

Heartbeat

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Foundation Luncheon showcases pharmacy renovation, kitchen updates

In April, the Unity Medical Center Foundation invited donors from calendar year 2025 to the annual Friends of the Foundation Luncheon to see first-hand the impact of their support, including the soon-to-be-renovated Pharmacy Department and new kitchen lighting.

Approximately 44 people attended over two days. The program recognized the top 20 donors from 2025, as well as 98 Giving Clubs members. Seven new members were added this past year, including Mark & Pam Bertilrud, Dakota Medical Foundation, Tim & Cori Dvorak, MDU Resources Foundation, Mark & Mia Presteng, Tollefson Funeral Home and Wipfli LLP. Foundation Executive Director Jessica Sobolik highlighted the impact of donor gifts over the past year, including a new LUCAS automated CPR device in the Emergency Department, a new patient lift in the Radiology Department, new LED lighting in the kitchen, a Pharmacy Department renovation, new blood pressure monitors and a new NuStep recumbent bike for the Rehab Department.

The Foundation also awarded two scholarships for staff pursuing nursing and leadership degrees, and supported the working groups formed after a Community Health Needs Assessment was completed. The groups are focused on addressing obesity and mental health, as well as helping elderly people stay in their homes.

UMC CEO Mark Bertilrud detailed the Park River Family Clinic project, as well as the Rural Health Transformation grants available from the federal government. The grants were created to offset cuts made to the federal Medicare and Medicaid programs, and are facilitated by the state Health and Human Services Department. The first grant application, focused on workforce retention, was due April 30, and Bertilrud reported that UMC had just submitted its application.



Guests arrive at the Friends of the Foundation Luncheon, including retired UMC nurse Adele Momerak and her husband Leonard.



UMC Dietician Rondee Feltman, left, details the recent changes to the U.S. Dietary Guidelines to attendees.

See FOUNDATION LUNCHEON on page 3

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There are moments when words feel inadequate, when “thank you” seems far too small. This is one of those moments.

Because what you do as a



community-- what you give of your time, your resources and your belief in this hospital--is not simply generous; it is essential. In communities like ours across North

Dakota, the local hospital is not just a building. It is a promise. A promise that no matter the hour or circumstance, care will be available close to home. And that promise is becoming harder and harder to keep.

Today, rural health care faces significant challenges. Many rural hospitals are operating at a loss, workforce shortages continue to strain care teams, and financial pressures tied to reimbursement and rising costs are reshaping what is possible for

organizations like ours. And yet, despite the headwinds, something remarkable continues to happen here in this region. Care still happens. Lives are impacted. Families are comforted. Communities are held together.

That does not happen by accident. It happens with the help of our donors. You are the difference between simply surviving and truly serving. You make it possible to invest in new technology when budgets are tight. You help recruit and retain the caregivers who choose to practice in rural communities. You ensure that when someone walks through our doors, they are met not only with clinical excellence, but with compassion rooted in community.

At a time when health care is becoming more complex--when telehealth, digital innovation and new models of care are emerging--you help ensure that progress does not bypass rural America. You help us adapt and remain strong for the people who depend on us every day.

But beyond all of that, what you give cannot be measured on a balance sheet. You give confidence, stability and hope. Hope to the young family raising children here. Hope to the farmer who needs care close to the land he works. Hope to the aging neighbor who deserves dignity and access without traveling miles away. Your generosity says, clearly and powerfully: This community matters. Because of you, this hospital remains more than a place of care, it remains a cornerstone of life in this region. An obligation and a mantle we wear proudly and with a deep sense of obligation.

On behalf of every patient, every family, every caregiver and every future story that will unfold within these walls, thank you. Not just for what you give. But for what you make possible.

Mark Bertilrud
Chief Executive Officer
Unity Medical Center

MEDICARE

- Pays 100% of your Welcome to Medicare Visit
- Pays 100% of your Annual Exams



Grafton Family Clinic | 701-352-2000 | Park River Family Clinic | 701-284-6663

Foundation Luncheon: Continued from page 1



Pharmacy Director Jaime Osmanski, right, details plans for the UMC Pharmacy Department renovation, located in the former St. Joseph's Hospital delivery and surgery department.

He closed his comments by sharing two notes received from patients or patient families recently. One read: "Words cannot express the warmth and passion we had received from everyone at the Grafton hospital. It felt like we were the only family in the hospital. It meant so much to all of us. We appreciate you more than you'll ever know."

The second read: "Our bricks and mortar are as good as the rest, so it's not the windows or cement that makes the difference. It's the staff and how they interact and react to each other and to the patients. It's my observation that Unity functions like a well-oiled machine and allows me to believe that the leaders of Unity not only know what needs to be done, they've assembled the perfect staff of well-qualified individuals to accomplish the task. My thanks to everyone involved at Unity. Know you have made me and our community extremely proud."



UMC CEO Mark Bertilrud, right, provides a construction update regarding the Park River Family Clinic project to guests from Altru Health System and Marsh McLennan Agency.

DAISY Award given to UMC's Mandy Hanson



In April, Unity Medical Center awarded a DAISY Award to Nurse Mandy Hanson for her dedication to her patients and profession.

Six UMC nurses were nominated. Mandy was selected by committee from nomination letters written about each candidate. Mandy's nomination letter detailed a workday in which she unexpectedly got called in early. She started by administering IV antibiotics for a patient before checking on other patients. When she returned to check on her initial patient, he reported feeling warm and itchy. "She instantly jumped into action," Darrin Wollitz (pictured) wrote in his letter. "She stopped the IV and ran to get Benadryl. When she returned, I remember telling her I was having a hard time breathing. I went into anaphylactic shock, and she didn't hesitate in calling for help. Her actions literally saved my life."

The DAISY (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) Award honors and celebrates internationally the skillful, compassionate care that nurses provide every day. It was established by the family of J. Patrick Barnes after he died from complications of an auto-immune disease in 1999. During his hospitalization, they deeply appreciated the care and compassion shown to Patrick and his family. When he died, they felt compelled to say thank you to nurses in a public way and encourage others to say thank you by sharing their stories of how a nurse made a difference they will never forget.

Leading up to this year's 36th Annual Golf Tournament, we have been talking quite a bit about scholarships, and I thought I'd share some of the information with you since it's what we're raising funds for this year.

While the parameters have changed to comply with federal laws, the UMC Foundation has offered scholarships to staff for many years. Going back 10 years, the Foundation has provided over \$43,000 in scholarships to 13 staff members, including three of our most recent awardees: Adora Avila, Erica Samuels and Priscilla Stark (more on them later). One of the biggest changes recently was no longer requiring a work commitment for scholarship recipients.

Amounts vary each year, depending on how many staff members apply and how much funding is available. Past gifts were in the \$1,000-\$2,500 range, which we know is a "drop in the bucket" compared

to overall education costs, especially in health care. So this year we did our best to increase awards.

There were only a couple years where perhaps a staff member's educational plans changed or life caused them to pause their programs for a time, and no scholarship dollars were awarded. In those years, we shifted any available funds from our Provider/Staff Endowment to continuing education needs, sending staff to conferences where they learned more about their respective specialties. As many of us know, these conferences are extremely beneficial. Then staff bring the latest news and techniques back to our patients.

Our most recent scholarship winners have wonderful goals for improving their levels of care. Adora is finishing her Practical Nursing program at Northland Community & Technical College and plans to start the Registered Nurse program in the near future. Occupational Therapy Assistant Erica Samuels is seeking her Doctorate in Occupational Therapy degree from Concordia University Wisconsin, a program that is primarily online but

requires monthly in-person visits on weekends. Priscilla is earning her Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner degree from Walden University, also online. These are all wonderful programs that will improve the quality of care at UMC. We are so happy to support these staff members' educational goals.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more staff education highlights leading up to our Golf Tournament scheduled for July 9. We hope to see you there!

Lastly, I want to thank the donors who have generously agreed to support our Park River Family Clinic project, especially Mark and Pam Bertilrud, Josh and Kirsten Lien, MDU Resources Foundation, Monty and Kari Novak, Polar Communications, Brad and Nadine Schanilec, Jim and Carol Tallackson, along with 15 others, and more still being added to the list. This project has been a change from our usual fundraising centered in Grafton, but this clinic in Park River will benefit so many surrounding communities seeking health care in rural North Dakota.

Jessica Sobolik
Executive Director
Unity Medical Center Foundation



36th Annual
Unity Medical Center Foundation

GOLF TOURNAMENT

For UMC provider/staff
education

Thursday, July 9, 2026
Fair Oaks Golf Course
Grafton, ND



Sponsor



Register

Staff Spotlight: Jayme Jonasson, FNP-C

Unity Medical Center welcomed Jayme Jonasson as a new family nurse practitioner at the Grafton Family Clinic in April. Jayme earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice Family Nurse Practitioner degree from the University of Mary in May 2025. She began her nurse practitioner career at Pembina County Memorial Hospital last July before coming to Unity Medical Center.



Prior to becoming a nurse practitioner, Jayme attended the University of North Dakota, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in 2014. Over the past 11 years, she has worked in critical access hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Although Jayme always knew she wanted to pursue an advanced practice nursing degree, she made the decision to apply to school during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said there were many unknowns about the future, and her family felt it was the right time for a change and an opportunity to further her education.

One of Jayme's favorite parts of being a nurse practitioner is building relationships with her patients. "You have the distinct opportunity to be an integral part of a person's health care journey," she said. "I enjoy getting to know my patients beyond their diagnoses and learning more about their lives, family and work."

UMC felt like a natural fit for Jayme after completing clinical hours in both the Grafton and Park River Family clinics. She shared that she had excellent experiences at both locations and quickly noticed the welcoming atmosphere and strong teamwork among staff members. "I genuinely appreciate how caring, supportive and willing everyone is to help me be the best I can be," Jayme said.

Jayme grew up on a farm north of Osnabrock. She married her husband Jon in 2015, and together they have a son Jensen with a second child expected in July. The family lives in Osnabrock, while Jon farms near Milton. In their free time, they enjoy camping during the summer months. Jayme also enjoys reading, cooking, baking and keeping up with Jensen.

Despite growing up on a farm and marrying a farmer, she admits she struggles to keep houseplants alive. "There's a long-running joke in our family that I'm the disappointment of our farming heritage," she laughed. "Even my 5-year-old son has been more successful growing vegetables at home than I have."

Jayme is currently seeing walk-in patients at the Grafton Family Clinic. The walk-in clinic is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. She is excited to join the UMC team and looks forward to getting to know the Grafton community while providing compassionate, quality care to local patients and families.

Staff Spotlight: Erica Samuels, OTA

Unity Medical Center recently hired Occupational Therapy Assistant Erica Samuels, whose passion for helping others and dedication to patient-centered care make her an important part of the Rehab team.



Erica joined UMC after earning her associate's degree as an Occupational Therapy Assistant from North Dakota State College of Science. She also completed her undergraduate studies at North Dakota State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Development and Family Science. Continuing to build on her education and clinical skills, Erica

is currently pursuing her Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree at Concordia University Wisconsin and will graduate in December 2027.

Erica had always known she wanted a career centered around helping people. She chose occupational therapy because it allows her to connect with patients on an individual level while finding meaningful ways to improve their quality of life and independence. She enjoys the challenge of tailoring care to each person's unique needs and goals.

Her pursuit of a doctoral degree reflects her commitment to professional growth and excellence in patient care. Erica hopes her advanced education will provide greater autonomy in her practice and create additional opportunities to expand her clinical expertise.

Originally from Wahpeton, Erica and her husband Colin, her high school sweetheart, have been married for three years. Along with their two cats Lulu and Ollie, they recently made Grafton their home. Erica and Colin enjoy spending time outdoors, tackling house projects and visiting the lake. Erica also enjoys Pilates, growing flowers, reading, and spending time with family and friends.

Erica says she chose UMC because of its strong sense of community and commitment to patient-centered care. She values the opportunity to collaborate closely with patients across a variety of settings and appreciates the supportive, welcoming culture at Unity.

"Unity is a place where I feel I can continue to grow professionally while making a meaningful impact in a rural community," Erica said.

UMC Employee Awards Banquet honors milestone staff

Unity Medical Center recently celebrated staff milestones at its annual Employee Awards Banquet held in April. Not everyone was able to attend, but all were recognized for their dedication.

50 years

- Sandra Lessard

40 years

- Bea Bolek
- Lon Kratochvil
- Kelly LaBonte
- Karen Puppe

25 years

- Darla Hanson
- Rachel Ray



Sandra Lessard



Celebrating 5 years.

20 years

- Peter Byzewski
- Vern Schnellbach

15 years

- Paul Tunks

10 years

- Yolanda Balderas
- Kristen Pastorek



Vern Schnellbach

5 years

- Natalie Anderson
- Sherri Boulduc
- Ashly Clemetson
- Morgan Ellingson
- Tammie Harder
- Karen Hills
- Sarah Janikowski
- Rebecca Koble
- Mary LaHaise
- Courtney Loftsgard
- Sarah Ostlie
- Kydyn Pastorek
- Robyn Sangrait
- Jennifer Shaw
- Jessica Sobolik
- Maggie Suda
- Julie Sundby
- Derek White
- Darrin Wollitz
- Brad Wurgler



Lon Kratochvil, Bea Bolek, Kelly LaBonte



Rachel Ray, Darla Hanson



Yolanda Balderas, Kristen Pastorek

UMC Auxiliary gift to Radiology



The UMC Auxiliary recently donated \$1,000 to the Radiology Department for the purchase of an infant papoose board, an important piece of equipment that helps safely stabilize young patients during CT scans. Thank you, Auxiliary members!



Park River Family Clinic construction update

Construction of the Park River Family Clinic made great strides in late April and May. The exterior is enclosed, windows are installed, and shingles are on the roof, including the canopy. Work on the interior will continue through the summer. Completion is slated for fall 2026.

Scrubs Camp Inspires Future Healthcare Professionals

Rural Collaborative Opportunities for Occupational Learning in Health (R-COOL-Health) Scrubs Camps are one-day events held in rural North Dakota communities designed to introduce students to a wide range of health care careers. Through interactive, hands-on experiences led by local health care professionals, students gain insight into career pathways available right in their own communities. Presenters also share personal experiences, offering a firsthand look at what it's like to work in rural health care.

This year, Unity Medical Center hosted 140 9th grade students from Drayton, Fordville-Lankin, Grafton, Midway, Minto, Park River and Valley-Edinburg on April 1 and April 8. This marked the sixth year UMC has hosted the camp in partnership with the North Valley Career and Technology Center, the Walsh County Job Development Authority and the Center for Rural Health.

Throughout the day, students rotated through 11 sessions, exploring a variety of high-demand health care careers while participating in engaging, hands-on activities. Experiences included pricking fingers in the lab to learn about blood typing; practicing CPR on manikins in the Emergency Department; compounding prescriptions with the pharmacy team; receiving an EKG; and testing balance, agility and speed with Physical Therapy staff.

New this year, the surgery team introduced a unique learning experience featuring an interactive, "walk-through" inflatable colon set up in an operating room alongside colonoscopy equipment. This display helped educate students on the importance of early detection and preventive cancer screenings.



Midway students learn their blood types in the UMC Medical Laboratory.

UMC also received a \$2,500 grant from the Center for Rural Health to help offset the cost of food and supplies for the event.

Dr. Leetun's 500th shoulder surgery



In late April, Dr. Darin Leetun of Sanford Orthopedic & Sports Medicine completed his 500th shoulder replacement at Unity Medical Center. In a Facebook reel celebrating the milestone, Dr. Leetun thanked UMC staff and administration who "have been so good at allowing me to bring what I do to this area," he said. "Our goal was to get this number up to show it's consistent, and people are getting good results and good care. It's nice to continue to bring the best opportunity for shoulder replacement care to this part of the Red River Valley."

UMC earns Best Place to Work Award for fifth consecutive year

Unity Medical Center has been selected by Modern Healthcare as one of the 2026 Best Places to Work in Healthcare for a fifth year in a row. This annual award program identifies and recognizes 150 outstanding employers in the health care industry nationwide. Half of these organiza-

**BEST PLACES
TO WORK™ 2026**

Modern Healthcare

tions are a combination of health care providers and

insurance companies while the other half are vendors.

Workforce is the No. 1 challenge facing all health care providers nationwide and in spite of the challenge, UMC is continually creating an environment where employees are voicing their satisfaction with their work environment and are ranked at the top nationally.

Modern Healthcare partners with Workforce Research Group on the assessment process, which includes

an extensive employee survey with questions pertaining to how well employees feel they are treated by the organization, if they feel they are recognized appropriately, and if they are engaged with their work in helping to identify opportunities/strategies to improve workplace culture and productivity.

UMC will find out its ranking on the Best Places list and be celebrated at the 2026 Best Places to Work in Healthcare Awards Gala taking place Sept. 16 in Houston, Texas.

Memorials and Thank You To Donors (Feb. 25-March 25, 2026)

The Unity Medical Center Foundation would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the donors who have donated to UMCF over the past years. It is because of donors like you that UMCF can continue to focus on its mission of supporting Unity Medical Center and improving patient experiences. Every effort is made to include all names accurately. Please notify UMCF if you discover any errors or omissions.

Doris Altendorf

Jan Altendorf

Gene Anderson

Jeff & Chris Ferguson

Sonia Midgarden

Darcy Sabourin

Marge Aukland

Paula Studney

Arnold Barclay

Mary Ann Barclay Family

Carol Gerszewski

Monica Groven

Dorothy Johnson

Francis & Paula

Kilichowski

Nick & Lynn Lane

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Ben Suda

Dennis Barker

Jean Baird

Dan & Carol LaHaise

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Pat Torgeson & Cynthia Sillers

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Don Burns

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Marlys Hanson

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Pat Torgeson & Cynthia

Sillers

Laurie Jensen

Rick & Susan Bigwood

Todd Flaten

Don & Paddy Hutson

Cathy Jo Johnson

Todd Flaten

James Johnson

Ina Raumin

Mike Johnson

Darcy Sabourin

Wendell Kelm

Rick & Susan Bigwood

Jon Kippen

LeRoy & Donna Kuta

Daniel & Deidre O'Keefe

Gene Kringstad

Don & Paddy Hutson

Richard LaBerge

Bill & Colleen Lykken

Don & Kathy Warren

Rick Langowski

Evan & Carissa Klug

Bill & Jody Tibert

Avis Linstad

Rick & Susan Bigwood

Loretta Moe

Rita Amiot

Kory Bjerke

Karen Cudmore

Douglas & Eileen Demers

LeaAnn Dolan

Judy Evens

Ray & Marcy Gourde

Paul & Sandi Houdek

Kevin & Jean Jiskra

Buzz & Tammy Lunde

Bill & Colleen Lykken

Edward & Nancy Miller

Jeanne Monson

Ben Suda

Shirley Suda

Pat Torgeson & Cynthia

Sillers

Ruth Ratchenski

Leonard & Adele Momerak

Marcel Sabourin

Gary & Ardith Demers

Keith & Joanne Saville

Deb Slominski

Marvin & Bea Bolek

Pat Sweeney

Todd Flaten

Foundation Mission

To financially support
Unity Medical Center, ensuring
quality health care close to home.

Philanthropic Priorities

1. Patients
2. Providers/staff
3. Programs
4. Facilities
5. Priority needs (unrestricted)



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