of the new Mental Health Fund. We had an amazing turnout of golfers and sponsors who helped us “Tee Off for Mental Health.”



This new Mental Health Fund is now LIVE! Applicants can find the guidelines and application on our website. The Fund exists to support improved responsiveness to mental health challenges in our area. The Foundation Board committed \$50,000 in start-up funds and is seeking community support to make this resource sustainable long-term. The Fund has three purposes:

1. Support community education initiatives related to improved mental wellbeing and reduced stigma around mental illness.
2. Support mental health professionals or first responders to receive advanced training that improves responsiveness to mental health crises.
3. Support individuals in our community who have an eligible unmet financial need because of a mental health condition or crisis

In October, we celebrated breast cancer warriors and encouraged women to take action for early detection of breast cancer. We hosted a “Bras for a Cause” contest with 27 impressive bra masterpieces! We also joined Runnings in their annual Ladies Night Out event on October 9th. We know breast cancer treatment can have an especially difficult impact on women and their families. That’s why we offer the Women’s Health Fund, which provides financial assistance to women undergoing any kind of cancer treatment. The process is confidential and easy. Visit our website for more information.



The Foundation is supporting the Giving Tree Program at Windom Area Health this winter. In its seventh year, this program supports families in our community by matching sponsors with families’ gift wish lists. We expect to serve 195 children this year!

The Foundation is directed by a group of local members who represent our community. We are grateful for the expertise they each bring to the table: Greg Scheitel, Terry Tegels, Kay Gross, Dan Ortmann, Claudia Lopez, Jay Grandprey, and Robin Rahn.

Stay updated on our happenings by following the Windom Area Health Foundation Facebook page! Contact Director Katie Greener for more information at 507-831-0633 or kathryn.greener@windomareahealth.org.

To donate to the Foundation, contact Katie Greener via the information above or scan the QR code to be directed to the online donation form.



507-831-0670

SELF REFERRALS WELCOME!

W
WINDOM
AREA HEALTH
Imaging

FEWER FALSE ALARMS
with 3D mammography

Proud to offer the best in screening technology.

New Location Opening!
315 Main St., Suite 300
Lakefield, MN

Join us for an Open House
Wed., Dec. 4th | 12:00pm–2:00pm
LBA Ribbon Cutting at Noon

Coffee and cookies will be available!

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AREA HEALTH
Specialty Clinics
- Lakefield -

Auxiliary Happenings

By Mary Klosterbuer,
Windom Area Health Auxiliary President

Quick notes

- Chamber Bucks raffle winners of \$50 each were Amanda Wilson, Jenny Quade, and Karen Skarphol. Thanks to everyone for your support as we sold all 1,500 tickets for the fifth year in a row. The profit has been donated to the hospital towards our current project of buying equipment so shoulder replacement surgery can be done here in Windom.
- A 1-lb. bag of fresh pecan halves is available for \$15. A bag of pecan caramel clusters is \$8. Contact Marlene Smith at 507-831-1393.



Like us on Facebook
Windom Area Health Auxiliary!!!



We Want YOU!

- New members are always welcome.
- Meetings are on the second Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the Large Conference Room at the hospital.
- Members receive a monthly e-mail of the Volunteer Times Review with hospital news.
- Call Mary Klosterbuer 507-831-3142 for more information about joining.

The Second and Third Auxiliaries

By Loren Liepold

(Editor's Note: This article is the second in a four-part series highlighting the work of the Auxiliary.)

The first Windom Hospital Auxiliary had been active for 30 years, beginning in February 1921 and ending in March 1951. A little over a decade later, Mary Lou Peterson led a movement to start a new Auxiliary, as reported in an article "Windom Hospital Aux. May Be Re-activated" on page six of the March 27, 1963 edition of the Cottonwood County Citizen. The article noted that a meeting, held a week earlier, had shown that there was enough interest for an April 6 organizational meeting. On May 27, 1963, a door-to-door membership drive was held, with follow-ups held in June. A general meeting with all members was held in July.

On May 10, 1964, the Auxiliary hosted a "Hospital Day" with an open house at the hospital. Despite early interest, the group had folded within a few years.

It would be around a decade later when citizens tried once more to form an Auxiliary. A Cottonwood County Citizen column written by Alita Oltmans, published March 13, 1974, mentioned plans for a new Auxiliary. An article published on March 25

announced an organizational meeting to be held in the St. Francis Xavier parish hall. Just a month later, the organizational meeting of the Windom Hospital Auxiliary was convened at the church, with 82 persons attending.

There was good reason for renewed interest in a new Auxiliary; plans were underway to build a new hospital to replace the small, existing "new" hospital on Ninth Street. The proposed hospital site would be on the north end of Windom, about a mile and a half from where Windom citizens had known their hospital for seventy years.

The community impact of a new hospital and a new Auxiliary may have been best summed up in an April 17, 1974 front page photo and article in the Cottonwood County Citizen which held a split screen of headlines and photos: "Hospital ground broken" (complete with photos of officials and ceremonial shoveling) and "Hospital auxiliary to meet, re-organize." From the beginning, the new hospital and the new auxiliary seemed to be bonded together.

The meeting was held April 25, 1974 at the St. Francis Xavier parish hall. About 125 new members were signed up at the meeting. Inaugural officers were elected, with Karen Pyleski as president, Vi Johnson as Vice President, Flossie Koep as corresponding secretary, Wilma Tasler as recording secretary, and Margaret Lande as Treasurer.

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The Second and Third Auxiliaries CONTINUED

Edna Warren, Esther Stahl, and Lula Leverenz were elected as one-year board members, and Jean Bolin, Deanna Voth, and Barb Lee were chosen as two-year board members. The minutes for this meeting also noted, "The last president of the former auxiliary, Mary Lou Peterson was present and presented \$70.00 to the new auxiliary. Unused funds of the former auxiliary."

The new auxiliary was organized with near machine precision, harnessing the large numbers of initial members into smaller units that would take on different tasks within the organization and within the community. Whereas the 1921 Auxiliary had started small and grew, and the second Auxiliary had drive but little motivation beyond basic service, the 1974 Auxiliary had large numbers of members and a focused goal. The new hospital was expected to be ready in late summer of 1975. The group had a lot of work to do in just a year.

The hospital itself was sparsely designed. Though it would be more spacious and include a variety of new departments and features, the architects and the funds raised for the new facility didn't include amenities. A task of the Auxiliary would be to supply those amenities to make a hospital stay more comfortable. Like the 1921 Auxiliary, funds were used both to supply decorative items for the rooms and some equipment that was needed by the hospital. By February 1975, \$2,300 was raised, with \$1,250 being allocated for "Inservice Education equipment and a Treadmill for Stress testing" (Windom Hospital Auxiliary Newsletter, Volume 1-Number 1, February 1975).

The new Auxiliary was a sort of amalgamation of the 1921 and 1963 Auxiliaries. The basic service needs that were reflected in both groups (raising funds, donating time and effort, donating essential equipment, and the like) were followed by the new group. They also saw an importance in finding camaraderie with other auxiliaries, both with neighboring towns, and working at the state level, a sentiment that was seen in the 1963 Auxiliary, and continued with the new group.

The group began to plan community education programs for the town. Programs about breast cancer, menopause, and smoking were among the

topics covered in that first year, taking advantage of medical professionals in Windom and the surrounding area.

As hospital construction progressed, the decision was made to hold the Open House on August 23 and 24, 1975. To be ready for that open house construction work had to be completed, and the Windom Hospital Auxiliary worked to clean and prepare the rooms, and to ready treats and refreshments for an estimated 8,000 visitors. As attention began to focus on the new hospital and the new Auxiliary, membership soared to over 200 members. Auxiliary president Karen Pytleski, in the July 1975 newsletter, asked those who weren't part of a unit tasked with a job to "donate three to five dozen cookies or bars for the Open house." She also added, "If we don't get rid of them, we'll have a bake sale! Ha!"

In the November 1975 WAHA newsletter (Volume 1, Number 4), President Pytleski expressed her thanks for the efforts that made the August open house a success. She finished her comments with a special shout-out of the event:

"And about those cookies - I will never ask for cookies again! You gals are too much, The Monday morning after the Open House, Gretchen Holmes and I went out to the hospital to pick up all of the leftover cookies. Would you believe we filled a whole station wagon full of them! So we grabbed two neighborhood kids and went down to the square Monday night and sold them for three dozen for \$1.00. We made almost \$75.00! Even though we served over 9,000 people, we had a lot (sic) left over. I was kidding about having a bake sale, but your response was so great that we had enough for that bake sale. Thanks again!"

To Be Continued.

Testing Tuesdays
In honor of National Diabetes Awareness Month!

We're partnering with local businesses to provide **FREE Blood Sugar Testing** at certain locations in the month of November.

Remaining Dates!
Nov. 19 | 8:00-10:00am
Kwik Trip
251 1st Ave S, Windom, MN
Nov. 26 | 8:00-10:00am
HyVee
192 10th St, Windom, MN

Thank you to Runnings and Lewis Drug of Windom for partnering earlier this month!

W WINDOM AREA HEALTH

Check Out Our Star!

Windom Area Health (WAH) recognizes employees through the Caught You Caring program for their superior care and above and beyond efforts. Each month, employees with submissions from peers, patients, and the public are recognized through our employee newsletter and are given a gift.



Quarterly, a panel meets to determine which employee has stood out over the past three months. We want to celebrate Emily Saffert, Employee of the Quarter for the 3rd Quarter of 2024!

Thank you for all you do, Emily. We are grateful you are on our team!

To nominate a member of our team, go to windomarehealth.org/caught-you-caring

Emily Saffert

Employee of the 3rd Quarter 2024

Emily has been in various roles since she joined WAH in 2010, and is currently our Growth & Development Coordinator in the Marketing Department. She is a key driver of our public relations and growth effort, but she is also a go-to person for many employees. Her behind-the-scenes efforts play a crucial role in the success of numerous projects. Whether it's lending a helping hand or ensuring smooth operations, Emily's contributions make a lasting impact.

Here is a colleague shout-out:

"Throughout the years of working with Emily, she has always been a positive force for WAH and the people we serve. She is constantly looking for ways to help others, fixing problems wherever she can and supporting everyone to be their best. Emily is one of the most caring individuals I've ever met and is a mentor and supporter for so many, both at WAH and in our communities. This recognition is extremely well-deserved. Thank you to Emily for all she does for the Marketing team, for WAH, and for everyone who has the joy of being around her!"

2024 Windom Area Health Recognition Night: Appreciation, Celebration, and Laughter

On October 3rd, we held the 2024 Windom Area Health Recognition Night to celebrate our employee milestones, board and committee members, volunteers, donors, and community partners. Held at Round Lake Vineyards & Winery, the night was filled with great conversation, delicious food, and a performance by comedian, Tommy Ryman.

Employee Milestones

5 Years: Janelle Edwards, Brooke Fink, Tarynn Paulson, Abby Kipfer, Deb Olson, Daniel Penaredondo, Jan Peterson, Linda Remmers, Chase Rovere, Anne Tippin, Rhonda Wahl, and Gabby Westman

10 Years: Mitch Boeck, Michelle Powers, and Deb Stevens

15 Years: Dixie Duerksen, Travis Eichstadt, and Jackie Fester

25 Years: Heather Bristow



Pictured: 2024 Milestone Employees with their Managers at the Recognition Night event.



Pictured: Comedian, Tommy Ryman, ending the evening with many laughs and some audience interaction!