



Northern LightSM Eastern Maine Medical Center

2023-2024

Community Engagement

ANNUAL REPORT



Our Vision



Julia Scarano, junior at John Bapst and student volunteer

The Community Engagement Department umbrellas three distinct programs, each headed by visionary leaders who are passionate about their contributions to our medical center and the wider community. Those programs are: Volunteer Services, Community Health, and Pathways in Healthcare.

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center volunteers are community ambassadors for healthy lifestyles and compassionate living. Volunteers serve patients, support families, and assist staff in striving to fulfill our mission with caring, competence, and dignity.

The Community Engagement Department also serves as a pathway for community outreach and public health initiatives, as well as the development of community growth avenues for current and future employees through outreach, internships, sponsorships and scholarship programs.

Fiscal Year Highlights

Supported 6 professional interns and 4 work study students

Volunteers gave over 16,800 hours of service

Piloted first Career Exploration Fair

Hosted 125 high school students for 8 career exploration field trips

229 volunteers, including 86 high schoolers, recorded service hours

Awarded 130 educational sponsorships to date

People



Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center volunteers make up a diverse population from 14 – 90 years of age, from high school students to retirees in the Greater Bangor region, who are dedicated to giving back and supporting the Northern Light brand promise to make healthcare work for everyone. Our volunteers put patients and their families at the center of their service commitment, while also supporting staff so they can deliver top quality care. We celebrate each person on our volunteer team for all they do.

These thoughtful community members provide their skills in clerical and administrative support, direct patient care and enrichment activities, and support tasks at the hospital on State Street and Lafayette Family Cancer Institute in Brewer.

"Thank you for creating the Serenity Lounge at the medical center. It makes us feel cared for and appreciated." - Grant 6 staff

Celebrating Exceptional Service

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center's Volunteer Services team celebrated their volunteers at Bangor Grande Hotel at their Annual Recognition Dinner. As we have come out of the pandemic, we are so grateful for those who have remained steadfast in their service and those who have joined us to serve and create a brighter tomorrow.

This year they helped us create new volunteer roles, such as a drop in hospitality position to support food services by delivering trays to patients for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Volunteers who reached service hour milestones were recognized and the 2024 Larry Malone Luminary Award was presented to Mary McKay for over a decade of volunteer service.

Congratulations to all those who received recognition awards this year!



Volunteers at our annual appreciation dinner at the Bangor Grande Hotel

2024 Larry Malone Luminary Awardee: Mary McKay

This year, we had great honor in announcing our 2024 Larry Malone Luminary Award winner as Mary McKay, who illuminates our community with her dedication and warmth. If you have visited the Daily Bread Café at Cancer Care of Maine, you may have met Mary, as she has been a steadfast volunteer since 2006. During her time as a volunteer, Mary has dedicated over 3,000 hours, earning her a spot on our Volunteer Honor Board!

Mary's relentless efforts in highlighting the role of nutrition in our patients' journey is something we are deeply grateful for. Furthermore, her commitment to provide support to the Café staff is commendable. Food is more than sustenance - it has the power of not only healing, but bringing us together as a community, whether that be around a bonfire or a table in the cafeteria. It can be argued that there is no time of greater need for community than when in a health crisis, and with Mary's kind smile and positive presence, she reminds us of this human connection food can provide.



Congratulations, Mary, on being selected for the 2024 Larry Malone Luminary Award, and to all our nominees!

2024 Luminary Award Nominees



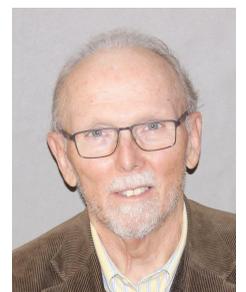
Mary McKay, Luminary Awardee, seen here at the annual recognition dinner with the Community Engagement team.



Greg Beswick



Barbara Bresnan



David Walker

The **Northern Light Luminary Award** celebrates the Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center volunteer community by honoring an individual who demonstrates extraordinary compassion, dedication, kindness, and generosity of spirit, helping to light the way for improved patient experience through their volunteer service.

Congratulations to all this year's Luminary nominees! We are so grateful for the impact you have on our patient, staff, and volunteer community.

Becoming the Community Engagement Team

This year, we celebrated a name change for our department, formerly known as Volunteer Services. We chose Community Engagement as our new name as it represents the diverse and important work our teams do.

Led by **Stacey Coventry**, who is also the director of Community Engagement as a whole, Volunteer Services is at the heart of our community interaction, focusing on the oversight and recruitment for our volunteer efforts across the medical center. This program also manages the Community Volunteer Impact Team, which includes our own staff members who dedicate their time to various community initiatives. Stacey leads our growing animal-assisted therapy program that serves our patients, staff and community partners. Additionally, she serves as the educational programming liaison to help build our workforce through our scholarship and sponsorship programs.



Under **Laura Lacasse**, community health coordinator, this program is committed to enhancing the well-being of our community through education and targeted health services. Key activities include: Psychological First Aid, providing education and training to offer immediate mental health support after a traumatic event; Caring Calls, reaching out to isolated seniors with a daily check-in call; Community Cupboard, expanding access to food for those in need; Community Education, informing the public on crucial health topics aligned with our Community Health Needs Assessment, and more. Community health seeks to bolster and leverage local groups to do the most possible good for our community.

Katelyn Stoddard, volunteer and development manager, is at the helm of Pathways in Healthcare, which is dedicated to inspiring the next generation of healthcare professionals. This program offers opportunities for young people to gain firsthand experience in the medical field through various interactive activities: Summer Student Volunteer Program, engaging students in volunteer opportunities during the summer; Career Exploration Fairs, opening the doors to potential healthcare careers; Career Exploration Field Trips, providing a closer look at the day-to-day workings of a medical center by inviting students in; and Student Observations and Job Shadows, providing access for real life observation for high school and undergrad students.

A Jammin' Summer of Service



Student managers gathered at the medical center after presenting their Passion Project

This summer, 86 remarkable students came together to make a difference, donating an incredible 5,877 hours of their time to volunteer in our healthcare setting—a value added of \$186,888 to the medical center. Their commitment and compassion have been nothing short of inspiring. From assisting patients and supporting staff to creating impactful community projects, each of them have shown what it truly means to serve others. The joy the students brought with them for community service impacted patients and staff alike.

Over eight weeks, our students supported 26 departments and 5 drop-in placements around the hospital. These departments graciously opened their doors and encouraged the students to dive right in, allowing for many students to discover passions and career opportunities they didn't know about before.

This year, eight student managers focused on reducing food insecurity in our community while improving patient experience through community gardening. The student project involved restoring and expanding the community gardens while providing a therapeutic patient

activity to support the hospital's Community Cupboard. This project was supported by the \$1,000 the students raised through their summer bake sales.

We presented a scholarship to Alexyss Spencer, a University of Maine nursing student. Our third annual SPARK Scholarship was awarded to Ada Sinclair-Steele, Student Manager, for outstanding leadership skills. This award recognition comes with a trophy and scholarship to use towards their college education. Lastly, we awarded leadership scholarships to Zoe Castrucci, for Excellence in Character, and to Stella Fox, for Innovation and Creativity in Service.

Community

At Northern Light Health, we are committed to being a visible, positive, and active partner in our community. Both staff and volunteers are passionate and dedicated about the communities we serve within the Medical Center and understand that the act of caring extends far outside our walls.

Break the Silence. End the Stigma.

This spring, 50 teens from area high schools and youth organizations gathered at our first Youth Mental Health Summit: *Break the Silence. End the Stigma* hosted by Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center.

The idea for the summit arose from the identified need in the 2022 Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment that identified mental health issues among Maine youth as a specific area of concern for our community, particularly the rate at which youth experience suicidal ideation and feeling sad or hopeless.

The 2024 summit took place at the University of Maine and was created and coordinated by the Community Engagement team, including several high school student volunteers who were part of the planning committee. The participating teens spent the day learning how to become alchemists in mental health by sharing their personal stories in order to heal while empowering others.

The day kicked off with an inspirational keynote from Danielle Whyte from the Yellow Tulip Project, and it concluded with an honest and interactive dialogue with peers from the Maine Recovery and Advocacy Project's youth caucus around substance use and recovery. Then, partners from across our community collaborated to ignite conversations around mental health; such as, suicide prevention, healthy relationships, LGBTQIA+ and allyship, and building a resiliency toolkit with modalities like art therapy, nature therapy, adventure-based programming and animal assisted interventions. The response from youth about our first summit has been inspiring. We broke the silence, began to end the stigma around mental health and started a mental health movement in our youth community.

"The summit was wonderful," says Katie Shepard from Partners for Peace. "We had some very thoughtful, insightful conversations during our workshop and we had the chance to connect with a few students one-on-one after. I hope this event can happen again next year." We are grateful to everybody who came together passionately in support of piloting our first youth mental health summit, including the Children's Miracle Network.



"You matter and there are more people around you than you think that care." -Teen

Auxiliary



Community Engagement is proud to be the liaison for the **Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center Auxiliary**. Auxiliary members participate in social, philanthropic, and service activities which offer both personal and professional growth while supporting local healthcare.

The **Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center Auxiliary** is a committee of community members who help raise thousands of dollars annually to support our medical center goals.

After fulfilling their pledge to support Miracle 2, a new neonatal transport ambulance, which is expected to arrive in early 2025, they took the year to regroup and reconnect to the medical center. They partnered to support Champion the Cure and the Summer Classic Fore Kids. They collected over 300 items for our food pantry. They also partnered with Moe's BBQ for a restaurant fundraiser and made a charitable gift to the medical center's Children's Endowment through the Children's Miracle Network and to the 2025 Youth Mental Health Summit.

Community

Hospital Week Challenge

Giving back to our community has always been at the heart of hospital week. So, this year, we launched a charity challenge! Each day we spotlighted some of our amazing community partners and our wonderful teams who have sponsored them during hospital week. Leading up to hospital week, we asked leaders to work with their teams on a charity service project that will be the banner cause for their group. There was a lot of behind-the-scenes momentum for these projects, so we are excited to spotlight all our teams and the charities they supported.



Departments and their sponsored organizations:

Intensive Care Unit sponsored Salvation Army

Inpatient Pharmacy & Pediatric Specialty sponsored the EMMC Community Cupboard

Peri-Operative Services sponsored the Shaw House

Med-Surg, Wound & Ostomy, & CVIT Adopted a Garden Downtown

Patient Experience sponsored the Boys & Girls Club

Women & Children's sponsored Ronald McDonald House

Medical Group, Imaging, Physician Services & Breast Services collaborated to support the Good Shepherd Food Bank

IPR & Cardiovascular sponsored the Bangor Humane Society

Executive Leadership Team sponsored the Bangor Area Homeless Shelter

Lafayette Family Cancer Institute sponsored Eastern Area Agency on Aging

Community Volunteer Impact Team



The Community Volunteer Impact Team allows Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center activate impactful community health initiatives through employee driven volunteerism. Its Steering Committee provides oversight and guidance to the community projects that the members pursue. This year, the Community Volunteer Impact Team celebrated its third anniversary!

In the last three years, the Community Impact Team has sponsored over **120** events. Our Impact team has grown to **150** employees and our steering committee to nearly **30** passionate philanthropists. Each year, hundreds of our employees, with their friends and families, give back through our sponsored activities. We have contributed over **1,500** hours of service annually to our community.

Highlighted annual projects:

- Pumpkins in the Park for UCP: **30** employees, **100** hours of service
- Annual Food Drive: collected **2,500** pounds of food
- Secret Santa and Christmas is for kids: sponsored over **75** families
- Spread the Love: **350** handmade Valentine's Day cards to all **14** units
- Participation in the Pride Parade
- Therapy dog evaluations: **40** employees, **150** hours, **13** teams passed

Service

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center seeks to be a leader in our community. We regularly initiate and support activities that help us support our mission. This includes activities such as, providing financial assistance, offering preventative screenings and healthcare education, supporting medical education, and more.

Feeding our Neighbors

To support healthy individuals and families and promote vitality in the community, Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center, in partnership from Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine, opened a landmark Community Cupboard in April 2024. With a \$21,300 grant from the Food Bank, as well as donations from staff, the medical center built and stocked the pantry space as a zero barrier center for patients, staff and community visitors--right in the heart of the hospital.

"We're so grateful for our partnership with Good Shepherd Food Bank," says Stacey Coventry, director, Community Engagement, Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center. "The Food Bank not only helps provide food at a reduced cost, they also train our volunteers on safe food handling practices for our pantry. This wonderful support helps us sustain this important effort to help feed and care for our community."

Since opening, the cupboard use is exceeding expectations, with over 488 households and 1,423 individuals signing in to use this benefit. As a low barrier cupboard, our team projects that our impact is much more expansive. Stacey continues, "As the cost of household expenses rises, so does food insecurity in Maine. It's our mission to care for our community, and one way we can provide support is by sending any person home with healthy food to meet their immediate need."



"This is such a great addition to the organization. I really enjoy seeing how many community members have been fed through this and it motivates me to bring more. Thank you for all of your hard work with this." - Employee

Shining a Light in the Darkness of Grief



In November, the Community Engagement team began *Beacons of Hope*, a monthly bereavement program at the medical center to assist individuals and families who experience loss in transforming their grief to healing by providing support and outreach services.

Our monthly grief gatherings provide support and guidance to bereaved individuals and families following the death of a loved one at the medical center, as well as to those in the community seeking support. Our collaborative programming has featured: monthly event discussions about experiencing and coping with loss, peer support, shared resources, and bi-annual memorial services to honor those who have died. We have welcomed experts from both within the medical center and community to present and educate.

"After 5 years into this journey of grieving my loss, it is the feeling of being alone that still haunts me. Now I know I am not alone and do have connections with others. I am grateful this group has started meeting."
-Attendee

Growth

In addition to supporting pathways of growth for our medical center workforce, Community Engagement continues to strive to expand our programming and create more opportunities to welcome new volunteers and community partnerships.

Expanding Services

Hospitality: Created spots for volunteers to support the hospitality team by offering a spoken menu service to the patient, assisting with tray assembly, and tray delivery and pick up. This program is a drop in shift model for breakfast, lunch and dinner service after training/orientation is complete to make the role flexible for all schedules and availability.

SIM Lab Patient Aide: Established a role for volunteers to support the Clinical Education team by portraying a patient with a certain medical condition, contributing to a simulated scenario as the patient or support person. These simulated "real patient" experiences improve training and onsite education for our clinical teams.

House Concierge: Enabled volunteers to bring hospitality right to the patient room by rounding with our Care Cart! Volunteer concierges also help make deliveries around the hospital, support discharges, and are available for comfort rounding and patient companionship.

Inpatient Activity Program Volunteer on KPO3: Created a role that allows volunteers to work with staff of patients to create individual profiles and personality assessments to provide cognitively stimulating activities during their hospitalization. Additionally, these volunteers support nursing staff with tasks such as bringing patients food and water, engage long-term patients to reduce reactive behavioral issues, participate in group activities, and support the Activities Coordinator with weekend coverage.

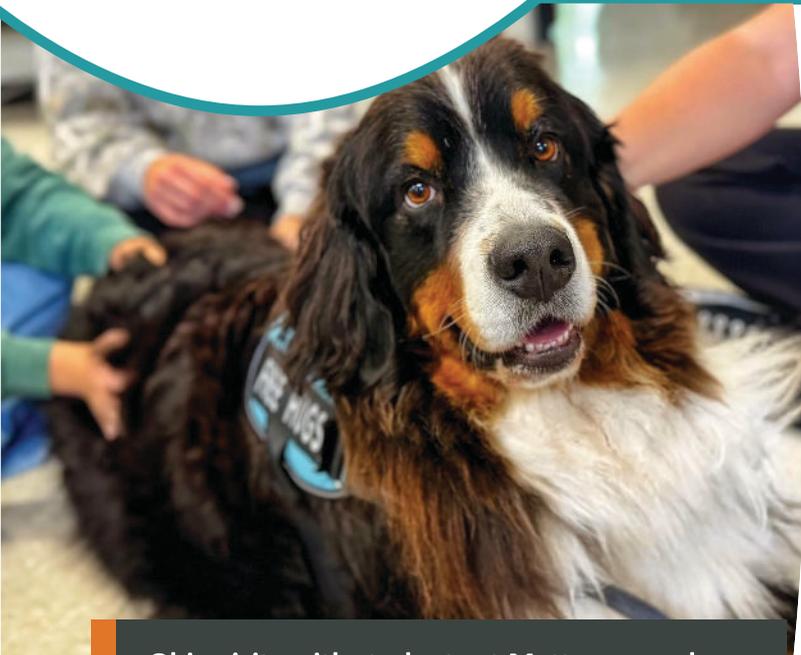
Bridge Student Volunteer Program: A new program for high school students who have "aged out" of our traditional summer program but would like one last summer to volunteer with the medical center before attending college. This is a hybrid experience where they get to participate in opportunities like our Career Exploration day and Recognition event, but are placed offsite in practices for a combination eight week volunteer and job shadow experience.



Finance

Community Engagement is a value-added service and is not revenue-producing. The department operates on a fixed budget tailored our present needs and maximized with creative programming and people equity. However, the Independent Sector, a nationally recognized group that gathers data on valuing non-profit volunteer time, currently values an hour of volunteer service at **\$33.49**. Based on service hours donated and logged, our volunteers provided **\$565,143** of added value this year.

Growth



Obie visits with students at Mattanawcook

The Community Engagement team develops and supports programs that positively impact the staff and patient experience. This year, our therapy dog program that supported staff, patients, and our community partners was a focused area of growth.

Code Koda Therapy Dog Program

Northern Light Health's animal-assisted therapy program has seen remarkable growth, expanding threefold in the past year. This success is attributed to the strong support of community partners, dedicated staff, and volunteers. The program not only enriches patient experiences and fosters workplace wellness for caregivers but also enhances community health initiatives through its broader community benefits programming.

A pivotal development in this journey was the launch of the "In Training" program, led by Stacey Coventry, Director of Community Engagement. Stacey, a passionate advocate for pet therapy, has been a registered team handler and evaluator with Pet Partners for over a decade. She also founded "Code Koda," a workplace wellness initiative named after her own therapy dog,

Koda. In March 2024, Northern Light Health sponsored Stacey's enrollment in the Animal Assisted Therapy Certificate program at Husson University, furthering her expertise.

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center supports local therapy dog evaluation events through a collaboration with Pet Partners. These evaluations at the Cianchette Building in Brewer, which are hosted officially by the medical center staff and volunteers, are offered no cost to the community. Our new training program allows therapy dogs to become familiar with the hospital environment and enhances the quality of visits for patients and staff alike. Bear Brook Kennel has been a key partner, collaborating to offer a therapy dog preparation course that has helped all participants achieve a 100% pass rate in their evaluations. As a result, 13 new therapy dogs were certified and added to the program's roster this year, bringing our total number of therapy teams to 17, and growing, who have contributed 450 hours of service to staff, patients, and community partner programs.

This expansion allowed Northern Light Health to become an official community partner with Pet Partners, now recognized as Pet Partners of Eastern Maine. This partnership opens new revenue opportunities for the program and strengthens its impact.

"I am so proud of the four-legged healing community we are building," says Stacey. "It is such a privilege to work with our incredible volunteers and their amazing therapy dogs. These dedicated humans and their furry friends truly embody the power of the human-animal bond."

The benefits of the program are widespread. Patients have reported reduced pain, anxiety, and stress, as well as faster recovery times when visited by therapy dogs. Hospital staff have also expressed their appreciation for the visits, noting that the presence of therapy dogs provides a refreshing break, fosters camaraderie, and reduces workplace stress.

In September 2024, the Community Impact Team partnered with Pet Partners of Eastern Maine to host the region's first local therapy dog walk as part of the Pet Partners World's Largest Pet Walk. The event raised over \$1,000, which will support education, registration, and sponsorship opportunities for therapy dog teams right here at Eastern Maine Medical Center.



"The hospital program helped us gain confidence and develop our skills with a wide variety of patients as Team Obie. Now we visit patients across the medical center and Acadia, as well as community programs." -Cathy Glover

Goals for Fiscal Year 2025

- ✓ Host 8 Career Exploration Field Trips and 2 Career Exploration Fairs
- ✓ Complete 120 Student observations
- ✓ Engage 250 students in Pathways programming
- ✓ Include 12 area high schools in Pathways to Healthcare programs
- ✓ Develop programs with JMG & Extended Learning Opportunities
- ✓ Participate in at least two volunteer outreach and recruitment opportunities
- ✓ Expand number of Caring Calls participants to 55
- ✓ Support two internship roles with Community Engagement
- ✓ Implement an Advanced Therapy Dog training class
- ✓ Expand animal assisted therapy to two new community partners
- ✓ Host networking Lunch and Learn for medical center educational programs
- ✓ Award 50 sponsorships and scholarships to support our workforce
- ✓ Add 25 new members and 5 new steering committee members to the Community Impact Team
- ✓ Develop 2 new community partners to support with employee volunteerism
- ✓ Increase Youth Mental Health Summit attendance to 150 students
- ✓ Increase number of participating teams and charities in hospital week challenge
- ✓ Host 3 “Community Conversations” to educate staff and community on Community Health Needs
- ✓ Expand patient focused roles in the medical center for volunteers
- ✓ Implement distribution of frozen, refrigerated food and fresh produce from Community Cupboard
- ✓ Distribute 2,000 food bags

To learn more about any of the programs or initiatives shared in this Annual Report, or to support the team by becoming a volunteer, please contact the Community Engagement office at 207.973.6806.

Our Team

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center
Community Engagement | 207.973.6860



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Pictured above from left to right: Liz Moores, Laura Lacasse, Stacey Coventry, Katelyn Stoddard, Rose Thurston, Maddy Humphrey

Not pictured: Lisa Rogers, Bianca Rodriguez

A department under Alison Worster, Vice President, Human Resources
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