



Taking Care: Creative Solutions to Health Care Challenges in Minnesota

HEALTH CARE: THIS ISSUE HAS RISEN TO THE FOREFRONT OF OUR LIVES IN MANY WAYS IN RECENT YEARS. THIS TREND IS REFLECTED IN THE FIELD OF PHILANTHROPY, AS OUR DONORS HAVE INVESTED IN THIS GROWING AREA OF CONCERN. FROM NEW CARE FACILITIES TO RESEARCH TO SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS, A WHOLE SPECTRUM OF HEALTH CARE NEEDS HAVE BEEN FULFILLED THANKS TO THEIR GENEROSITY.

Nature's Healing Powers

A little piece of Alexandria has recently gotten even more beautiful—and is providing a welcome respite for some of its residents. Thanks in part to a grant from Alexandria Area Community Foundation, a Community Fund of Minnesota Community Foundation, the Knute Nelson Foundation has added healing gardens to its rehabilitation and skilled nursing facility there.

The idea of outdoor healing spaces has been gaining momentum in care facilities around the United States, as studies have shown gardens to have curative effects for people. The American Horticultural Therapy Association states that gardens can lower peoples' blood pressure and stress, increase their attention spans, improve their self-esteem and promote a continuation of lifelong interests.

Centrally located at Knute Nelson, the healing gardens were planned with the residents in mind down to every last detail. Both the entrances to the gardens, as well as the paths throughout, are wide and gently-graded so as to be wheelchair-accessible. There are tables, benches, and a handicapped-accessible swing to promote socialization and encourage people to linger in the outdoors.

The quarter-acre space provides both audio and visual attractions. Visually, the southern-exposed gardens will have some sort of plant or flower in bloom all year. To appeal to the residents' audio senses, there is a water fountain feature, a wind chime and trees that attract birds.

Empowering residents was another major theme in planning the healing gardens. All of the plants in the gardens are labeled to promote self-guided walking tours. In addition, a gardening group is being formed to include residents and members of the surrounding community. "The opportunity to actively garden again," says Knute Nelson's Director of Communications and Development Katie Perry, "gives residents the chance to be in a caregiving role rather than a care receiving role."



Knute Nelson residents Les and Julia Simpson pause to read a historical marker dedicated to Senator Knute Nelson, the man who left a bequest 60 years ago that made this residence a reality.

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Dear Friends



Anyone living in 21st century America would probably agree: health care is a major issue in our country, state and in each of our

lives. We all share concerns about the quality, accessibility and affordability of our health care. How, in this day and age, do we take care of ourselves and each other?

Minnesota Community Foundation partners with a host of individuals, organizations and communities who are working to tackle this challenge. In this issue, we share some wonderful illustrations of their creativity and collaboration.

Health care and other challenges we face as a state are significant and require focus, partnership and a commitment to improving lives. Working in tandem will allow us to enhance our knowledge and expertise to maximize impact on lives and communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carleen K. Rhodes".

Carleen K. Rhodes
President and CEO

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Installing the healing gardens aligns with the organization's focus on developing innovative programs and services that enhance the quality of life for older adults in the area. "Everyone has a special connection with nature," says Katie. "We're trying to foster that and encourage it to happen again for our residents."



Les and Julia Simpson enjoy a sunny day in the healing gardens on a swing specially-equipped for wheelchairs.

Leaving a Legacy for a Healthy Future

Erma Rosen knows the value of health care and the importance it carries in her community. A lifelong resident of Fairmont, she has struggled over the years with health issues and has experienced firsthand the critical need for quality nurses. "I have seen nurses who are trying to juggle school and family," says Erma, "and I wanted to help."

Through the Erma Rosen Fund of Minnesota Community Foundation, a Donor Advised Fund she recently established, Erma knew just what she wanted to do to help solve this problem. She made a gift to the Fairmont Community Hospital Foundation that will help local nursing students pay for their education through the Erma H. Rosen Nursing Scholarship Endowment.

Careful thought was put into the criteria for the scholarship, with the hope that the recipients would be most likely to obtain their education in Fairmont and then stay in the area once they enter the nursing field. For example, the scholarship is for students entering their third year of an accredited nursing program, a point in their education when Erma believed they would be most serious about finishing their degree and entering the profession. Also, first consideration will be given to those attending Presentation College in Fairmont, followed by students attending other schools who will do a clinical rotation at Fairmont Medical Center.

The goal is for Erma's endowment to fund scholarships for at least 25 years. With demand for registered nurses only expected to

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Researching for Better Health

Tobacco use among Hispanic/Latino communities in south-central Minnesota is not an area that has received any serious attention from the health community—until now. “A lot of research has been done in urban areas on this subject,” says Rodolfo Gutierrez, executive director of Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER), “but not as much in rural areas.”

Funds awarded in 2007 by the Herbert C. Anderson Fund of Minnesota Community Foundation—a Field of Interest Fund that includes health care as a focus—helped launch HACER into the first phase of this community-based research. The focus will be on understanding tobacco use and cessation in the Hispanic/Latino population.

Developed with health promoters in the area, the fact that this initiative has come directly out of the community makes the project a unique one, says Rodolfo. “They have come to us saying ‘this is what we want to know’ instead of the other way around,” he says. “It’s very interesting.”

The first phase of research is to identify the scope of the problem in the community. The second phase is to create effective programs for tobacco cessation, utilizing the strengths of the community for positive end results. These cessation programs will be in the Hispanic/Latino community’s own language and will be developed and supervised by community members.


“The ultimate end goal,” says Rodolfo, “is to eradicate tobacco use within the community.”

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increase in coming years, this gift could not have come at a better time. Not only is the baby boom generation requiring an increasing amount of care, but those within its ranks are retiring from the profession of nursing at the same time. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, demand for nurses is expected to increase 27 percent or more through 2014.

Fairmont Community Hospital Foundation Director Darla Nelson-Philipp says that same trend is being reflected in their community, and the goal is for Erma’s scholarship to help fill that gap. “Our hope is that this scholarship will both educate and retain nurses in Fairmont,” says Darla.

Erma understands not only this great need but also the value of education. “Nursing is a program I really admire. I couldn’t be a nurse because my parents were from the Depression era, and I didn’t have a chance for a good education,” she says. “But later in life when I had saved money, I wanted to help someone else pursue their dreams.”

In this first year of her scholarship, 12 area students applied and two were recently granted awards. “Erma’s gift is her legacy to our community,” says Darla, “and it will keep giving in her honor.” 

Editor’s Note:

Our original cover story for this issue of *Perspectives* had been about the new Warroad Senior Living Center, a state-of-the-art health facility being built in that northern community. Deeply committed to making their community an even better place to live, Marvin Windows and Doors Chair and CEO Jake Marvin and his siblings established a fund at Minnesota Community Foundation in late 2005 to achieve that goal. Planning and construction for the new center began shortly thereafter, and residents were slated to move into the new facility in mid-summer 2008. Just as this issue was going to press, however, we received news that the new Warroad Senior Living Center had been destroyed in an overnight fire. Fortunately no lives were lost, but the project will undoubtedly be on hold until plans can be developed for reconstruction. We at Minnesota Community Foundation were very sorry to hear about this unfortunate setback, and we extend our best wishes for rebuilding and know that the strength of the Warroad community will persevere.

Granting Wishes, Strengthening Organizations

For the past seven years, Grant a Wish has helped donors support local nonprofits. Every year donor advisors are given the opportunity to recommend a favorite nonprofit with a specific need that is \$2,500 or less. These wishes are then compiled into an easy-to-share booklet and sent to donor advisors.

For the last few years, the Ferguson family has participated in Grant a Wish. Eldest child Teri (Ferguson) Thompson leads the charge in fulfilling their late father's legacy, and she says she looks forward to receiving the book every year.

"Each year something different speaks to me," Teri says. "I always think: what would my dad like us to do? Something always jumps out."

When she saw in the wish book last year that the Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery needed to replace its main sidewalk, she knew she had found a perfect fit. Protecting women and children in need was one of her father's main concerns. "My dad was a blue collar worker, so he would have wanted to get right in there and make this fix for this organization," she says.

The Grant a Wish books are sent out every year before Thanksgiving. For the Ferguson family, it has become a beloved part of their holidays to share what wishes have been fulfilled that year on behalf of their father.

"The needs can be simple, but what a huge difference fulfilling these wishes can make," says Teri. ✨



grant a wish

Connecting Donors to Special Community Needs

The Foundation congratulates:

- Jack Pohl on his new position as vice president, investments
- Christine Searson on her promotion to vice president, finance

Perspectives

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