

Mercy Health Foundation



Winter 2017
ANNUAL GIVING &
DONOR APPRECIATION EDITION

Standing on a Strong Foundation

by *Richard Miller*
Chairman of the Board,
Mercy Health Foundation

An “Eppich” Story: Sister Pauline’s great nephew leaves a bequest to Mercy

by *Guy Walton*
Retired nurse and co-author of
The History of Mercy Hospital
of the San Juans

Mercy Hospice House: Going Home & a Celebration of Life

by *Indiana Reed*
Durango Writer / Marketing
Consultant

A Year of Events: Memories from an eight-year participant of Journey of Hope 5K

by *Evan Roth*
Animas High School Student



The Heart of Mercy: A Word from Dr. Eugenia Miller & Dr. Susie Kim *Mercy Cardiologists*

Standing on a Strong Foundation

Greetings. Over 20 years ago, I went through the Hospice of Mercy volunteer training and bereavement program that would qualify me to be a hospice volunteer. After some time at being a direct care volunteer in Pagosa Springs, I was asked to be on the Hospice Committee for Mercy. I have been honored to be present at many a person's last moments on Earth. I have shared in their fears, uncertainty, hopes, regrets, dreams and love of life as they "braved a new world."

Through the years and progress of Hospice of Mercy and Mercy Regional Medical Center, I became involved in volunteering for various Mercy Health Foundation (MHF) endeavors and began to understand the scope of what MHF has done and continues daily to do for our region.

I am still here after all of these years volunteering in a different capacity and with a more profound knowledge of just what Mercy Health Foundation has provided for our communities.

The Foundation's latest achievement opened in October 2017 - the \$5.6 million Mercy Hospice House. Twenty years ago as a hospice volunteer, I would not have guessed I'd be in my current position celebrating the opening of a much-needed residence.

As I think back, I am struck by the range and number of not just specific capital campaigns for patient advancements, but the daily ongoing programs the Foundation provides for and directs. Programs such as Halos for Heroes, Gray Matters, Tanzania Mission, Mercy Project (assisting patients with costs of services), along with many lifesaving equipment needs such as the recently purchased 3-D mammography machine and cath lab upgrade.

Our yearly signature events, **Soup for The Soul** for hospice and **Journey of Hope 5K** for free mammograms for women in our community, have become "must attend" events for hundreds of community members. The events we participate in and are financial recipients of are Durango area institutions. Who could miss the **Durango Classic Car Show** or the nationally recognized **Iron Horse Bicycle Classic**?

Supporting Mercy Regional Medical Center in meeting the needs of a dynamic, challenging healthcare landscape is what Mercy Health Foundation does best. What MHF knows is that none of these programs or projects would exist if not for your generosity!

Thank you for being part of something great by your continuous support.



Richard Miller
Mercy Health Foundation Chairman of the Board

MERCY HEALTH FOUNDATION

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Standing left to right: Lauri Wilson-Lacy, Steve Swisher, Judy Roelofs, Dick Pearson, Richard Miller, Will McConnell, Jerry Martinez, Virginia Miller-Cavanagh, Karen Midkiff
Seated left to right: Miss Jane Fogleman, Megan Aus, Joy Hess. Missing from photo: Marjie Wilson, Kay Jones

Programs and Services at Mercy



Since Dr. Mark Stern started the program in 2010, your gifts for Gray Matters have supported



Amy Haggart, GM Coordinator

Mercy Regional Medical Center Trauma Services is committed to injury prevention, education and providing a helmet to any child or family member in need of one. The goal is to reduce the number of traumatic brain injuries in our community.

The project also includes providing a new helmet to any patient admitted to Mercy or Mercy Emergency Department that was involved in an event that would have benefited from a helmet or damage has occurred to their helmet. The lasting value to local families is immeasurable. Lives are being saved!



Dr. Mark Stern

\$49,111 in helmets and educational materials to our community. Mercy has distributed over 3,035 helmets to kids in need who do not have resources to buy their own. \$13,928 worth of educational materials has been distributed at Gray Matters events where presentations were directly given to 3500 children.



In March of 2017, Mercy Health Foundation in partnership with Dr. Stern launched an internal online campaign to fellow physicians, all clinical and non-clinical staff to raise money for helmets. Many community members contributed as well. The goal was to raise enough money for 450 helmets at \$25 each. We surpassed that goal raising \$18,790 to buy 752 helmets. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

To continue providing support for the Gray Matters program, please visit www.mhffnd.org or call 970-764-2802 for more information.

Halos for Heroes

Halos for Heroes provides an opportunity for a patient or family member to make a gift in honor of Mercy Regional Medical Center staff member(s) who treated you or a loved one with outstanding care. This grateful patient program acknowledges those who exemplify the Mercy ideals of compassion, respect, integrity, spirituality, stewardship, imagination and excellence. Congratulations to our current Mercy Heroes.

To honor a Mercy caregiver, please visit www.mhffnd.org or call 970-764-2802 for more information.



JOURNEY of HOPE

5K FAMILY RUN/WALK
October 14, 2017

My Relationship to the Journey of Hope 5K Walk/Run by Evan Roth

of Hope Fund. The Journey of Hope event raises money to provide free mammograms for women in this area who could not otherwise afford one.

My mom, Kim, and I began walking in the Journey of Hope (JOH) 5K in 2009 and it has become a yearly tradition for us. At the beginning of this journey, I knew supporting breast cancer awareness was important to my mom because it has taken her aunt and her mother, and because it's so important to her, it has become important to me especially now that the disease has affected my dad's side of the family too, taking his grandma and affecting his mom, who is now a survivor.

Over the last few years, I have gained a stronger understanding of Mercy Health Foundation's Journey



Evan
9 yrs old
2009



Evan
17 yrs old
2017

I'm proud to wear pink and do something around JOH and breast cancer awareness. Every October, I encourage others to wear pink throughout the month with me. Over the years, to promote awareness, I've passed out pink carnations to my teachers, given away bags of pink M&M's and donuts with pink ribbon sprinkles in my elementary school years. In middle school, I started making and giving away pink ribbon para-cord bracelets.

Now, in my junior year at Animas High School, I reward anyone who takes on my pink challenge by giving them a para-cord bracelet if they wear pink on Fridays. To honor my mother, the memory of the women in my family who I've lost to breast cancer, and all families, I'm starting and sustaining new traditions to spread awareness in my community.

For the first time since 2009, I was not able to partake in JOH this year due to a wedding I was at, but I was there in spirit and had my pink on for the day and sported it to the wedding. I had many friends from school I encouraged to be at the Journey of Hope.

To make a contribution to the JOH Fund, please call 970-764-2800 or visit www.mhffnd.org



...more on events!

SOUP FOR THE SOUL: MARCH 14, 2018 | PURCHASE TICKETS AT www.DurangoConcerts.com



SOUP FOR THE SOUL - Proceeds for Hospice and Mercy Hospice House

Providing nourishment for both the body and the soul, Soup for the Soul gives guests an opportunity to taste soups, appetizers and desserts from some of the area's finest restaurants while at the same time giving the community the gratifying feeling that they have helped so many in need of hospice care.



Thank You

Durango Classic Car Show

Proceeds for
Mercy Hospice House

June 2017



Thank You

**Animas Valley
Concours D`Elegance**

Proceeds benefitted
Mercy Hospice House

September 2017



Thank You

Iron Horse Bicycle Classic

A portion of the proceeds
benefitted the
Mercy Hospice House

May 2017



Thank You

**Iron Horse Hog Chapter
Toy Run**

Annual Harley-Davidson
ride helped pediatric
Mercy patients.

November 2016



SUBARU SHARE THE LOVE PROGRAM SPONSORED BY MOREHART MURPHY

Blanket and arts and crafts kits for children from the Leukemia Lymphoma Society Rocky Mtn Chapter are given to Mercy Cancer Center patients - August 2017

An "Eppich" Story

by Guy Walton

Tom Eppich is a successful rancher in Montana (north of Billings) but was raised on the family ranch in Thompson Park, between Hesperus and Mancos. Tom's great grandparents, John and Anna Sponsel, homesteaded the area. John and Anna had 13 children. One child, Sister Pauline (Margaret Sponsel), became one of the sisters that loyally served Mercy for years. **Sister Pauline was Tom's great aunt, which prompted this rancher from Montana to make a bequest to Mercy Health Foundation in honor of his family.** He is very proud of his Sponsel lineage, and wants to keep the legacy of John and Anna alive. Sr. Pauline struck him as one of the happiest people he knew. He also was well aware of her commitment to Mercy and the surrounding community. The legacy lives on.

Sister Pauline Sponsel: A Life of Service

Margaret Sponsel was a farm girl at the turn of the last century. The fifth child of what would eventually become 13 children, Margaret was born June 22, 1894. Her parents were Bavarian immigrants homesteading 20 miles west of Durango in Thompson Park. Margaret entered the Sisters of Mercy Community in 1914 and became Sister Mary Pauline Sponsel.

Her parents, John and Anna Sponsel, spoke no English when they came to America, but John's brother, George, was already here. The young couple eloped to Durango

and were married at St. Columba Catholic Church in 1887. According to daughters Josephine and Cecelia Sponsel, in *Pioneers of the San Juan Country* (Sarah Platt Decker Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution), the immigrants were escaping an arranged marriage between Anna and a much older man.

The Sponsels worked hard and so did their children. In 1908, the family bought a home on West Second Avenue in Durango, and there was at least one Sponsel child in St. Columba School for the next 15 years. When school let out the children returned to help on the farm. The family was strongly

committed to education, and it was 38 years "from the time the oldest son entered grammar school until the youngest daughter graduated from the University of Colorado."

While she was a novice and student nurse, the Great Influenza of 1918-19 (also called the Spanish Flu) took the lives of three siblings. One of them was a brother still in military training during World War I. After her novitiate, Sr. Pauline attended the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in both Denver and Durango. She spent most of her nursing career in her home town. She also did stints in Denver, Manitou Springs, Cripple Creek, Omaha (Nebraska) and Joplin (Missouri). She eventually attained



Tom Eppich

her bachelor's degree at St. Teresa's College in Winona, Minnesota. In addition to her nursing education, the nun became a registered laboratory technician. Although she worked in various hospital settings, surgery is where her heart was. In 1938, she learned to deliver anesthesia (mostly ether) and two years later was the surgery and anesthesia supervisor at Mercy.



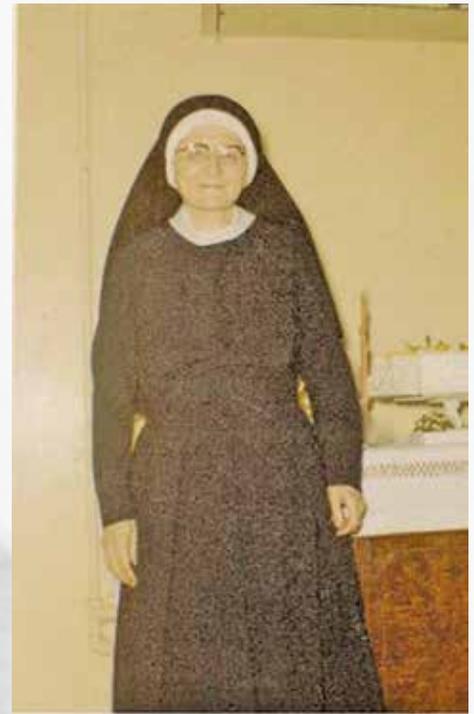
Hospital work was truly manual labor when she started nursing. With no portable medical equipment, patients were transported from one part of the hospital to another. The dumbwaiter and elevator were with ropes and pulleys, often operated by the sisters. Ice was delivered to the hospital in 50-pound blocks, and broken apart with icepicks to make ice compresses. Nurses did all the housekeeping and cooking for patients. Nuns working in the hospital had at least two sets of habits. White robes were used in the hospital; the black robes were for all other activities.

Joan McCaw was a student nurse (Joan Pedwell) in the 1940s, and fondly remembers Sr. Pauline visiting patients in the afternoon after a morning in surgery. Joan's family lived out of town, so she boarded at St. Rita's, the dormitory for nursing students. The nuns lived on the floor

above the hospital but had duties on all parts of the campus. In addition to fruit trees, the sisters had a large garden and chicken house in a fenced yard. Sr. Pauline had charge of the chickens.

One afternoon [I was] trying to sleep, as I worked night shift. You had to have so many hours of nights to complete training. Sr. Pauline was given a pair of geese by Dr. Rasor. They were supposed to be used for food, but Sister couldn't butcher them. As the girls were trying to sleep, Sr. Pauline was walking and grazing her geese. She would talk to them saying, "Here goosey, goosey, goosey. Pretty goosey."

Sr. Pauline died in 1982, after a life of service to others for more than six decades. In her eulogy, Sr. Norita Cooney said, "We thank you for your gift of humor and love of nature, which brought lightheartedness and beauty into our midst. We know you to be a strong and determined woman. We also experienced you as gentle and fun-loving."



Sister Pauline Sponsel

Guy Walton is a retired nurse and co-author, with Barbara Moorehead, of the history, *Mercy Hospital of the San Juans*.



Sister Pauline reading with the geese

LEAVE A LEGACY...INCLUDE MHF IN YOUR WILL OR TRUST

To learn more about including Mercy Health Foundation in your will and being part of shaping the future of health care for family, friends, neighbors and all patients in need of care at Mercy, please call Karen Midkiff or Joy Hess @ 970-764-2800

Going HOME

by Indiana Reed

I'm blessed. I haven't had to call on Hospice of Mercy's services, but I've known many who have. The in-home care provided by this wonderful organization defies my wordsmith's words. And now I've watched Mercy Health Foundation, working with Mercy Regional Medical Center and Hospice of Mercy, take end-of-life care to a next level with Mercy Hospice House.

Typical of Durango and surrounding La Plata County, the community has made something happen that is unmatched nearly anywhere - and certainly completely unmatched in communities of our size. Mercy Hospice House, as one construction worker on the project observed, is God's Waiting Room.

This past fall, the community was invited to view what "they" (the community) built - the 11,000 square foot hospice facility. Through MHF's Hospice of Mercy Experience (HOME) campaign, the community raised \$5.6 million recognizing the need for dignity of care at the final transition of life. The resulting residence is a place of warmth, not grief; a place that understands the end-of-life needs of patients and families; and provides a place where patients and families, respectively, can feel unburdening and unburdened.

Indeed, terms such as "compassionate caring" and

"catering to" could describe part of the inherent core missions of the Mercy Hospice House's staff for both patients and families - and they always understand that the meaning of the terms are unique to each family.

Mercy Hospice House is the last home of its guests, but it is far from a clinical environment. Though it is a state-of-the-art hospice facility, and features the finest of the traditional aspects of a hospital, those traditional features don't "feel" the same as some might assume are found in a hospital. Instead of one long hallway, Mercy Hospice House's footprint is essentially circular, a nod to the circle of life, with staggered doors to patient rooms lending a sense of privacy for patients and families.

The eight patient rooms are tastefully appointed, and, in addition to the generous hospice beds, feature comfortable day beds, allowing family members to essentially "move in" to Mercy Hospice House to spend final days, or hours with loved ones. Each patient room also has its own private veranda, another feature that helps remind of the peace in the natural order, and that all that God touches is perfect in its own way.

Mercy Hospice House's interior colors are muted, natural tones - again speaking to the peace found in nature. Visiting families can find respite in the living room, meditation areas and library. While food service is provided, small kitchens are also available for families to prepare personal meals.

Original artwork is tastefully placed throughout, and in some ways, the entrance, sheltered beneath a stunning portico, lends a sense of entering a luxury hotel, a step closer to the gates of Heaven.

The community had its first look at the Mercy Hospice House on Sept. 29th, during a special reception held on the Mercy Regional Medical Center campus. The afternoon had offered a taste of Mother Nature's wrath throughout the region with thunderstorms, lightning and hail that accumulated like mid-winter snowdrifts. And the event was scheduled for out-of-doors.

Interestingly—and one might say miraculously—not a drop of rain or pellet of hail fell at Mercy's Three Springs campus, though the storm swirled around the mesa. Reverently, community members, as well as Mercy Hospice House staff and clergy, couldn't help but feel they must doing something right with Mercy Hospice House, and that a Higher Power approved of the new facility.

The ceremonies featured a blessing from Fr. Kevin Novack of St. Columba, who also opened the symbolic door used at the groundbreaking on April 21, 2016. Hospital and Foundation guests were treated to Mercy's fine cuisine, as well as a powerful rendition of "The Prayer," from soloist Gemma Kavanagh. The event was a true celebration of the six years of research, design, planning and special fundraising events that brought together enough dollars to make the hospice home a reality.

The building is now open and serving our community members. But Mercy Hospice House does need to be maintained as a living, breathing entity tomorrow and into the future.

The eternal flame reminds us all, Mercy Hospice House is God's Waiting Room.

To give to the hospice program or the Mercy Hospice Home, please call 970-764-2802 or visit www.mhffnd.org

Celebrating Life



Fr.
Kevin
Novack



Dr. Steven Bush
and Mercy CEO,
Will McConnell



Bob Griffith, Jane Pearson,
Jayne Griffith, & friend



Peter & Jodye Glick,
Lawrence Althouse,
and Katherine Freiberger



MHF board chair, Richard Miller

Will McConnell & Family



Gemma Kavanagh

PLEASE HAVE A HEART

Annual Giving Opportunity – Make your donation

Can you remember when you heard the beat of a child's heart for the first time? You probably listened to it repeat itself over and over. The magic of experiencing something so special early in life is unforgettable. Then we go about life just taking for granted that a heartbeat will continue. There is much more to this phenomenon of nature. Your generosity at Mercy continues to echo for years and years and is felt by every patient who benefits from the service



*M*y name is Dr. Eugenia Miller. I am thankful for having had the opportunity to spend the last 22 years practicing cardiology at Mercy Regional Medical Center. Caring for patients in Durango and the surrounding areas has been a very rewarding experience for me. I retired on November 2nd of this year and look forward to having more free time to bicycle and ski, but also to do some volunteer work including medical missions abroad.

I have been honored to work with a very strong cardiology team at Mercy, with Drs. Fraley, Kim, and Torres who have been with our group for several years, and our new colleague, Dr. Palusinski. We have been able to deliver high quality cardiology care in part because of the strength of our whole Mercy team. Critical care services, led by our intensive care doctors, are excellent. General medical care led by our hospitalists, is excellent. We have a variety of strong specialist physicians in many fields who greatly enhance care here.

I leave my patients who I have cared for from all life ages - the elderly to young parents of very young children - in expert hands. My patients could not have received the care they did at Mercy and go on to live a healthy, active life without the cardiologists and the state-of-the-art services that we have in cardiology and intensive care.

We now have some critical needs in cardiology. Our equipment in the catheterization laboratory needs to be upgraded. We do not have equipment to perform certain advanced heart rhythm services known as ablations, but we will have a cardiologist who can perform certain ablation procedures join Mercy Cardiology Associates in January of 2018. I am pleased that Mercy Health Foundation has agreed to partner with our cardiology group to update our equipment so that we may further enhance our services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dr. Eugenia Miller

*Please make your
heart gift today!*

Tax Benefits!

Mercy Health Foundation qualifies for Enterprise Zone State Tax Credit of 25% for cash donations of \$250 or more. Donations may also be eligible for federal charitable donation tax deductions.

Please consult with your financial adviser for more information.

GIVE A GIFT TODAY

with the enclosed envelope or visit www.mhffnd.org

Mercy's cardiology team provides to us. We hope our gratitude echoes in your heart for your lifetime. Without you, Mercy Regional Medical Center could not provide the level of medical care and medical services that are available in our area. You are a vital part of this heartbeat of life as Dr. Eugenia Miller and Dr. Susie Kim attest.



*H*ello, my name is Susie Kim, and I'm one of the cardiologists at Mercy Regional Medical Center. In the space of a month, I will celebrate my four-year anniversary with Mercy, and I will have celebrated the end of Dr. Eugenia Miller's 22-year tenure. We both have seen incredible changes in the practice of medicine here at Mercy over both our professional careers.

Dr. Miller was there to experience the hospital's move from the downtown area. It wasn't long ago, if you had a heart attack you were flown to Denver or Albuquerque for care. Now, Mercy Regional Medical Center performs hundreds of life-saving cardiac procedures.

In my short time here, I have seen the hospital grow both in size with new outpatient offices, as well as specialty services Mercy provides. This growth is to help better serve our ever-growing resident population, as well as visitors that come to enjoy the beautiful environment and outdoor life unique to this area.

As I settle into the community and become a resident, I am impressed by the strong focus the residents have on keeping this area active and vibrant. This drive to keep our area an ideal place to live and the best place for our family and friends to visit overflows in our need to keep our health care practice just as vibrant as our community.

It is with that support of this community that we are able to maintain our goal of growing and offering services that our community needs. In the past, MHF has been able to raise funds for building a state-of-the-art hospital, Breast Care Center and Hospice Residence in order to keep healthcare local and of the highest quality.

It is our hope that we can raise funds again to help to increase the types of services that our community needs for our Heart and Vascular Program. We want to continue to be a place that you feel confident in receiving the best care possible when you need it.

Please help grow our heart program by giving a gift today. Your annual donation to Mercy Health Foundation allows Mercy to continue providing excellent, quality healthcare for the residents of Southwest Colorado. Our mission continues to be simple:

We save lives * We impact lives * We have a healthier community every day

We respectfully request your consideration of a gift again this year for Mercy's Cardiac Equipment Upgrades and Advancements. Please see the enclosed envelope to make your gift.

With Enormous Gratitude,

Susie Kim

Dr. Susie Kim

*Thank you for
making your gift today!*

Mercy Health Foundation is a nonprofit organization which supports patients and families in need of care at Mercy Regional Medical Center. The foundation supports the hospital's mission to enhance the health of the individuals and communities it serves through promotion and distribution of philanthropic gifts.

Mercy Health Foundation respects your privacy. If you prefer not to receive any further communications from us, please email us at chihipaaoptout@centura.org or call 970.764.2800. Please understand it may take up to thirty days to process your request.

Mercy Health Foundation



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The Heart of Southwest Colorado

Thank you for supporting Mercy Health Foundation for our Heart and Vascular Program.

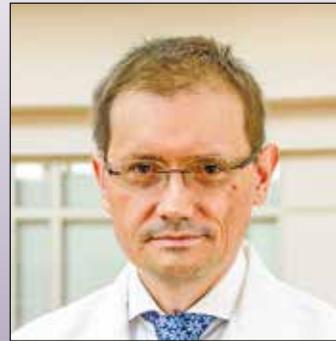
Please give your end-of-year gift today!



Alexander Fraley, MD, FACC
Cardiovascular Disease,
Interventional Cardiology,
Nuclear Cardiology,
Vascular Medicine



Susie Kim, MD, FACC
Cardiovascular Disease,
Interventional Cardiology



Robert Palusinski, MD
Cardiovascular Disease,
Nuclear Cardiology



Frank Torres, MD, FACC
Cardiovascular Disease,
Interventional Cardiology

Chad Bidart, MD, FACC
Cardiovascular Disease,
Electrophysiology,

Dr. Bidart is the newest member of the Mercy Cardiology Associates team (arriving in January 2018).



Sunil Nath, MD
Cardiovascular Disease,
Electrophysiology.
Based out of Colorado Springs, Dr. Nath has been providing patients in Southwest Colorado with their electrophysiology care since 2013.



Natalie Hilsenbeck, FNP-C

Mercy Cardiology Associates

1010 Three Springs Blvd., Suite 130

Durango, CO 81301

970.764.2600



Sheena Carswell, RN-CNS