

Transforming Care Together

MAHHC DONOR IMPACT REPORT • 2023

“When we saw the extent of her injuries, and the resources we would need to help her, I expected Story to stay with us in our Rehabilitation Center for 3 to 4 weeks, but through her motivation and the expert care of our staff, that was reduced to just ten days.”

• Belinda Needham-Shropshire,
Senior Director of Rehabilitation Services,
Acute Rehabilitation Center, Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center



Story Smith's Journey to Rehabilitation

“I remember every bit of the accident,” says Story Smith. “One of the things that has kept me going is thinking about the gentleman who held my head in that parking lot, and the people who held my hands after I was struck.” When she thinks back to the severe trauma of being run over by a car and gravely injured, the compassion of other people is what Story remembers.

A week after the December 2022 incident, following emergency surgery and stabilization of her numerous injuries at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center—including a mild brain injury, shattered ankle, 10 broken ribs, fractured left pelvic bone and sacrum bone—Story entered through the doors of the physical medicine acute Rehabilitation Center at Mt. Ascutney Hospital in Windsor, Vermont.

“When we saw the extent of her injuries and the resources we would need to help her, I expected Story to stay with us in our Rehabilitation Center for 3 to 4 weeks,” says Senior Director of Rehabilitation Services, Belinda Needham-Shropshire.

“But through her motivation and our staff's expert care, that was reduced to just

ten days.” Needham-Shropshire says Story responded well to what's lovingly referred to as the “full MAH treatment,” filled with personal attention, sensitivity to the emotional aspects of her trauma, and old-fashioned TLC in addition to intensive physical therapies geared to Story's abilities.

Story herself says, “One of my worries at the time was, can I handle 3 to 4 hours a day of rigorous therapy? It didn't take me long to realize, yes, I can.”

(cont. inside page 2)

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Greetings!

Welcome to the second annual edition of the **MAHHC Donor Impact Report**. This publication is designed to highlight the varied ways in which charitable support from individual and institutional donors has had a direct effect on the quality and breadth of care we are able to deliver to the communities we serve, close to where they are. The impact is significant. We are excited to share stories with you demonstrating how this support is making a real difference.

We genuinely could not do any of this without you. We want to hear from you! What do you find most useful about this Report? What would you like to see in future editions? Reach out and let us know.

Tayo Kirchhof,
Director of Development
Tayo.S.Kirchhof@mahhc.org

Steve Crihfield,
Development Committee Chair

A Time of Transition

Join us in welcoming Interim CEO Winfield "Win" Brown. Win comes to us with an extensive background in healthcare administration, most recently as President and CEO of Heywood Healthcare in Gardner, Massachusetts for the past 12 years. He has also served in administrative roles at Lowell General Hospital and Northern Berkshire Healthcare, and in a variety of development roles at philanthropic organizations. Please join us in welcoming Win as we start our next chapter.

We also say goodbye and thank you to Dr. Joseph Perras, who started with us in 2013 as Director of Hospitalist Services, became Chief Medical Officer in 2015, and then led the Hospital for the past 6 years as our President and CEO. We wish him well in his new role with our Dartmouth Health system partner as President and CEO of Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, New Hampshire.



Win Brown,
Interim CEO

Story Smith's Journey to Rehabilitation (cont. from cover)

Part of Story's motivation was that, ironically, prior to sustaining her injuries, she was training to become an occupational and physical therapy assistant herself, and was determined to regain her strength and mobility to complete the clinical rotations that are part of her education.

According to Needham-Shropshire, rehabilitation for patients happens in layers, from the foundations up. "We start by helping someone like Story learn to regain balance and stand again; from there to moving with confidence; then onto completing more complex tasks needed to get through daily living." Story's rehabilitation centered on concentrated physical and occupational therapy. Story's Occupational Therapist, Stella Virchick, OTR-L, says "Working with Story was unique, because of her own training as an occupational therapist. She was not only my patient but a peer, who understood why I was asking her the questions I was. It was easy for us to collaborate on solving problems." Virchick adds that Story was dealing with both physical and emotional difficulties as a result of her accident, "which is common for many patients, and something we always keep in mind as we provide care."

While Story's recovery focused on OT and PT, other patients benefit from the Bioness Vector Gait System, an advanced, computer-aided system that closely tracks how people walk, and our recently introduced Virtual Reality technology, which is inspiring patients to move through artificially created spaces, performing tasks while engaging their imaginations (see sidebar on page 3).

"I was motivated," says Story, "and reassurance came quick. I would like to credit the LNAs. They knew what I needed in terms of my rehabilitation. They let me do by myself what they knew I could do. They were sensitive to my traumatic brain injury (TBI), knowing that loud noises hurt me. And they had so many little tricks for everything, from hooks for masks to how to get my toilet paper. They had enormous patience with me."

Just as good Samaritans held onto Story in that parking lot until help arrived, our donors lift us up, and make it possible for us to invest in the technology and people who transform lives every day in every corner of our Acute Rehabilitation Center. Story says, "Mt. Ascutney made a huge difference in my recovery. It's impressive to have a level of support like this locally, and so important for care to happen in a place where everyone gets to know you. I tell people, if you need help, go to the Mt. Ascutney Hospital Rehabilitation Center."

Enhancing Care with Advanced Technology: Virtual Reality and More

Our CARF accredited physical medicine acute Rehabilitation Center leads the region because of the professionals who make up our team. Their ability to provide excellent care to both inpatient and outpatient services is enhanced by the advanced technology available for their use.

Gait and Safety System

A special harness that promotes independent walking by supporting the patient's weight, with movements closely tracked by computer to assist therapists in assessing and correcting gait issues.

Miller Therapeutic Pool

A pool is technology? Absolutely! Our one-of-a-kind pool is designed and temperature-controlled to support aquatic physical therapy to our patients, with hours available to the community as well.

Virtual Reality

This system provides patients with a goal-oriented VR experience that lets them move their whole body through virtual space. Stella Virchick, OTR-L explains that the system can give patients customized tasks to perform within the virtual reality, "from reaching for a pullup bar at the beach to reaching out and grasping swiss cheese at the deli counter."

Outside the Rehabilitation Center, we continue to make upgrades in technology across the Hospital, including our recent, donor supported, acquisition of a specialized **Eye Surgery Stretcher**, which is designed for maximum patient comfort during eye procedures. It allows for easy transfers on and off of the stretcher, and helps the surgeon to be better positioned while looking through the operating microscope. It's just one of the ways we are continually improving our tools and technology to serve you.



Employee Spotlight:
Sandra Connolly, Supply Chain Specialist

Sandra Connolly grew up in Windsor, Vermont, and for much of her life Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center (MAHHC) was just the place up the hill from her home where she went for medical appointments. Her perspective shifted in 2014, when she changed careers from sales to a position at the Hospital managing nurse scheduling for the Acute Swing and Acute Rehabilitation units. She says, "I saw first-hand all of the hard work and skill that goes into caring for patients—I was amazed. Unless you see it with your own eyes, it's hard to grasp the effort involved."

"There's a real feeling of pride in looking across the Hospital and knowing that you contributed to the improvements that you see."

Since joining MAHHC, Sandra has provided support through a number of roles where needed, including time spent in development and marketing, as a per diem unit secretary, and now back supporting the clinical units as Supply Chain Specialist, making sure that nurses, doctors, and staff have the equipment and supplies they need to do their best. Across that time, she has given back to the Hospital as an employee donor. "When I was first hired," she explains, "we were in the midst of a capital campaign largely to fund upgrades to our

Rehabilitation Center. I was happy to be part of the organization, and I gave to the campaign because I wanted to deepen my involvement and sense of belonging."

Sometime after the capital campaign wrapped up, Sandra decided to continue giving back to the Hospital as an ongoing donor. She says, "While the Hospital has a number of ways for employees to give, personally I feel most comfortable donating to the Annual Fund, where I know my contributions are pooled with others for the benefit of all. My perspective is that MAHHC understands the areas of greatest need, and can apply the money raised accordingly." She adds that she has also given to the Hope Fund, a special fund designed to help employees in need due to health issues or other crises.

"There's a real feeling of pride in looking across the Hospital and knowing that you contributed to the improvements that you see," says Sandra. She adds, "I love to walk people through places like our Rehabilitation Center and know that I played a small but very real part in what I see. If you're proud of where you work, if you want to increase your sense of attachment to this place and coworkers, and if you have the financial ability, becoming an employee donor is one of the most satisfying things you can do. As a community, we're so fortunate to have a hospital of this caliber, and I am glad to support it."

"I was motivated, and reassurance came quick. I would like to credit the LNAs. They knew what I needed in terms of my rehabilitation."

The MAH Auxiliary: Connecting Care to Community

The membership of the Mt. Ascutney Hospital Auxiliary have contributed their time, energy, and passion to supporting and improving local health care for more than 60 years. The Auxiliary provides a vital link between the Hospital and the communities it serves. Since its start, the Auxiliary has raised more than \$800,000, including support for these projects:

\$100,000 toward the **Positively Vital** Capital Campaign

\$30,000 for an air transfer system for safer patient transfers

\$62,500 for IV infusion "Smart Pumps"

\$20,000 for high-tech defibrillators

\$1,000 for pediatric literacy programs

\$12,500 for new AED monitors

\$830 for Hospice Suite music system in memory of Nancy Loux

\$20,000 toward construction of new Hospice Suite

\$18,000 for private nursing/lactation pod

\$500 to support the OHC Mosaic Project

\$7500 Matching Gift to support the beautification of Hospital Grounds for enhanced patient experience

Commitment to support remote patient monitoring systems in acute rooms for patient safety and support

You may become a Supporting Member of the Auxiliary simply by making a "Membership Contribution" in any amount. If you're interested in joining the Board or a committee, contact Auxiliary@mahhc.org or call **802-674-7088**.



The Impact of Planned Giving

The health of our community is about more than individual care. It is about the choices we make and the work we do as a community. Thanks to the power of planned giving, it is also generational. Today, several trusts continue the legacies of donors who sought to have a positive impact on community health beyond their lifetimes, for generations to come.

Clarence H. Martin was born in Ascutney in 1879 and was a well-known entrepreneur in the region. Mr. Martin was the founder of the Martin Motor Co., the president of Peoples National Bank, and active in town affairs most of his life. His philanthropy included large gifts to the Claremont Hospital (currently Valley Regional), the Martin Memorial Hall, and land for the Ascutney school. Clarence Martin passed away at his home in Ascutney in 1964, but his impact is still prevalent through the establishment of the Clarence Martin Memorial Trust of which Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center and Valley Regional Hospital are the shared benefactors. The Trust's annual distributions to the Hospital are vital to providing high-quality care to our communities.

Access to high-quality, local health care matters. And if it matters to you, if MAHHC has been there for you in times of need and changed your life for the better, there are many ways for you to lend your support through planned giving opportunities. You can direct your support to patient experience, established capital needs, the Annual Fund, general operations, special initiatives, or other channels according to your wishes.

Blanch Curtis King utilized Ottauquechee Health Center (OHC) located in Woodstock, Vermont for her health care. In 1991, Mrs. King noted OHC as a beneficiary in her will. In 2023, Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center, which operates OHC, was the benefactor of a final distribution from that will. Though Mrs. King passed in 1996, her will allowed for the remainder of her assets, after previous commitments were settled, to be distributed to multiple area charities, including OHC. Will distributions such as this allow for those close to you to receive support after your passing while also supporting the causes you feel connected to.

You can make a bequest or charitable gift through your will or living trust. You can bestow a **tax-exempt Beneficiary Designation Gift** from various retirement, checking/savings, or brokerage accounts and annuities. **Charitable Gift Annuities** are gifts of cash or annuities that then pay you a set amount for life. **Charitable Remainder Trusts** pay you and others you designate with the remainder going to a charitable organization like MAHHC. And with **Retained Life Estate**, you

give your home to the charitable organization and continue living there for the rest of your life while receiving a charitable deduction. **Your options are numerous. Our gratitude is endless.**



When you're ready to make decisions, or if you have questions about how to gather the information you need as you make plans, we're here for you. Please reach out anytime to Tayo Kirchhof, Director of Development at tayo.s.kirchhof@mahhc.org or **802-674-7321**.

Inside the Family Wellness Program

"The wellness of our families is the fabric of our communities."

That simple idea motivates and inspires Courtney McKaig, Family Wellness Coach with the Family Wellness Program in the Pediatric Clinic at Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center. The opt-in program, patterned upon the Vermont Family Based Approach pioneered by Dr. James Hudziak of the University of Vermont, has promoted healthy relationships between caregivers and children since its founding here in 2016, and is made possible with ongoing philanthropic support from the Couch Family Foundation.



McKaig says, "We created the Family Wellness Program to support all local families starting from their child's infancy to boost parent-child relationships and screen for risk factors such as post-partum depression, financial stresses, housing and transportation challenges, mental health issues and substance use disorders."

In 2018, the Family Wellness Program incorporated Developmental Understanding and Legal Consult for Everyone (DULCE), providing support to families with babies up to 12 months. When children are 21 months old, McKaig says, "I introduce the Family Wellness Program and myself and meet with families in-between their scheduled well-child visits." She explains that her focus as a Coach is on working to ensure healthy family relationships. "I talk with families to understand their unique circumstances, connect them with resources, and coach families in evidence-based approaches to navigate the changes of parenting in healthy, constructive ways." This can include everything from referrals to therapists to guidance on adding healthy nutrition, movement, sleep routines, and stress management.

A key to the Family Wellness Program, explains McKaig, is that it is universally offered to every family. If you're doing well, it can enhance your wellness. If there are concerns to address, it can help reduce that risk early. This isn't about singling out families with needs," she says, "rather, it is about helping everyone parent the best they can." McKaig is part of a team that includes a dedicated Family Wellness Therapist, social workers, the DULCE Family Specialist, and psychiatrists who provide consultation services to the program. She adds, "Health happens in the community, so I'm in partnership with many stakeholders across our communities," building parenting programs like Circle of Security, and creating a network of playgroups across the Connecticut River Valley where families can build their social support networks and share experiences and ideas.

While the Family Wellness Program provides invaluable prevention support to improve community health, it doesn't generate income like lab tests or surgical procedures. McKaig says that Program funding has been provided over the years by philanthropic support. Currently, her position is funded by a second 3-year grant from the Couch Family Foundation. She says the Foundation "understands that raising children is one of the most important things we do as human beings—so it's important to help people do it well. That's why we are here."

Couch Family Foundation Executive Director Sara Vecchiotti, Ph.D., Esq. says that the Family Wellness Program aligns with the Foundation's mission to enhance the well-being of children and families in the Upper Valley. "The innovation and relationship-based approach of the program, and its coordination across clinical and community systems, appealed to the Trustees," she explains. "Rooted in Richard and Barbara Couch's vision, shaped by their experiences as employers, parents, and grandparents, the Foundation seeks to promote positive outcomes including healthy children, strong families, and vibrant communities," and the Family Wellness Program is at the intersection of all three.



Courtney McKaig, Family Wellness Coach

DONORS: October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023

We sincerely thank all the donors and supporters who make our work possible. Your gift of any level is accepted with deep gratitude. Every dollar donated remains with MAHHC, advancing our commitment to improving the health and well-being of our community.

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Accolades & Accreditations

Donor support translates into quality that gets recognized.

MAHHC is the winner of the 2022 Press Ganey Human Experience Guardian of Excellence Award, recognizing the top 5% of healthcare organizations in patient experience, employee engagement, physician engagement, or clinical quality performance.

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) bestows accreditation on rehabilitation programs that demonstrate an ongoing commitment to quality improvement, a focus on patients, and continual monitoring of our results. We are proud to be the only facility in northern New England to be CARF-accredited in our acute inpatient, outpatient, and stroke specialty rehabilitation programs.

The MAHHC Emergency Department is the first in Vermont to earn accreditation as a Level 2 Geriatric Emergency Department from the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) which recognizes emergency departments that uphold the highest care standards for older patients, by following best practices, stressing patient education, and guaranteeing the best transitions from the emergency department to other settings, such as hospital inpatient units or skilled nursing communities.

Recognized by CMS as among the top in the nation, Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center received a five-star summary rating, the highest a facility can achieve for its drug communications, according to CMS' Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems data. CMS shares 10 HCAHPS star ratings based on measures such as care transitions, nurse communication and cleanliness.



We apologize for any names or organizations that may have been inadvertently omitted, misspelled, or incorrectly listed and appreciate notice of corrections or errors. Please forward notices to Tayo Kirchhof, Director of Development at 802-674-7321 or email tayo.s.kirchhof@mahhc.org

Thank you to the members of the MAHHC Development Committee.

The Development Committee provides oversight of the philanthropy functions at Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center and partners with leadership and staff to support a culture of philanthropy within the Board, the organization as a whole, and the communities that it serves.

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Connecting at Cloudland TO Enhance Care FOR OUR COMMUNITIES



On Thursday, October 19th, Leadership, Board of Trustees, and friends of Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center and Ottauquechee Health Center came together at Cloudland Farm in North Pomfret, Vermont to kick off a collaborative conversation about the future of health care in our communities.

The dinner event was also an opportunity for recently arrived members of the MAHHC Leadership team, including Interim CEO Win Brown, and Director of Development Tayo Kirchhof, to meet with and hear from community members.

Cloudland was just the start. The opportunity to meet and talk with us is ongoing—we invite all who have contributed to the success of MAHHC to join us and share your vision for health care right here close to home. To learn more or share your ideas, contact Tayo Kirchhof, Director of Development at **802-674-7321** or tayo.s.kirchhof@mahhc.org.

WE WANT TO
Hear from You!