Our Vision

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 Volunteer Services Department also serves as a pathway for the development of community growth avenues for current and future employees through professional internship opportunities as well as sponsorship and scholarship programs.

Staff members showing off Valentines made for our patients during our Spread the Love event

Fiscal Year 2023 by the numbers

- **Our volunteers** gave over 14,000 hours of service
- We had 211 volunteers with recorded service hours
- **QuiCuddlers** gave over 2,600 hours of service
- **Caring Calls volunteers** made over 20,800 phone calls
- Pet Therapy volunteers donated 250 hours of service
- Our volunteers supported 62 various service roles across three campuses
Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center volunteers make up a diverse population from 13–90 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.

Hot Chocolate and Warm Company

This winter, we had the pleasure of hosting a holiday social in an effort to connect and socialize, as well as celebrate a return to normalcy as the pandemic slowed down. For the first time in a long time, we were able to see each other maskless as we enjoyed the company, which was one of the best gifts of the holiday season.

Thanks are in order to all who brought a dish for the potluck – everything was delicious! Speaking of delicious...how about that hot cocoa bar? Nothing like hot chocolate to warm up the soul.

Many volunteers also channeled their inner artist by painting holiday ornaments! We hope your trees this year are full with the ornaments we decorated, and leave you with the warm memory of good company and glad tidings.

Celebrating Exceptional Service

In June, Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center’s Volunteer Services team celebrated their volunteers at Bangor Grande Hotel at their Annual Recognition Dinner. The evening honored our incredible volunteer community and their ongoing dedication and commitment to enriching the lives of our patients, supporting our staff, and helping the outreach efforts in our community. We also had the honor of listening to Dr. K Suchari Rutledge deliver an inspiring keynote on Celebrating Service.

Volunteers who reached service hour milestones were recognized and the 2023 Larry Malone Luminary Award was presented to Anne Corliss, for 25 years and over 2,100 hours of outstanding volunteer service as a NICU Quiet Care Cuddler.

Congratulations to all volunteers who received a service milestone award, including Mary McKay and Joanne Avila, who reached 3,000 hours of volunteer service and have been added to our Volunteer Honor Wall that hangs in the medical center lobby.

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The Volunteer Services team is grateful to all those who helped make the evening’s recognition event a success, and for the support of the senior leadership team who joined in attendance to help celebrate our volunteers. Of course, we are also immensely grateful for the unwavering dedication of our volunteers. We are truly honored we get to work with all of you to make the medical center and our community a better place.

It was a booming summer!

We had another busy summer in Volunteer Services, this year with 77 local high school students joining our summer student volunteer program. Collectively, they donated an incredible 5,000 hours of service!

Over the course of eight weeks, our students supported 22 departments 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 summer we had the opportunity to bestow scholarships unto two of our volunteers – for the first time ever! Our Senior Student Scholarship Award is intended to financially support two volunteers who are intending to study an approved healthcare track during their higher education. This year’s recipients were Samantha Bellerose and Logan Williams, both of whom are planning on pursuing a career in nursing.

Volunteer Services also awarded our SPARK Scholarship to Jordan Peterson, Student Manager. The Spark Scholarship Award recognizes a Student Manager in the Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center’s Summer High School Volunteer program for outstanding leadership skills, demonstration of the Northern Light EMMC caring behaviors, and helping to create a lasting impact on the Student Program and/or medical center. The award recognition comes with a trophy and monetary award to use towards their college education.
2023 Larry Malone Luminary Awardee: Anne Corliss

This year, we had great pleasure in announcing our 2023 Larry Malone Luminary Award winner as Anne Corliss. Anne joined our NICU Quiet Care Cuddlers team back in 1998 and has dedicated more than 2,100 hours supporting our smallest and most fragile patients. Anne has been a consistent and unwavering supporter of our program, fully understanding the positive effect of her role on the little lives she touches. She rarely misses a shift and goes above and beyond in the hours she spends on the unit.

In addition to her weekly shift in the NICU, Anne also takes on several administrative roles for the team. She ensures the upkeep of the Cuddler bulletin board on the unit, making it both informative and visually appealing. If the quote "The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others" rings true, Anne’s heart must be one of the greatest. She is dedicated, compassionate, and selfless, and we are incredibly grateful to have her on our team.

Congratulations, Anne, on being selected for the 2023 Larry Malone Luminary Award, and to all our nominees!

2023 Luminary Award Nominees

Cindy Curran  Bill Donovan  Jim Frick

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.

Anne Corliss, Luminary Awardee, seen here cuddling an infant in the NICU as part of the Quiet Care Cuddlers team.
How Are You?

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. With the launch of Northern Light Health’s How Are You? campaign, our team has been dedicated to putting this initiative into action through volunteerism and department services that focus on mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

Serenity Lounge

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center recognizes the work our staff do each day to provide quality care and services to our patients and communities. The determination and level of care delivered by our staff is nothing short of amazing, and all too often our staff’s own self-care takes a backseat. The hard work they do, while rewarding, is emotional, difficult, and often leads to high rates of burnout. So, we helped create the Serenity Lounge, an inclusive, quiet space where you can pause, relax, and check in and ask, “How are you, really?”

This special space is centrally located on Grant 2 and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to all staff. Lounge visitors can settle into one of our nooks and decompress individually, plug in their headphones, and listen to their favorite calming music, take time to journal or try some breathing exercises to ground and reset. Eye masks and ear plugs are available if desired.

Here, staff and visitors can explore a variety of modalities such as meditation, yoga, aromatherapy, or interact with our nature or coloring stations. We welcome staff to reserve the lounge to connect as a team for a guided small group meditation, yoga, or to explore the modality stations together. We also encourage individuals to take some wellness resources to integrate these tools into their everyday life and participate in scheduled activities like pet therapy, reiki, meditation and massage.

Employee Engagement

We love to support each other and our medical center community. This past January on National Rubber Ducky Day, we partnered with the Employee Culture and Engagement Committee to hide over 400 mini Rubber Duckies across the medical center for our colleagues to find. Some rubber ducks had funny duck puns attached that gave the staff a good chuckle (or quack), and other staff were rewarded with some Café Bucks in the Maine Café as a gift for their hard work. Staff had so much fun duck hunting that they asked for it to be a monthly event!

Auxiliary

Volunteer Services is proud to be the liaison for the Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center Auxiliary. The Auxiliary is a committee of community members who help raise thousands of dollars annually to support our medical center goals. Auxiliary members participate in social, philanthropic, and service activities which offer both personal and professional growth while supporting local healthcare.

This year, they fulfilled their current pledge to support Miracle 2, a new neonatal transport ambulance, by presenting $75,000 to EMMC and the Northern Light Foundation: a gift that puts their support of our NICU at $500,000. Additionally, each year, they also make a charitable gift through the EMMC Children’s Endowment through the Children’s Miracle Network.
Caring Calls

Spring is the season of change, and that was surely the case for our Caring Calls program. After previously being held out of Northern Light Home Care and Hospice offices on Union Street, the program is now run out of an office located at our very own medical center!

For those who might not know, Caring Calls is a program where volunteers connect with individuals in the community who might otherwise have little socialization and/or live alone. They call our senior participants every weekday from 8 to 9:30 am, offering a friendly chat and asking, “How are you?” Their calls not only help alleviate loneliness, but also give families peace of mind, knowing that someone is looking out for their loved ones.

Doug Cotta, Spiritual Care Coordinator and Caring Calls program manager, says, “Once you start making those connections, you’re talking to someone’s mom, someone’s grandparent, someone’s loved one. You’re not just making a call, you’re making a connection with that person and their family.”

Community Volunteer Impact & Community Health

In September, the Community Volunteer Impact Team celebrated its two year anniversary!

Over the past year, the team has sponsored more than 30 events that have helped our community. From our Annual Food Drive in November and our Christmas is for Kids event in December, to our June efforts celebrating with Pride with a panel on Allyship, crosswalk painting and walking in the parade as well as ongoing guest chef-ing at the Ronald McDonald House, our members have continued to give back this year.

Other events the team sponsored were Blood Drives with the American Red Cross, a Valentine’s Spread the Love event for our patients, walking for Champion the Cure, hosting a book drive with the Medical Science Library Team members, hosting a booth at Pumpkins in the Park, cleaning up Chapin Park and adopting a garden in Downtown Bangor.

In total, over 400 employees donated 1000 hours in sponsored activities. We are grateful to each employee who participated in team events to make our team efforts a continued success!
Service and Quality

Code Lavender

This July, on National Lavender Day, Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center launched its Code Lavender program. This program provides immediate, holistic support for staff members facing stress, emotional distress, or trauma. Volunteer Services was part of the collaborative team who developed the program, and is a part of the Code Lavender Response Team.

Code Lavender was pioneered at Cleveland Clinic in 2008 to help prevent those who work in healthcare from experiencing long-term mental and emotional trauma because of the stressful work they do. It emphasizes the need for a safe, supportive environment that looks after employees' emotional, spiritual, and mental health during challenging times.

Code Lavender can be called in situations of high stress, emotional distress, traumatic incidents, bad news, or end-of-life decisions. It’s meant to provide immediate, holistic support during difficult times - it does not necessarily need to be a “major event” - anything that affects staff members' feelings of physical or emotional well-being could be reason for a Code Lavender. Examples of situations when a Code Lavender might be called include, but are not limited to: traumatic patient death or injury, workforce member assault, workplace member illness or death, abduction, mass casualty, safety/quality failure/ adverse outcome, and community loss.

Psychological First Aid

Psychological First Aid is an evidence-informed approach that provides skills to identify and respond to those who have experienced trauma, strategies for connecting individuals to resources and skills for self-care for those providing PFA. This summer, 15 of our high school student volunteers participated in and completed PFA training. They each received certificates for completion of the four hour training and are now equipped to put their new knowledge and skills into practice in both their personal lives and school communities.

Additionally, two members of our Volunteer Services team, Laura Lacasse, Community Health Coordinator, and Stacey Coventry, Director of Volunteer and Community Development Services, completed the two-day Psychological First Aid Train the Trainer program with Acadia Staff and are now available to provide this training to school and community partners interested in completing the program.

Finance

Volunteer Services is a value-added service and is not revenue-producing. The department operates on a generous fixed budget which sustains our present needs. However, the Independent Sector currently values an hour of volunteer service at $31.80. Through their service, our volunteers provided $461,163 of added value this year.
Growth

The Volunteer Services department supports the medical center’s efforts in identifying, developing, and supporting pathways that help inspire and engage our future workforce through various community outreach initiatives and partnership opportunities.

Career Exploration

Over the past year, we have had the pleasure of hosting customizable, educational field trips for local high school students to give them insight into what a future in healthcare may look like for them. These Career Exploration Days provide experiences such as Q&A panels with healthcare professionals, lab science demonstrations, trips to our state-of-the-art Simulation Lab, tours of our more than 20 operating rooms, and even occasionally a surgical robotics demonstration - all coming together to create a day filled with new information and fun. In our first year, we have hosted more than 125 students from 8 area high schools here at the medical center. These events would not be a success without the unwavering cooperation by our colleagues across the medical center. We are truly grateful for them taking time out of their busy schedules to help us inspire the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Ongoing Education

In an effort to help increase volunteer engagement and satisfaction, we created a Continuing Education Series featuring a variety of topics relevant to the medical center for our volunteers. Our hope was to not only support our volunteers in their service roles with added competencies, but to also help them feel more connected to the initiatives and goals of the medical center as we returned to life post-pandemic. We were pleased to offer two continuing education opportunities for our volunteers this year. Topics included Spiritual Care, our Patient Concierge program, Code Lavender, and Psychological First Aid.

Educational Programming

We operate as the liaison for our medical center scholarship and sponsorship programs supporting mentor relationships, assisting professional development goals, and generating marketing and outreach opportunities to promote the programs. To date, over 100 individuals have been sponsored across our RN, respiratory, echocardiology and CST programs. We continue to work across departments to identify existing sponsorship and scholarship opportunities to help engage our future and sustain present workforce.

We have developed, published and maintained a centralized directory of these opportunities to share across the medical center and with our college partners. For an electronic version of our educational catalog, email Stacey Coventry at scoventry@northernlight.org.

We collaborate with department leaders to create professional undergraduate and graduate internship opportunities at the medical center. We have welcomed four interns who have helped support Human Resources, Materials and Transport, Nursing Administration, and various special projects through Volunteer Services.
In addition to supporting pathways of growth for our medical center workforce, the Volunteer Services department continues to strive to expand our programming and create more opportunities to welcome new volunteers and community partnerships.

**Music Wellness Program**

This year, through a grant from the Maine Community Foundation, we partnered with the Bangor Symphony orchestra to implement a new monthly music and wellness program at the Lafayette Cancer Center. The goal of the program is to enhance the well-being of the patients through targeted musical performances, contribute to a positive hospital environment for staff and visitors, and create a community connections through music and conversation.

**Unleashing the Potential of Animal Assisted Therapy**

Northern Light Health recognizes the value that animal assisted therapy offers to workplace wellness initiatives for our caregivers, enriching the patient experience, and supporting various community health initiatives in our region through its community benefits programming. After many inquiries from excited four-legged volunteers and their parents, this year we announced programming to expand volunteer therapy dog services at the medical center and across the Northern Light Health system.

Stacey Coventry, Director, is passionate about pet therapy and is a certified team evaluator with Pet Partners and will host regular pet therapy evaluation events in the community. She is also Koda’s mom, EMMC therapy dog who inspired our “Code Koda” workplace wellness initiative. Pet Partners promotes the health and wellness benefits of animal-assisted therapy, activities, and education in a way that fits this mission, and has developed policies and procedures that teams must follow.

As this is part of an overall growth plan for volunteers to support the care of our care team and patients, Eastern Maine Medical Center will cover the evaluation cost and provide ongoing space for evaluations locally at the Cianchette Building in Brewer.

**Books on Wheels**

We were excited to have our inpatient library book cart officially return this summer! While during the pandemic, the medical library partnered with the Library of Congress Surplus Program to keep our inpatient library shelves stocked with brand new books to gift to patients during their stay, being able to reinstate our lending library and book cart service provides an opportunity to create patient connections through a friendly smile and caring conversation while delivering a book or magazine to help keep their minds and spirits engaged during their stay.

The inpatient library and book cart are services created and maintained by our Medical Librarian, Linda Kerecman. In partnership with Volunteer Services, our student volunteers helped her launch the return of the book cart for the first time in over three years! On their first day, volunteers gave out 16 magazines and eight books to patients. “The ability to greet patients and share books and magazines, or even just few a kind words was so rewarding, and the patients and staff were so kind and appreciative,” says Linda.
Goals for FY24

- Support Community Health Improvement Plan goals and initiatives
- Create 10 new rolling Community Volunteer Impact Team volunteer opportunities with staff to promote team engagement and community involvement
- Through expanded marketing and communication efforts, increase the Community Volunteer Impact team membership by 10%.
- Develop a multi-faceted recruitment plan to steward community volunteers and expand our medical center volunteer team, increasing our active volunteer base by 20%.
- Partner with Human Resources to offer two educational sessions for staff featuring our Community Benefits programming and Community Health goals as well as the sponsorship and scholarship offerings in the Educational Catalog to increase awareness about our educational programming and develop ongoing sponsorship opportunities in areas with highest need.
- Expand our partnership with local Work Study programs.
- Host quarterly educational sessions on department and medical center programming (virtual or in person) for volunteer and staff engagement
- Extend our Culture of Caring goal through ongoing appreciation of volunteers as well as forging new opportunities to bring our volunteer community together through virtual workshops and social gatherings.
- Grow internship opportunities to help design and implement new programs and services to enhance patient care at the Medical Center.
- Coordinate monthly Career Exploration Days on site at the Medical Center in partnership with area high schools between November and June.
- Create a strategic plan for community engagement to grow the Auxiliary.
- Partner with Spiritual Care to host 10 (monthly) bereavement and two annual memorial events.

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 Volunteer Services at 207.973.7851.
Our Team

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Stacey holds baccalaureate degrees in communications and sociology from Syracuse University. In 2009, she graduated from Husson University with a Master of Business in Nonprofit Management. Bringing twenty years of nonprofit professional experience, she has specialized in advocacy, fundraising, marketing, development, outreach, volunteer management, event coordination, and community and capacity building. Stacey’s dog Koda has volunteered as part of EMMC’s Pet Therapy team, offering workplace wellness visits for staff. She is currently pursuing a certificate in Animal-Assisted Therapy from Husson University and currently chairs EMMC’s Community Volunteer Impact Team. In her spare time, Stacey enjoys hiking with her dogs, traveling, and live music.

Katelyn earned her bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Maine in 2017. Coming from a long line of healthcare workers, joining the EMMC team seemed like it was meant to be. Most recently, she earned her Certified Administrator in Volunteer Service designation – one of just 4 in the state of Maine at this time. In the nearly four years since joining Volunteer Services, she has found endless joy bonding with all our volunteers and overseeing the high school student volunteers she fondly calls “her kids” every summer. In her free time, Katelyn enjoys reading, spending time with her niece, exploring New England with her husband and dog, and snuggling with her two cats.

Originally from Oxford, Maine, Laura earned her Bachelor’s degree in Community Health Education from the University of Maine at Farmington. After graduation, she and her husband moved to New York as he earned his PhD. During that time, Laura earned her Master’s in Public Health and Master’s in Business Administration. After 7 years in New York, they are happy to be back in Maine. Laura is so excited to join Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center as the Community Health Coordinator and looks forward to all that we can do as a team to make a lasting impact in our community.

Maddy is currently a 3rd year student at the University of Maine. She is studying history, business, and anthropology. Before her time as Intern for Volunteer Services, she was a student volunteer for 3 summers. She loved it so much here at EMMC that she just couldn’t leave! She is excited to venture across the pond to the University of Birmingham in January for a semester abroad. In her spare time, Maddy enjoys hiking, reading, baking, and rewatching the same 5 movies over and over again.