

# CONNECTIONS IN CARING



GRIFFIN HOSPITAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND, INC.

## Thank You For Caring!

Dear Friends,

Your generosity inspires all of us at Griffin Health to provide distinctive high-quality patient-centered care. Your support has enabled the acquisition of leading-edge technology in our operating rooms and Center for Cancer Care, breakthrough diagnostic imaging, and advanced laboratory testing. It has also allowed us to offer free healthy living and chronic disease management programs as well as health screenings, and so much more. **You make Griffin's award-winning care possible.** Together we are empowering people and advancing care.

Our quarterly newsletter is published to keep you informed of how Griffin uses the gifts you give to enhance the care we deliver and improve the health and wellbeing of communities we serve.

**Griffin is committed to being your hospital** – compassionate, comprehensive and close to home. Providing you, your loved ones, and our community with exceptional care is our steadfast focus.

As you read this newsletter, we hope you take pride in what we are accomplishing together and feel valued for helping make it possible.

In gratitude,



Patrick Charmel  
President & CEO  
Griffin Health



Kristy Jelenik  
Executive Director  
Griffin Hospital  
Development Fund

## Griffin Health Mission

- To provide personalized, humanistic, consumer-driven healthcare in a healing environment.
- To empower individuals to be actively involved in decisions affecting their care and well-being through access to information and education.
- To provide leadership to improve the health of the community served.

**Your partnership and support means the world to us, and as a nonprofit community hospital, we are resolute in our commitment to exceptional and compassionate care for you.**

# Responding to the Mental Health Crisis

## Griffin's vision to build a first-of-its-kind EmPATH Unit in Connecticut

Griffin Health has embarked on an innovative initiative to address patient care issues caused by the dramatic increase in individuals experiencing serious mental illness leading to an emotional crisis. **Your belief in breakthrough, patient-centered healthcare can help make our pioneering EmPATH plans a reality.**

The COVID-19 pandemic created an exponential demand for behavioral health services, including support for patients in severe emotional crisis. The National Alliance on Mental Illness reported that 41% of adults in Connecticut experienced symptoms of anxiety or depression, and 121,000 adults have a serious mental illness. With access to behavioral health services in short supply across the state, people experiencing a severe emotional crisis are frequently brought to a hospital emergency department (ED) by community crisis centers and police, and well-meaning loved ones. ED teams are only equipped to evaluate and stabilize patients requiring psychiatric crisis care and don't include the behavioral health care professionals and support staff required to initiate therapeutic care. Nor is the ED environment conducive to effective treatment. Currently, patients in emotional crisis initially evaluated and stabilized in the ED often must be hospitalized in Griffin's inpatient Psychiatric Unit to begin treatment of their acute psychiatric illness. If an EmPATH Unit were available, hospitalization in many cases could be avoided.

Over the past three years, Griffin Hospital's ED has seen a 50% increase in mental health crisis patients with approximately one in seven ED patients seeking crisis care. This elevation in anxiety, depression and other behavioral health conditions not only exceeds Griffin's and other hospital's EDs



The EmPATH Unit will have a calming, healing environment. A large, open common space with high ceilings, ambient light and soothing décor will make patients feel more comfortable and less confined. The atmosphere is designed to facilitate stabilization, interpersonal interaction and therapy.

capacity to provide care in a safe environment conducive to stabilization and healing, it also causes delays in patient care overall.

To address this critical need for compassionate and patient-centered crisis care, Griffin Hospital will be the first in the state to offer an Emergency Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment and Healing (EmPATH) Unit. In this calming space, a multidisciplinary team of experts, including psychiatrists, social workers and specially trained nurses work collaboratively to immediately provide personalized care that addresses a spectrum of behavioral health conditions. EmPATH units in the U.S. have been shown to reduce the length of stay for emergency department patients and the instances of crisis patients returning within 30 days of discharge by 25%. Most importantly, research shows that 75% or more of severe crisis emergencies can be stabilized within 24 hours.

**To learn more and discuss ways that you can contribute, contact Executive Director Kristy Jelenik at [kjelenik@griffinhealth.org](mailto:kjelenik@griffinhealth.org) or 203-732-7539.**

# Providing Exceptional Cancer Care for 16 Years and Counting

Thanks to you and all of our generous community members, the Center for Cancer Care at Griffin Hospital has been fulfilling the demand for comprehensive and comforting cancer treatment close to home.

Our community deserved access to the latest cancer treatment protocols, clinical trials, and cancer care experts from the Center's Radiation Oncology and Smilow Cancer Hospital medical oncology specialists. More than a decade later, 5,000+ patients have experienced the Center's unique healing environment, innovative patient-centered programs, life-saving outreach and screening efforts, and advanced technology for personalized and effective cancer treatment.

Your continued support, year after year, helps your neighbors experiencing financial hardships while undergoing treatment through rent assistance food, medication, utilities, and transportation, so they can focus on healing. To learn more, visit [www.griffinhealth.org/cancer](http://www.griffinhealth.org/cancer) or call us at 203-732-1260.

*"When my 38-year-old daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer, we were all devastated. She had a husband and three young children. She was a marathon runner. She always looked the "picture of health." Kathryn wanted to be treated close to home and in a nurturing, holistic environment. She chose the Cancer Center at Griffin because she had had a good experience with the hospital in the past. Her treatment was long and arduous, but the loving care she received together with the serene environment of the center made it possible.*

*While Kathryn was still in chemotherapy, I was also diagnosed with breast cancer. Inspired by her experience, I chose Griffin for my treatment. I had radiation therapy and my experience with the amazing surgical and oncology teams was the same! Six years later, both Kathryn and I are cancer free. Words cannot express our gratitude."*

**- Fiona Hodgson**



Approximately 400 caring and compassionate walkers and runners crossed the finish line at our 16th Annual 5k Walk/Run. Thank you to our incredible community for raising over \$52,000 in support of cancer patients in need!



# How Would You Like to Be Remembered?

Imagine if you could leave a legacy that provides transformative patient care for years to come, and yet costs you nothing during your lifetime. Making a bequest to Griffin Health in your Will is easy to do and has many advantages, including:

- Directing your gift to a specific department or program that is meaningful to you
- Knowing your legacy will benefit the health of *your* community for years to come

If you have already included Griffin in your Will, please let us know so that we can personally thank you and welcome you as a member of the George Griffin Legacy Society. If you have any questions or would like to discuss your options, please contact Executive Director Kristy Jelenik at [kjelenik@griffinhealth.org](mailto:kjelenik@griffinhealth.org) or 203-732-7539.

# Save the Date

Join Us for a Holiday Concert Dec. 10



Griffin Health is celebrating the holiday season with a hand-clapping, foot-stomping, this-couldn't-possibly-be-Naugatuck-Valley concert! Don't miss this traditional and contemporary gospel and holiday music by the Valley Soul community choir on Tues., Dec. 10 at Church of the Good Shepherd, 135 Mountain Road, Seymour. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the concert starts at 6:30 p.m. The event is free and open to all.

# Volunteer Opportunities at Griffin

Volunteers play a vital role in the day-to-day operations of Griffin Hospital, providing assistance and helping to make Griffin Hospital a warm and friendly community hospital.



Here's a sampling of opportunities.

- Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) provides extra support for elderly patients and volunteers are needed for help with mealtime assistance, exercise, therapeutic activities, and more.
- Reiki and Therapeutic Touch Programs provide hands-on care to inpatients. You will be trained to give a therapeutic, relaxing, and gentle rub either to the hands or feet of our patients.
- If you have an outgoing personality to provide warm greetings, and the ability to escort patients to their destination, the Ambassador Plus program could be for you!

Learn about all of the ways you can help by scanning the QR Code



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