Generosity in Action
2021 in review
Making an Impact through Partnership

With spring finally here, brighter days are ahead. The last few years were incredibly challenging, but the perseverance, dedication and compassion demonstrated by Advocate Aurora Health team members, partners and community gives us tremendous hope for 2022 and beyond.

As a non-profit health care system, philanthropy powers our mission to help people live well now and into the future. We have deep pride in our partnership with our community of supporters. None of our vital work would be possible without the financial support and involvement of philanthropic partners like you.

With your support, we have made great strides this year in our commitment to communities in Illinois and Wisconsin, including nearly the $2 million needed to begin construction on the new Ronald McDonald House Family Room located on the Advocate Lutheran General campus. In partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin and Employ Milwaukee, Advocate Aurora led the effort to secure a $500,000 grant to provide workforce development support to Wisconsin residents. We also exceeded our 2021 funding targets for health equity programs, which means our team will be able to serve even more members of our community.

This is the tip of the iceberg of the impact you have made this year and is proof that every donor can make a difference.

We are grateful for your partnership and commitment to helping our communities live well, and we look forward to envisioning a better future together.

Cristy Garcia-Thomas
Chief External Affairs Officer
Advocate Aurora Health

A word from the President

2021 was indeed another unique year. Despite the challenges this year presented, we were able to find new solutions and continue our efforts to help people live well. We owe a debt of gratitude to generous donors like you.

Once again, we have the opportunity to share with you the inspiring stories of our team members, patients, communities and donors. These stories remind us of the incredible impact, big or small we are all capable of making, regardless of circumstances.

The impact shared within these pages reconfirms the influence of philanthropy and how it remains pivotal in our ability to enhance care. No matter what area you support, you’ve been a part of making a difference in the lives of others through Advocate Aurora Health.

We are continually humbled and thankful for your remarkable support.

With gratitude,

Randy Varju, FAHP, CFRE
President, Advocate Aurora Health Foundations
Chief Development Officer, Advocate Aurora Health
BY THE NUMBERS in 2021:

More than $47 million in gifts received by generous donors

Over $14 million raised to support our health equity efforts of helping all people live well

$2.5 billion+ in community benefits

OVER $2.5 million raised by team members through the internal Team Member Giving Campaign for Advocate Aurora Health funds

More than $700,000 distributed to Advocate Aurora team members through the Team Member Crisis Funds, helping our health care heroes overcome personal crises

More than $31 million distributed across the system to enhance programs, fund research, support team members and more
Always Advancing

Your gifts provide team members with rest and renewal

Health care workers deal with pressure and tension every day, but COVID-19 has caused more stress and new challenges.

“Since the beginning of the pandemic, there’s been a clear sense that people are showing up to work and giving so deeply of themselves and their time and energy. They’re physically and emotionally exhausted,” shared Staycie Flint, chaplain coordinator of team member well-being and spirituality at Advocate Children’s Hospital. “We wanted to find a way to support them and offer healing.”

The Mission and Spiritual Care team started hosting virtual Renewal Days to help the hospital’s frontline staff navigate distress and crises.

“Team members receive an activity kit, join us online and take part in discussions and independent exercises,” explained Janet MacLean, director of clinical pastoral education. “From daily challenges to COVID stress, people bring to the table whatever is weighing on them.”

Bounce Back kits are also available to team members. The kits include take-home materials that allow people space to reflect on what is meaningful to them.

Renewal Days and Bounce Back kits were so popular at Advocate Children’s Hospital that they’re now available to team members across Advocate Aurora Health.

“We know they’re effective from surveys. We’ve found people feel less exhausted after attending a Renewal Day. They’re less agitated, and they feel gratitude more often,” said Staycie. “There’s an increased sense of caring for themselves, support and connection.”

Patients also benefit from these efforts. “Patient safety is directly linked to team member safety and well-being,” explained Janet.

Renewal Days and Bounce Back kits are funded through the Advocate Aurora COVID-19 Relief Fund.

“These programs would not be possible without charitable support,” said Janet. “Donors help us realize what we need, and there’s a real gift in that,” added Staycie.

How your gifts helped save a mother’s life

After Alana Tesch delivered her third son, Griffin, at Aurora Medical Center – Grafton, she started hemorrhaging. The obstetrician told Alana she was losing a lot of blood and that she’d need emergency surgery to stop the bleeding.

She was in surgery for two hours before they were able to stop the bleeding. She’d lost a third of her blood volume.

When Alana started hemorrhaging, the team knew exactly what to do. In addition to their education and experiences, ongoing education and training funded by donors helps prepare them in new and different ways for emergency scenarios.

“Every year, our department practices emergency scenarios,” explained Erica Deuser, RN, who was part of the team that saved Alana’s life. Training builds confidence in the face of real-life emergencies.

“If we didn’t get her into surgery and find the cause of her bleeding, she could have died,” said Erica.

Alana is forever grateful to her care team – and to donors who helped make it possible. “You kept a family together,” she shared.

You’re providing new technology for breast cancer detection of cancers

For women with dense breasts, detecting cancer on a traditional mammogram can be difficult. For physicians to properly assess their cancer risk, patients may need expensive and for some, claustrophobic MRI’s.

At Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital, donations supported the purchase of Molecular Breast Imaging technology, providing patients with a solution. From your generous support, clinicians are now able to use alternative ways to detect cancers on women with dense breasts.

“The Molecular Breast Imaging device was funded with the generous support of the Foglia Family.”

Because of your support:

- More than $1 million funded team member, nurse and physician education and professional development
- More than 7,000 integrative medicine services were provided to cancer patients at free and reduced costs
- CancerIQ was launched in both Wisconsin and Illinois and will assist in identifying patients at high risk of hereditary cancers
- Patient housing provided to Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center organ transplant patients were updated and remodeled
- Over $13.2 million supported unique programs and services helping our team members, patients and communities

Sumit Chhadia, MD
Co-Director of Breast Cancer Center, Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital
Caring for You with You

Mobile Dental Program helps create smiles for patients

Julia Ordonez has gone without teeth for 20 years. At age 79 and without regular dental insurance, she thought there was nothing that could be done.

“I went to three different dentists, and they all said my mouth was bad. They denied making dentures for me,” Julia shared.

But at the end of 2020, she discovered the Mobile Dental Program through Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, and her luck finally changed. “This program was willing to work with me and give me a set of teeth. I am extremely happy with my new teeth,” Julia said with a smile.

Julia received care through the Mobile Dental Program, which just received a new van funded through Advocate Charitable Foundation. Thanks to a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the van will help us facilitate care in the community where it’s needed most. The van was funded through Advocate Charitable Foundation, thanks to a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health. The goal of the program is to provide quality, comprehensive and affordable dental care to underserved adults and children throughout Chicago. This new van will help the program treat over 650 low-income and at-risk people who, like Julia, would likely have nowhere else to turn.

“The van serves as a modern dental office on wheels, equipped with two exam rooms,” explained Amy Martin, DDS, Dir. Of Mobile Dentistry at Advocate Illinois Masonic.

The van can provide virtually any service provided in a freestanding dental facility. The program works with 18 partner sites throughout the city of Chicago and greater Chicagoland. It has been significantly funded through philanthropy for 20 years, giving the gifts of a smile and confidence to thousands of people.

“This new van make thousands of healthier smiles possible across the city over the next few years. We are truly grateful,” said Dr. Martin.

Because of your support:

• 4,000 meals were provided to Milwaukee families through Aurora Family Service’s Family to Family Thanksgiving
• Aurora Healing Center therapists provided 3,859 individual and group sessions for sexual assault survivors.
• 5,188 unique patients were served at Aurora Walker’s Point Community Clinic, the largest free clinic in Wisconsin
• Continuing Health team members drove 3.5 million miles to provide patient care across Wisconsin and Illinois
• 1,700 adults were served at Adult Down Syndrome Center
• Created in response to the pandemic to provide high-level care for very sick patient in their home, the Home Hospital program has cared for over 480 patients.

You’re bringing health to communities in need

Advocate South Suburban Hospital, located south of Chicago, serves a diverse patient population from the local community and beyond. With donor support, a new Community Health Worker program was created, which has since established the South Suburban Food Farmacy. The Food Farmacy provides fresh produce boxes for patients managing chronic conditions related to diet such as diabetes and high blood pressure as well as those who may be food insecure.

“It is important that we empower our patients through medical interventions and nutrition to help them live well and we are so grateful for donor support enabling us to do so,” says Monet Sims-Joe, MPH, Manager Community Health for Advocate South Suburban Hospital.

The Community Health Worker was funded with the generous support of Michuda Construction.

Your gifts are helping our tiniest patients thrive

For premature infants with fragile immune systems and organ systems, receiving human breastmilk is a critical component to getting them on their path to growing strong.

At Aurora Medical Center Sinai, with the help of donor support, infants born at less than 32 weeks or at less than 1,500 grams (below 3 pounds, 5 ounces) whose mother’s may not be able to provide milk for them, are provided pasteurized donor breast milk for at least their first 28 days of life, providing them with essential antibodies and reducing their risk of other serious complications.

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The donor milk program offers many of the same benefits to infants in the absence of maternal milk and mothers are so grateful for this resource, thank you!”

Dawn Porter MSN, RN NE-BC
Patient Care Manager, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Aurora Sinai Hospital
Improving health equity through research

For doctors and clinicians to treat patients as effectively as possible, they need research and data that reflect a population as diverse as the people they serve.

“What we’ve found in clinical trials is that participants tend to be women, white and under age 65,” explained Veronica Fitzpatrick, DrPH, MPH, manager of Patient Centered Outcomes Research at Advocate Aurora Research Institute. “We’re missing a large portion of the population, and that affects health equity.”

This is especially evident with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected people of color.

“Not enough people of color are participating in clinical trials related to COVID-19, which means we are not being effective in treating all of our patients.”

To get to the root of this problem, Dr. Fitzpatrick will lead a study on disparities in clinical trial participation, which is being funded through donations to Advocate Aurora Health Foundations’ COVID-19 relief efforts.

“It will be a one-year study in which we’ll use qualitative and quantitative methods to find answers to how we can cultivate a more diverse population in our clinical trials and studies,” said Dr. Fitzpatrick.

She and her team will analyze internal data to get an overall picture of patients, their health and demographics during the pandemic. They’ll also interview clinicians and self-identified patients of color about clinical trial hesitancy, barriers and potential solutions to involvement.

“We want to identify and reduce barriers to encourage more diversity in clinical trials. The whole reason we do trials is to assess how well treatments are working,” she explained. “If we can get people from all races, ethnicities and backgrounds to participate, we’ll have a healthier population.”

We’re so grateful for the opportunity to have the funding to do something we’re passionate about and that will help more people in the long run,” shared Dr. Fitzpatrick. “We’ll not only share our findings within Advocate Aurora but also with other health systems across the country.”

How your gifts helped a patient with a brain aneurysm

After a ruptured brain aneurysm, Rocco Rubino feared another life-threatening stroke.

But thanks to a procedure performed by the neurological team at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital and the assistance of a new robotic technology system, which was funded through charitable giving, Rubino doesn’t live in fear anymore.

Dr. Demetrius Lopes, comprehensive stroke program surgical director at Advocate Aurora Health, recommended placing a stent after Rubino’s care team noticed he was at risk of another rupture during monitoring. And in what Rubino could only describe as “perfect timing,” Lutheran General was one of two area hospitals installing robotic-assisted equipment that would help his surgeons better visualize and plan the procedure, while also providing incredible precision.

Having completed the most neurovascular cases so far using this new technology, Advocate Aurora Health is among a few hospital systems in the country that will participate in trials to advance the use for intracranial procedures and remote surgery.

“It feels so much more relaxing to have the stent placed so accurately and to have such a high likelihood that a rupture won’t happen again,” Rubino said. “My family and I are relieved.”

Your support is helping launch groundbreaking research for children with life-threatening heart defects

Researchers funded with donor support at Advocate Children's Hospital are collaborating with researchers at University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children’s Hospital on a clinical trial of a new stem cell therapy for infants born with a life-threatening birth defect, hypoplastic left heart syndrome (HLHS).

Babies born with HLHS require several surgical repairs for survival. Even after surgery, babies born with the condition face additional obstacles, but new treatments like stem cell therapy bring the hope of improved outcomes and better quality of life.

“Using stem cells to regenerate parts of the heart is a really exciting advancement coming down the road. Your support helps us move towards helping patients in new ways and we can’t do it without donors and their generosity. We are able to succeed because of the partnership of our donors,” says Michael Earing, MD, MS Healthcare Management, Section Chief and Co-Director of Advocate Children’s Hospital Heart Institute.

Because of your support:

• More than $2.4 million enhanced research in cardiovascular health, precision medicine, oncology, endocrinology, Alzheimer’s and more
• Advocate Aurora Health was able to initiate a melanoma research pilot study to identify a bio marker to help monitor treatment response and predict outcomes
Generous donations make walking trail a reality
The Mary Hofer Walking Trail surrounding Aurora Medical Center – Bay Area offers a place to reflect, walk and remember a loved one. The trail began as a generous donation from John Hofer, a former team member, to honor his late wife, who had also been a team member and underwent cancer treatment at the hospital.

“The walking trail is an appropriate way to say thank you to the staff that supported Mary during her two years of cancer treatments and to acknowledge the 20-year relationship we both have with the people who work there,” John wrote of the trail project.

“My hope is that this trail, with Mary’s name, may prompt others to memorialize or recognize those they love through philanthropic support of the hospital.”

Fighting back in honor of their son
For George Moore III and his wife Cindy, their fight against addiction is personal. Their world was shattered when their 28-year-old son, George, died from an accidental drug overdose. He had just completed a 30-day inpatient treatment program and was ready to continue outpatient treatment.

Today, George and Cindy are active committee members of Ethan’s Run Against Addiction and host an annual golf outing to raise dollars to support the Ethan Monson-Dupuis Opiate Recovery Program Fund, which helps provide recovery resources to those in need.

George III says, “We are trying to make a difference in memory of George and help shatter the stigma, break the silence and save lives.”

Paying it forward
Jerry and Sandy Lewis have been walking on a journey with their son over the last few years. He was diagnosed with a rare type of brain tumor. Thankfully, he was treated and is doing well. While walking this journey, he studied and received his MBA and has been raising his family with his wife.

According to Jerry, “It has been a life-changing event for all of us, but so much has been accomplished.” There are few cases of oligodendroglioma annually in North America. He is lucky in that his neuro-oncologist, Nina Paleologos, MD, is one of the experts on his type of tumor. Her research and collaboration around the world are so important for the future, to diagnosis and treat this and all brain tumors.

Jerry and Sandy are paying their gratitude forward using Advocate Aurora Health Foundations’ newly launched DIY platform. They have raised more than $65,000 by asking their family and friends to contribute to support Dr. Paleologos’ research. The dollars raised for this research will help current and future patients regarding the diagnosis and treatment of brain tumors.

Sandy and Jerry’s intention and purpose are clear, “We are very grateful to have so many friends and family who share in charitable giving. Every year, new things are discovered to help cancer survivors and we feel continued research in neuro-oncology is very important.”

Donors making a difference

Honoring Finn’s life by giving back
Gina Howell went into preterm labor on Sept. 28, 2018, delivering twins Wade and Finn, who were only 23 weeks gestation and weighed about one pound each.

Within a few weeks in the NICU, Finn had developed several serious complications and received complicated diagnoses. It was not an easy decision, but the Howell’s decided to take Finn off of life support.

Since their time in the NICU, Gina and her husband have donated 750 books to the NICUs at Aurora Sinai and Aurora West Allis in honor of their boys. Recently, Gina raised funds to transform the pump room at Aurora Sinai into a more welcoming and comfortable place for mothers to pump breastmilk.

Wade is now a thriving 3-year-old and big brother to sister Finley, named in honor of her big brother.

Giving back to help others smile
When 6-year-old Sofia spiked several fevers over a seven-day period, her parents thought it was a virus. Instead, Sofia received a shocking diagnosis: she had leukemia. During her treatment, one thing that stood out to Sofia’s family was the extra care from the Child Life Team at Advocate Children’s Hospital - Park Ridge.

“When she had to get spinal taps, she knew she would get to pick a little prize when she woke up. Things like that were huge for her,” says Sofia’s mom, Alicia. The child life specialists explained what would happen during her treatment and answered all her questions.

Sofia’s journey inspired her family to give back. For her 7th birthday, they held a fundraiser for the hospital and asked their friends and loved ones to donate. “When kids are sick, it’s so helpful to have something that can make them smile. It’s so important to give back and help kids feel a little bit better.”

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Our team members, patients and communities are thankful for YOU

We would not have had a traditional American meal without this generous gift. It allowed us to stay home together and enjoy family time. The food tasted great. The conversation and relaxation felt good in these COVID times. Thank you so much.

- Family to Family Thanksgiving recipient

The Transplant Housing was such a blessing for us and our family while we were waiting for a donor heart. I can’t express enough appreciation. I hope the Foundation benefactors realize just how precious it was to be able to utilize this wonderful gift during this stressful time.

- Jim, Transplant Housing Program resident

I am beyond grateful for the Pediatric Developmental Center and their professionalism and empathy that therapists and doctors share with their patients and for the help they have given me to make things easier for me, despite my kids’ challenges. I want to thank and motivate all those good-hearted people to keep supporting this center, so it can continue to provide services to families like mine. We are a true testament of the big impact that this center has on families.

- Mother of three special needs children served at the Pediatric Developmental Center at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center

We are so grateful for donor support to AAH Cardiology Research. Your gifts help us support Advocate Aurora Health physician initiatives aimed at improving care and outcomes for our most vulnerable patients.

- Viviana Zlochiver, PhD – Cardiovascular Research – Advocate Aurora Health Academic Affairs

To learn more about how Advocate Aurora Health Foundations are impacting care for your family, friends and neighbors, please contact giving@aah.org or...