

Heartbeat

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Harvest Auction raises \$120,000 for pharmacy, kitchen

Following last year's record-breaking year, the fundraising goal for this year's Harvest Auction was set high. Although it didn't reach its goal, the Unity Medical Center Foundation board still considers this year's event a success in raising \$120,000 for UMC's Pharmacy and Dietary departments.



Michelle Murray realizes she holds the Lucky Charm at the 27th annual Harvest Auction.

The 27th annual event, held Nov. 14 at the Minto Community Center, started with the Lucky Charm drawing, and Michelle Murray was the lucky winner. She heads Faith in Action in Cavalier, a non-profit that trains volunteers to provide helpful services to primarily the elderly in Pembina County, including transportation to medical appointments, as well as yard work, minor home repairs and light house-



Alan O'Neil receives a standing ovation after concluding his comments, which reflected on 11 years of service before his retirement in January 2026.

work. Michelle selected the Yeti & Grafton Shopping Package donated by Alan and Mary Jane O'Neil from the 21 live auction items available.

The event continued with the reverse auction, which was kicked off by Bill and Jody Tibert and Dr. Mike and Pattie Bittles providing generous \$10,000 bids, as they did last year. Bidding continued with two \$5,000 bidders until 29 individuals or businesses had donated a total of \$48,400 in a matter of minutes, exceeding the reverse auction's goal of \$44,000 for kitchen updates at UMC.

The silent auction opened the week prior to the live event and at closing that night raised just over \$17,000 through 78 donated items. The largest amount raised in that portion of the event came from the Industrial Clock donated by B&D Flooring & Furniture.



Bill and Jody Tibert and Pattie and Dr. Mike Bittles listen to Alan O'Neil's comments during the program.

See HARVEST AUCTION on page 3

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Dear friends,

As I prepare to retire from my role as CEO of Unity Medical Center, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey we have shared.



Leading this institution has been one of the greatest honors of my life, and I am deeply grateful for the trust, collaboration and unwavering support you have shown throughout the years.

Together, we have faced challenges, celebrated milestones and worked tirelessly to ensure that every patient receives the highest standard of care. None of this would have been possible without your dedication and belief in our mission. Your commitment has strengthened the community and made UMC a beacon of hope and healing.

Over the past several months, I frequently found myself reflecting on the incredible journey we have shared, and I am deeply proud of what we have accomplished together.

Under our shared commitment

to excellence, we have achieved significant milestones, including:

Building an exceptional team: We have assembled an incredible group of passionate caregivers whose dedication to patient-centered care is the foundation of our success. Every employee plays a crucial role.

State-of-the-art facility: We completed the construction of a modern hospital and clinic, with another new clinic on the horizon for next summer. These buildings were designed to meet the evolving needs of our patients and community.

Advanced technology and equipment: We invested in cutting-edge medical technology and modernized equipment to ensure the highest standards of care and safety.

Quality recognition and community impact: We earned prestigious accreditations and strengthened partnerships that have improved health outcomes across the region.

These accomplishments reflect not only the dedication of our exceptional team but also the trust and collaboration of valued supporters like you.

While I will be retiring from my role effective January 2, 2026, I am confident UMC is well-positioned for continued success under the guidance of our leadership team. The mission to provide compassionate, high-quality care remains unwavering, and I look forward to watching the organization continue to grow and expand services.

Thank you for walking this path with me. I will always cherish the relationships and memories we have built. It has been an incredible honor to work alongside you in service to the community.

Finally, I'd also like to thank my incredibly supportive wife and our three children. Our health care journey has taken us to Alaska for a dozen years and back to North Dakota.

My parents, who were both from this region, were from "The Greatest Generation," and they taught me the most important lessons in life, including "be kind and take care of people."

With deepest gratitude and warm regards,

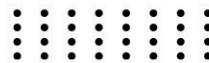
Alan O'Neil
Chief Executive Officer
Unity Medical Center

ALLERGY TESTING DIAGNOSTICS & TREATMENT

Grafton Family Clinic offers **PENICILLIN**, **ENVIRONMENTAL** and **FOOD** panel testing for ages 6 months and up.

Allergen immunotherapy effectively treats animal dander & feathers, insects & dust mites, molds, grasses, plants, trees and weeds.

Call **701-352-2000** to schedule a consultation.



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Harvest Auction: Continued from page 1

The highest number of bids went toward the Devils Lake Guided Fishing donated by Dr. Jennifer Shaw and her husband Andy Moquist, followed by the Car Battery Booster donated by Mark and Mia Presteng.

UMC CEO Alan O'Neil detailed the new Park River Family Clinic construction project currently underway. The concrete foundation has been poured, allowing for construction to continue this winter. He also reflected on his 11 years spent at UMC, as he will officially retire Jan. 2, 2026.



Kayla Thompson keeps an eye on the Last One Standing wheel during the second round.

Resource Auction's David Gorder returned as auctioneer, and he ran through the 21 live auction items that raised just over \$37,000 total. The live auction ended with two now-traditional necktie auctions that raised a total of \$750, thanks to Wally DeSautel and Kari Novak. DJ Brett Om-dahl provided just the right songs tailored to each auction item.



Molly Sobolik and Jeff Williams show no hard feelings after the first round of Last One Standing.

Cash prizes were awarded to Barb Sobolik, Dr. Mike Bittles, Jenny Holand, Mike Kilmer and Tim Dvorak. Jeff Williams edged Molly Sobolik in the first round of Last One Standing, while Kayla Thompson won the second round.

The hat auction returned for a second year, which auctions off five men's winter hats and five women's winter hats. The winners of the men's hat auction then entered a drawing for a new Scotty Cameron putter, and Mayra Ramirez won that prize. The winners of women's hat auction entered a drawing for a Thermea Spa Package for two, and Tim Dvorak won that prize.

Unity Medical Center breaks ground on new Park River Family Clinic

Unity Medical Center has officially broken ground on a new construction project that will bring expanded health care access to the Park River community. The new 3,800-square-foot facility, located just off Highway 17 next to Dollar General, will soon become the new home of Park River Family Clinic, with doors expected to open in the summer of 2026.

The current clinic sees over 3,000 patient encounters annually. About half of the encounters are not surprisingly from patients in the Park River and Grafton communities. The next largest groups of patients come from Hoople, Edinburg and Fordville, and even as far as Fargo and Grand Forks.

The new clinic's design—envisioned by Clinic Manager Kari Novak and brought to life by the Leon's Build-

ing Center Inc.—emphasizes patient comfort, efficiency and privacy. The building will feature six exam rooms and a layout designed to ensure a welcoming, modern environment for patients and staff alike.

"Dr. Kristi Midgarden has been a mainstay within the Park River community for more than 18 years," said Mark Bertilrud, chief operating officer at Unity Medical Center. "We want her and Kristin Stabo's patients to have a clinic space that reflects the same level of quality and care seen in our recent Grafton upgrades. Every step of this project is centered around enhancing the patient experience."

The new Park River Family Clinic represents Unity Medical Center's ongoing investment in local health care and its commitment to serving the region with compassionate, high-quality care close to home.



As I write this just before the Thanksgiving holiday, we are still closing out the annual Harvest Auction campaign, which was a wonderful success as you may have read on Pages 1 and 3. Although it was short of our goal inspired by our record-breaking 2024 results, we still raised an impactful amount similar to our auctions in 2022 and 2023.



And when we think about it, the economy, political climate and all the other things that indirectly affect philanthropy are quite different than they were a year ago! We con-

tinue to feel blessed by your support in any amount.

Of course, after each Harvest Auction, we continue working to make sure that all of the auction items and certificates get to their new homes, that all of our paperwork is correct, that our thank yous go out and that the donations process correctly. It continues on for a few weeks after the actual event, as anyone familiar with event planning can imagine.

I enjoy visiting with donors as they come in to pick up their items or “pay their tabs,” so to speak. Some round up their totals and make an additional cash gift. Others share fun stories from their relative perspectives that night.

One thing that we sometimes hear from auction item donors is that they wished their items raised more for UMC. Understandably, they hope that their item sparks a bidding war and goes for twice what it’s worth. But in reality, when you look at auction statistics nationwide, that rarely happens. According to ClickBid, which facilitates over 2,400 events annually (primarily auctions), mobile or electronic bidding typically generates over 80 percent of total fair market value on average (traditional paper auctions generate about 50 percent). So how did we do in comparison? Our silent and live auctions had a combined total of \$60,000 FMV and raised \$54,771. So we generated 90 percent of our FMV, and we feel good knowing that our auction is more successful than the national average. Our donors should too!

In reflecting on this year’s Harvest Auction myself, I learned a valuable lesson: Don’t drink from your water glass at the same time two donors—Bill and Jody Tibert, and Dr. Mike and Pattie Bittles—enter their matching and very generous reverse auction bids. I almost spit it out, and they were sitting right in front of me!

The end of the calendar year is a busy time for our office with Giving Tuesday, the Tree of Lights Community Remembrance Service, the UMC Staff Giving Program and the year-end direct mail appeal, which this year focuses on the Park River Family Clinic project (see Page 3).

At the end of this year, we are also celebrating the legacy of UMC CEO Alan O’Neil before he officially retires Jan. 2, 2026. Be sure to check out his last column for this newsletter on Page 2 if you haven’t already. I will always be grateful to Alan for recruiting me to this position at UMC. Alan is a great recruiter (and DJ) and what he has built at UMC in both facilities and workforce has been amazing!

Jessica Sobolik
Executive Director
Unity Medical Center Foundation

Save
the
Date!



**GIVING
HEARTS
DAY**

Interested in being a matching gift donor to encourage others to participate?
Contact us before Jan. 26.

GivingHeartsDay.org
#givingheartsday

Open House

February 12, 2025
8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.

Unity Medical Center Foundation
147 W 13th St, Grafton

Visit with UMC staff about the LUCAS automated AED device purchased with last year’s proceeds.

Refreshments will be served.

Provider Spotlight: Jaime Osmanski

Unity Medical Center is excited to welcome Jaime Osmanski as its new Director of Pharmacy. Jaime brings a passion for patient safety and experience, values that align with Unity's mission. After hearing from colleagues like Kara Price about how Unity prioritizes both patient care and employee family life, Jaime knew this was the right place to make a difference.

When the opportunity arose to expand UMC's Pharmacy Department, Jaime worked closely with administration to explore options, and now a few months in, she's grateful for the chance to join the team and help UMC grow.

Jaime grew up in Hillsboro, N.D., where her passion for pharmacy began during her senior year of high school. Through a class that allowed her to work at her hometown drug store, she witnessed firsthand the pharmacist's ability to manage hundreds of medications while offering



personalized recommendations and guidance to patients. His confidence and compassion left a lasting impression on Jaime and inspired her to pursue a career in pharmacy.

Her older brother, who was in pharmacy school at the time, served as one of her closest role models

and further encouraged her interest in the profession. Motivated by these experiences, Jaime went on to study pharmacy at North Dakota State University, where she built the foundation for her career dedicated to patient care and pharmaceutical expertise.

"Pharmacy has given me the chance to collaborate with an incredible medical team, deepen my understanding of health care and keep learning as medicine evolves," Jaime said. "It's a career that's both gratifying and versatile—and I love being the go-to 'pharmacist friend' for those everyday questions."

Jaime lives in Grand Forks with her husband Chad, their 7-year-old son and soon-to-be 3-year-old daughter. She loves traveling, hiking, gardening, playing games and spending time outdoors. Always eager to learn new things, Jaime is also proud to be an expert lefse maker.

Provider Spotlight: Sarah Janikowski

Unity Medical Center recently added Sarah Janikowski, speech-language pathologist (SLP), to the Unity Medical Center team.

A proud Grafton native and Grafton High School graduate, Sarah began her college path at North Dakota State University before transferring to the University of North Dakota, where she earned her bachelor's degree in 2023 and recently completed her master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology this past May. This has been a big year for her outside of school too: She graduated, started a new job, bought a house and got married.

During her undergraduate years, Sarah wasn't yet sure what career she wanted to pursue, but she knew she wanted to make a meaningful impact. After shadowing an SLP and seeing the wide range of people the profession serves, she knew she had found the right fit. Supporting individuals in one of the most essential parts of life—communication and

connection—is what drew her to the field.

Her favorite part of being an SLP is building strong relationships with clients and becoming a steady source of support as they work toward their goals. Whether helping a child find their voice or celebrating an adult's progress, she loves being part of each person's journey. She also values the chance to support families, caregivers and everyone involved in the therapeutic process. The wide scope of the field keeps her continually learning and growing.

Sarah chose UMC after completing her Spring 2025 student placement here. She loved the opportunity to serve a diverse patient population—pediatrics, geriatrics and inpatient care—while continuing to expand her skills. Most of all, she was drawn to the chance to care for the community she grew up in. "Unity feels like another family," she shared. "It's warm, welcoming, and it means so much to give back to Grafton."



Outside of work, Sarah enjoys curling, golfing, baking, spending time with family and friends, and being outdoors with her husband and their dog Cooper. She and her husband are also in the process of growing a hobby farm, currently home to chickens, guinea hens, three cats and one dog—with more additions on the way.

UMC Pediatric Therapy Department expands

The Pediatric Therapy Department is excited to announce its recent expansion into four new spaces across the hall from the pediatric gym space, creating a dedicated Pediatric Therapy "wing." The new area features an office, a quieter and more private waiting room for families and children, and two additional treatment rooms.

The growing team now includes two occupational therapists, two occupational therapist assistants, two speech language pathologists, one physical therapist,

and one physical therapist assistant. Together, they currently serve 55 children across multiple disciplines, with many receiving care in more than one area. Families travel from a variety of communities throughout our rural region to receive these services.

These therapists remain committed to professional growth, consistently pursuing continuing education to expand the high-quality services offered to the children and families UMC serves.



O'Neil celebrates retirement after 11 years of service



UMC CEO Alan O'Neil celebrated his retirement in early December after 12 years of service in Grafton. Read his farewell column on Page 2.

UMC Veteran wall home to 250 photos



Unity Medical Center hosted a Veterans Wall 1st Anniversary Social on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. The wall is currently home to just over 250 photos of area veterans.

UMC Auxiliary donates \$1,000



The UMC Auxiliary recently donated \$1,000 to the UMC Pediatric Therapy Department for new art in the waiting room and treatment rooms. See story above for more information.

First United Bank commits pledge to Pharmacy Department project

Separate from the Harvest Auction, just before it took place Nov. 14, First United Bank in Grafton made a \$25,000 pledge toward Unity Medical Center's renovation of its Pharmacy Department.

"First United Bank is committed to strengthening the communities that we serve," said Regional President Matt Beneda. "Supporting the pharmacy renovation is our way of helping community members have access to modern and dependable health care. We were proud to partner with Unity Medical Center on this important project."

The Pharmacy Department is currently located in the old St. Joseph's Hospital surgical and delivery area. Three staff offices are scattered throughout. The medication storage room is full, and additional space is limited. The renovation aims to configure offices in a way that makes communication and collaboration easier, and move an IV mixing room from down the hall to within the department.

"Supplies are tucked here, there, anywhere we have a spare shelf or closet," said Pharmacy Director Jaime Osmanski (read more about her on Page 5).

Pharmacy staff are hoping that a more efficient workspace would free up time to offer additional services to patients. Pharmacists currently reconcile medications for



hospital patients, make sure that automated medication dispensers are stocked and spend timing ensuring that medication mixing areas meet strict standards, among many other things. They hope to expand services to clinic patients down the road.

A video was produced for the Harvest Auction that shows the current department and explains the renovation project further. Click the adjacent QR code to watch.



O'Neil receives North Dakota 2025 Community Star Award



Left to right: Nicole Threadgold and Jody Ward of the Center for Rural Health presented UMC CEO Alan O'Neil with the North Dakota 2025 Community Star award on National Rural Health Day, Nov. 20.

UMCF Purchases NuStep recumbent bike



Physical Therapy Assistant Makenzie Paulson showcases a new NuStep recumbent bike that was recently purchased for the Rehab Department with funds from the UMC Foundation Patient Endowment Fund. Department Director Lon Kratochvil said many patients prefer this equipment to walking on a treadmill.

Memorials and Thank You To Donors (September 3-December 2, 2025)

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.

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Grafton Drug
Greg Young

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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