

# OUTLOOK

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[www.tahv.org](http://www.tahv.org)

SPRING 2021

## Celebrate National Volunteer Week

**April 18 – April 24, 2021**

### How Does Volunteering Benefit You?

- It raises your self-confidence and self-worth.
- You make new friends.
- You build connections with other volunteers.
- You benefit physically and emotionally

... and so many more benefits ....

**1. Sharing time changes lives:** that's one of the strongest and simplest reasons to volunteer. Especially after retirement, volunteering is a great way to use your existing skills and develop new ones when working with young and old alike. It's a great way to continue to do worthwhile work and keep your confidence levels high at a time when it can be difficult to transition out of employment. Most people have a wealth of skills and experiences that can be really useful, and which make everyone feel valued and involved whatever their age.

**2.** Whether you're interacting with children, their parents, or seniors, ... sitting at their bedside or visiting while refreshing their water, these contacts are what make volunteering great. At the end of the day, it's the small things that count ... a conversation, a laugh from a person

*Continued on page 2*

## TAHV CONVENTION May 1-3, 2022

**at the Waco Convention Center, Waco, Texas**

**Volunteers ... Love, Peace, and Dedication**

**IMPORTANT: TAHV Member Hospitals**  
Due to Coronavirus and the uncertainty of its effects in the coming year, the TAHV Board has voted to cancel the Convention planned for May of 2021. The well-being and safety of our membership during this time is of utmost importance. The 2022 Convention will be held in Waco, TX at the Waco Convention Center. Mark your calendars as we once again join together and celebrate our hospital volunteers.  
**For further information, go to [www.tahv.org](http://www.tahv.org).**





## ***The President's Reflections***

by **Kathy Jenkin**,  
President

It has been a year since the pandemic started. And yes, we have to cancel 2021 Convention. We are still moving ahead and thinking about the 2022 Convention in Waco. We are working hard to make the 2022 Convention the best. The Board of Director for TAHV did get to meet in November of 2020 and the TAHV Communications Committee had a ZOOM meeting last month, thanks to Judi Winslow.

These are still trying times but know that TAHV board members are here to help answer your questions or just to talk. We need to stay strong and help each other whenever we can. Have a meeting outside, have a virtual meeting with your volunteer family or gather in a park and have a picnic. We will get through this difficult time and be stronger than ever. Hang in there my friends, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I pray that the volunteers will be able to go back to their hospitals soon, after everyone has had the vaccine.

*Stay safe and healthy....*

*Kathy*



## **National Volunteer Week**

*Continued from page 1*

who is feeling lonesome, a heartfelt Thank You or even a smile. It might seem like a trivial thing but putting a simple smile on a person's face definitely builds that connection. The patient might be going through a hard time whether it be the reason they are currently in the hospital, or for other unknown reasons, but the chance to make them smile might be the exact thing to make their day or even week better. Service work is about getting to know some of the most interesting people in your town or city, building friendships, and enjoying each other's company.

3. Working alongside fellow volunteers who feel as strongly as you do about supporting this cause creates a path to developing strong relationships. Many people start volunteering because of a hospitalized friend or family member's positive experience with volunteers. It's a form of giving back. People who unselfishly give of themselves make very compatible friends.

4. Studies show that Volunteers are happier and healthier than non-volunteers. In fact, during later life, volunteering is even more beneficial for one's health than exercising and eating well. Older people who volunteer remain physically functional longer and have more robust psychological well-being. And it's also a fact that people who share their time with others through volunteering live longer! Although it is not well-understood why volunteering provides such a profound health benefit, a key factor is assumed to be that volunteering serves to express and facilitate opportunities to carry out one's sense of purpose. The very nature of volunteering means choosing to work without being paid. As a result, people choose to spend their time on issues they feel strongly about. ***By volunteering, you get more back than you can ever imagine!***



### **How to Become a Member of the TAHV Board of Directors?**

Go to the TAHV Website... [www.tahv.org](http://www.tahv.org). Put your cursor on **"ABOUT"** and choose **"BOARD"** on the drop-down list. If interested, click on the **NOMINATION FORM** at the bottom of the page, print it, fill it out and call **(361-877-3412)** or email **(mkjenkin@icloud.com)** Kathy.

## A Letter from Norma

Norma Burnside, District 3 TAHV Board Member and Volunteer from CHRISTUS Spohn Corpus Christi South



With the knowledge of knowing volunteers would not be coming back to work until further notice, our volunteers were devastated. Ninety plus percent of us are over the age of 65 and volunteering is a large and important part of our lives.

For many of us, our families have moved to Heaven or live in other states. As a result, we have become very close-knit... our new family. As volunteers across Texas are aware, living alone during this time of COVID has not been fun.

Many of us are self-starters. We begin projects on our own, in our homes.

Here in Corpus Christi, we have done several different projects:

- ⇒ Some crocheted baby blankets/caps for the nursery
- ⇒ Some called fellow volunteers to make sure they were OK.
- ⇒ Several of us met each Friday at various restaurants for dinner.
- ⇒ One went around to each volunteer's home to take a picture of them in uniform holding up a sign of encouragement for our associates at the hospital and then put it on our media board in the hospital foyer.
- ⇒ We sent cookies to our associates.
- ⇒ Some of us met regularly to work on "Tray Favors". We have done July 4<sup>th</sup>, Fall, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Christmas Ornaments and Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Easter.
- ⇒ Several of us send out cards of encouragement and birthdays cards.
- ⇒ Some made crosses for Easter.
- ⇒ One or more volunteers took lunch to the associates.



Our hospital CEO, Dr. Blow, made it possible for any volunteer who wanted the vaccine could receive it beginning the end of December 2020. Most of us have now received our second vaccine and are good to go when they call us.

These activities have kept us busy and in contact with our fellow volunteers.

Since I'm on the TAHV Board of Directors, I truly have missed seeing another part of my family, the TAHV Board members. These are great ladies and one gentleman that I work with. I've missed the two conventions we planned for, the BYOI sessions I'm involved with, and all the wonderful ideas we always come away with from that exercise. I also miss the wonderful speakers we have. I just miss the whole community experience of a convention... seeing old friends and meeting new ones.

We are just over one year since this all started. It has not been a fun year but certainly a time to reflect... on our relationships with our family, our faith and talk more to our Heavenly Father.

However, I'm ready to get moving! Enough is enough! I'm sure you all feel the same way. Let's get moving and begin thinking about Convention 2022 in Waco.

**I can't wait to see and visit with all of you.**

*Norma*



## Driscoll Children's Hospital Recognizes New Leadership Team

By **Kathy Jenkin**, Driscoll Children's Auxiliary President,  
TAHV President

The Auxiliary to Driscoll Children's Hospital is comprised of volunteers who give their time and hearts to the children of South Texas. On February 4<sup>th</sup>, the Auxiliary met to recognize the outgoing 2020 officers and install the incoming 2021 officers featured below:



*Pictured L>R: Front Row: Kathy Jenkin and Karen Bartek. Back Row: Christine Stanley, Nancy Toepfer, Chrissy Garcia, Jane Kisner and Marihelen Boyd.*

Congratulations to **Selda Scott**, named the **2020 Auxilian of the Year**. Selected by her peers, Selda was recognized for her incredible talent, passion and dedication to the Gift Shop and Driscoll Children's Hospital.



*Selda presented flowers by Marihelen Boyd.*

*Do you have questions that come up in your meetings or updating or writing your bylaws???*

**Ask the Parliamentarian**  
**Call Sue Bickham**

With your Bylaws Questions  
**361-241-1766**

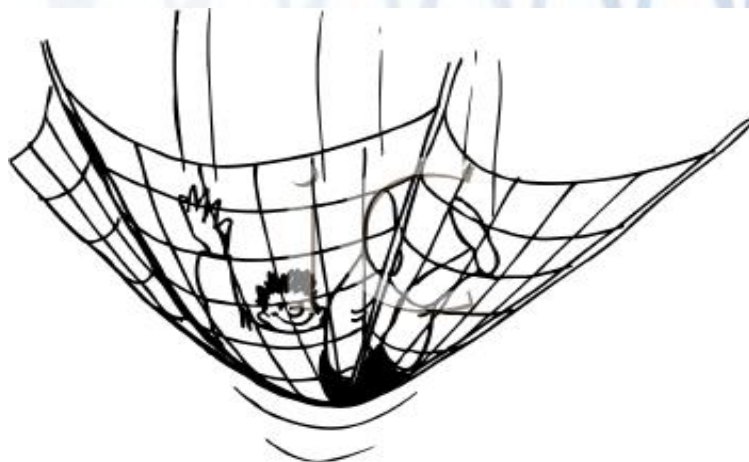
## Parkland Gift Shop Becomes Essential

by **Mary Ann Blome**, Parkland Health & Hospital System,  
Dallas, TAHV Board of Directors, District 5

**Parkland Health & Hospital System of Dallas County** is well known as a safety-net. During the recent Winter Storm (arctic freeze), our Gift Shop staff became that safety-net to many. Because of icy roads and distant homes, Parkland Employees were given the option to sleep on cots and stay overnight at PHHS. Terry Perry, seasoned Giftshop Assistant Manager, stayed two nights herself to sell needed food items to the many essential employees also spending the night. When Terry finished her regular shift, she sprang into action to help in the Reception Area, giving weary employees a break. Gift Shop employees like Kindra Rainey and Carolyn Ramsour, who came to work knowing they were needed even though their homes had no water or electricity. By Thursday and Friday, all full-time staff came in and worked at capacity while still facing the aftereffects from the storm at home.

Parkland Auxiliary is proud to oversee a Gift Shop that benefits its customers with so many services in its beloved hospital. The Gift Shop is a port in a storm, not only in this difficult time but all year long, where the gift shop staff extend their love and dedication to the hospital, employees, and the visiting public that rely on their services.

**DON'T EVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A VOLUNTEER!** We extend a BIG salute of gratitude to the members of the PHHS Hospital Gift Shop, as well as all Hospital Gift Shop personnel across Texas.



## Are You Familiar With the Gifts and Memorial Foundation?

By **Sue Bickham**, Director, G&M Foundation, TAHV District 3 Board Member



As a longtime Board Member of TAHV, I was asked to serve on the Gifts and Memorials Foundation as Director in 2019. I quickly realized that I was not truly knowledgeable about the Foundation and the importance of its function which is mainly, of course, to aid students financially who are planning careers in the healthcare field. Here are some facts to make all of you more aware of the Foundation and its function in helping students who are the future of the medical field.

The Foundation was established by a former TAHV President (1956-1957), and longtime TAHV Board Member, Kitty Brady. The Foundation accounts are maintained through careful management and the generosity of donations from our member groups and individuals. It is a great choice when making memorial donations or to honor friends and loved ones. Our donations can impact the lives of as many students as we can possibly manage. Through 2/2020, we had 7 students receiving \$1,000 per semester. Each semester we peruse new applicants and accept as many as possible. Once accepted, they remain with us up to 8 semesters. Recipients must reapply each semester, be a fulltime student and maintain a 3.0 GPA.



Two of our students:

*Ryan, as of May 2020 had received 7 semesters and was graduating from Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine.*

*Vanessa had received 5 semesters and was finishing her BS in Nursing at Midwestern College.*

As of December 2020 and January 2021, we have received 6 new applications and all are so deserving. Many of these applicants have no support from parents, are young parents themselves and striving to make a better life for their families, and some have mentioned the impact of the COVID virus on their jobs and incomes.

I believe that providing scholarships is one of the most important things that we, as volunteers, can do. Please consider when planning your organization's budget, including an annual donation to your TAHV Gifts and Memorials Foundation.

**It is a very worthy cause.**

### Keeping in Touch with TAHV:

The TAHV website is updated frequently whenever we have new information on Convention activities, new Board Members, or District news items, and you can check it out at: [www.tahv.org](http://www.tahv.org).

If you have something to contribute, contact **Mary Pfeffer** by email: [maryellenpfeffer@gmail.com](mailto:maryellenpfeffer@gmail.com) or by cell phone: 903.271.9243. Contact info also available directly on website or Facebook page.

**Be sure to FRIEND us on Facebook:** Go to your Facebook page, search for [Texas Association of Healthcare Volunteers](https://www.facebook.com/TexasAssociationofHealthcareVolunteers).



## Help Us Expand Health Coverage in Texas

By **Ted Shaw**, CEO

Texas Hospital Association

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are profound and wide-ranging. As hospital volunteers, you are acutely aware that there are few people that this public health crisis has not impacted. Hospitals and health care providers have withstood the past year's tests and now depend on health care advocates to ensure their needs are represented at the Capitol. One of the predominant advocacy issues impacting Texas hospitals during the 2021 session is health care coverage expansion.

With pandemic-induced unemployment, even more, Texans are without employer-sponsored health care coverage. Accessing necessary medical care has been difficult for many Texans for a long time. Texas is still only one of 12 states that has not yet expanded Medicaid coverage. Texas also continues to lead the nation in the number and percentage of residents without health insurance, leaving many Texans in the state's piecemealed health care safety net, where they could be cut off from physical and mental health services.

Our nation's health and financial future has not been in a state this perilous since the pandemic of 1918. If ever there was a time for Texas to increase access to health care coverage, it is now. Beyond the obvious health benefits, there are also significant economic benefits for expanding health care coverage. The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that nearly 1.8 million non-elderly Texans, who were uninsured before the pandemic, could be covered in 2021 if the state expanded Medicaid. With coverage expansion, hospitals' costs of caring for uninsured patients

could decrease. Whether by using health insurance for preventive care to maintain good health, reducing reliance on emergency departments, and hospitals' charity care to treat unmanaged chronic conditions, Texans will always need health care services. How and whether those services are covered is negotiable, and there is much room for improvement. Providing a path to that care will make Texas and its residents physically and economically stronger.

The Texas Hospital Association and its member hospitals are committed to increasing access to comprehensive health care coverage for every Texan who needs it. I encourage you to visit [www.tha.org/coverage](http://www.tha.org/coverage) to learn more about the Texas Hospital Association's effort to protect Texas hospitals, patients, and communities' physical and financial health.

Whether it's voting or volunteering, you have a civic duty to make your voice heard regarding the issues that matter most to you. We need steadfast volunteers such as yourselves to spread the word about why we need a health care coverage solution now more than ever.

### Send articles/pictures for the Outlook!!!

*Let's learn from and celebrate one another!*

*Share the stories and successes of your volunteer group.*

*Do you have special traditions or unique fundraisers?*

*We'd love to hear about them...and don't forget the pictures.*

*What does your auxiliary plan to do to help your hospital recover from the Corona Virus-share your stories.*

Send to: Judi Winslow at  
[mkjudiwinslow@hotmail.com](mailto:mkjudiwinslow@hotmail.com)

***"As you grow older, you will discover you have two hands - one for helping yourself and one for helping others."***

### YOUR DATABASE UPDATES ARE IMPORTANT!

Please use the "Member Update" form from the TAHV website ([www.tahv.org](http://www.tahv.org)) throughout the year to keep your information current.

**IF YOU CANNOT DOWNLOAD OR PRINT IT, PLEASE CONTACT: Dana McGinnis, Database Chairman**

PO Box 2795, Crystal Beach, TX 77650 — Phone: 972-971-9790

Email: [danamcginnistahv4@yahoo.com](mailto:danamcginnistahv4@yahoo.com)

(A form will be sent to you!!)



## Answering the Question....



### What Are Your Volunteers Doing During These COVID Times??

This question was posed to all TAHV Board Members to survey volunteer activity around the state of Texas. We found a BIG difference from one hospital to the next, maybe related to the amount of COVID activity in the area. It was interesting to see how some auxiliaries are staying active despite lack of access to their regular duties in the hospital itself. We feel it's worth sharing the answers to this question to let you know **you are not alone** in your struggles and to share ideas that are helping other auxiliaries stay together during these difficult times. We certainly don't want to lose such a valuable asset (volunteers) for our hospitals and especially the patients and staff.

**Baylor Scott & White Medical Center Hillcrest (Waco):** Volunteers provided homemade casseroles for clinical teams caring for COVID patients. Gift bags full of various snacks were given to hospital departments giving their time and talent during the pandemic. Large Christmas cans of flavored popcorn were delivered during December to non-clinical teams such as: public screeners, supply chain, security, pastoral care, food and nutrition, EVS, and more - there are so many!!! We try our best to remember the HEROES who work in our hospital and clinics.

**Beaumont Baptist Hospital:** Volunteers are having virtual board meetings and quarterly in-service meetings. They had a drive-thru Christmas party and brought gifts for needy kids, got a catered meal box that was better than the banquet meals they normally have! Volunteers are back to work at the ICU desk and Outpatient areas and are about to resume work at the Information Desk. Gift shop was cut way back but picking back up as visitors are being allowed back in limited numbers.

**Brownwood Regional Medical Center:** No volunteer activities since March 2020.

**CHI Baylor St. Luke's Hospital Medical Center (Houston):** has not allowed any of the volunteers to return. Board of Directors have started having Zoom meetings to keep in touch and do a little business. Volunteers funded a Patient Care Cart with essentials with items from Chapstick and lotions to eye masks, puzzles, phone chargers, etc. for hospital patients. Gift Shop is open, but not volunteer run. Some volunteers are helping with the immunization drive.

**Corpus Christi Medical Center NW:** No current volunteer activities.

**Guadalupe Regional Medical Center (Seguin):** No volunteer activities since March 2020.

**Hendrick Medical Center (Abilene):** Volunteers are back at the Information Desk; Gift Shop and they screen incoming patients for Cardiology Consultant practice. Volunteers decorated all 3 Hendrick hospitals for Christmas but were unable to bring in the usual holiday musical entertainment for the hospital lobby. Volunteer Services department put on a drive-thru Christmas gift pickup for volunteers. Have had Volunteer Board meetings, but no General Member Luncheon Meetings.

**Knapp Medical Center Weslaco:** No volunteer activities since March 2020.

**Medical Center Hospital Systems (Odessa)** MCHS volunteers returned to some hospital duties (Front Desk and Popcorn sales) on March 8<sup>th</sup>. MCHS volunteers stay in constant contact plus the Volunteer Board organizes activities to involve as many volunteers as choose to join. There are weekly Zoom bingo "dates" for volunteers who would like to play. A monthly or bi-monthly newsletter is emailed/mailed to auxiliary members. Members get together to make monthly tray favors for hospital patients and crafts for MCHS staff appreciation and pediatrics; paint "We Miss you" rocks; make and sell Holiday earrings and handmade holiday wreaths and have served breakfast on several occasions to volunteers working the all-day drive thru for COVID shots. (See more in "How to Keep Functioning..." article on page 9).

### TIPS FOR COPING WITH STRESS DURING COVID-19

#### MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

as best you can with proper diet, adequate sleep and exercise, and social interaction with loved ones at home or online

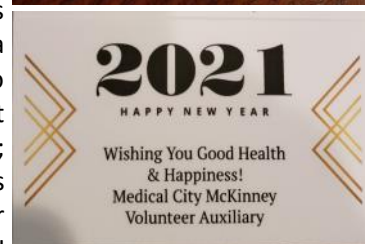
#### SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

for physical and mental health needs instead of using smoking or alcohol or drugs to cope.

#### GATHER FACTUAL INFORMATION

from credible sources to help you accurately determine your risk and take reasonable precautions.

**Medical City McKinney:** The Auxiliary continues providing financial support to the hospital with over \$6000 to the Prescription Assistance Program. They've published 9 newsletters which are sent electronically to volunteers to keep them engaged; they sent **Thank You** notes to healthcare staff in April and in the fall; they gave candy and drinks to hospital staff during Hospital Week and they held a "Thank You Heroes" car-parade thru campus in May (included 2 city Fire engines and 11 McKinney police vehicles). They presented \$7000 in scholarships to McKinney High School graduates going into health fields (a ZOOM presentation in May). They wrote over 400 notes to healthcare workers on COVID wards each month from August



thru October. They held an online Vendor sale in November; donated 800 pair of socks to Meals on Wheels at Christmas and addressed and stuffed two thousand Christmas cards for the hospital. A small team of volunteers trained online and have participated in patient calls weekly since November. On Jan 1<sup>st</sup>, they delivered Thank You bags of mints (*see photo top left*) to nurse's stations. They hold monthly Board Meetings online and have accomplished Bylaw changes, Standing Rule revisions, Officer Elections, and Budget Reconciliation. They also send monthly communication to all volunteers.



**Memorial Hermann Memorial City:** Volunteers returned to the hospital in November but for only 3 weeks. Having Zoom Board Meetings.

**Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Medical Center:** Volunteers sent cards and posters to hospital departments; baked treats; participated in a "Superhero's" parade to thank staff and employees and made "Extra Thanks for going the Extra Mile" Snack Baskets (*See article on page 11*). They continue to have Board Meetings at a medical building adjacent to the hospital.

**Olney Hamilton Hospital:** The Gift Shop is open with vaccinated volunteers; Membership Meetings are held off-site using COVID guidelines. Vendor sales have resumed off-site.

**Parkland Health and Hospital System (Dallas):** No volunteers working in Parkland Hospital; Gift Shops are open with limited capacity. They hold virtual meetings, and the Scholarship Committee is active selecting finalists. An online newsletter is published four times a year and they reach out to members via email, phone, and virtual zoom. The Auxiliary has a Benevolence Program to help employees with personal catastrophies and Christmas help.

**Shannon Hospital (San Angelo):** Volunteers renovated a Bealls Department Store into an area where people can receive the COVID vaccine. Volunteers assist by working 2 shifts: 6:30 to 11:30 and 11:30 to 4:30 or 5:30 and continue to work the Front Desk. Volunteer Board Meetings are held monthly. The Gift Shop is open and doing well. Scrub Sales are scheduled in March for both the Downtown Campus and South Campus.

**Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital (Hurst.Euless.Bedford):** Campus has been closed since March 2020, Volunteers have sent over 1100 hand-written notes to all employees/physicians, provided water bottles to medical team; distributed goody bags (sweet treats) to employees; Provided funding for an interactive sensory wall for their adopted school as well as books/resources to help students in disadvantaged neighborhoods to increase their literacy. Awarded 6 scholarships to students pursuing healthcare degrees. The Executive Board communicates regularly with all members with newsletters, and check-in calls.

## TIPS FOR COPING WITH STRESS DURING COVID-19

### AVOID BAD MEDIA

lessen the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage of news that you find upsetting.



**TOGETHER WE CAN  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**



### MANAGE YOUR EMOTIONS

by using skills that you've used in the past when facing life's adversities.



### Texoma Medical City (Denison):

Reopening Gift Shop with limited hours on March 22.

Volunteers have had 2 Board Meetings during 2020; sent encouragement cards and Christmas cards to members; delivered gifts from TMC Hospital to Volunteers at an off-campus location. (photos: right)

**Valley Baptist Medical Center – Brownsville:** Some volunteers are helping in clinical research inputting COVID data.

**Valley Baptist Medical Center - Harlingen:** A few volunteers are running a golf cart service from parking lot to the hospital; some of the pastoral volunteers are keeping contact with COVID patients; plus 3 volunteers are helping in clinical research by inputting data for COVID vaccine; Gift Shop closed.



## How to Keep Functioning in YOUR Auxiliary....

by **Pamela Andrews**, District 2 TAHV Board Member, Auxiliary President, Medical Center Healthcare System, Odessa

In times such as these, when volunteers are banned from their usual hospital responsibilities because of COVID, we need to think outside the box to make our volunteers feel needed and important. We miss our jobs, seeing and helping the hospital staff, and the patients. I know the staff and patients miss us too. The inactivity has had a disastrous effect on many auxiliaries. Many volunteer groups have lost members who have moved away to be with family, who have passed away from COVID, from inactivity and from age. What can be done to keep volunteers involved?

MCHS volunteers are purposely staying in constant contact and reaching out to each other. Here are some things our Volunteer Board organizes to involve as many volunteers as choose to join in....

We plan weekly **Zoom Bingo "dates"** for any of our volunteers who would like to play. And yes, we do give prizes for all games!! We get donations from everywhere just by making a call or asking at local restaurants while we're out eating. They are very gracious and supportive. The volunteers themselves donate books or items they don't use from home that others might enjoy. You're welcome to join us and we're willing to train you on how to organize this activity for your group.

A **monthly or bi-monthly newsletter** is emailed (or mailed to those without email), to all volunteers. It includes a list of member birthdays and any planned activities for the next month or two.

These are some of the activities we continue in spite of or because of COVID:

- ⇒ **Monthly Tray favors** for hospital patients.
- ⇒ **Crafts** for MCHS staff appreciation
- ⇒ Social-distancing indoor **picnics**
- ⇒ We have **served early breakfast** to all Odessa volunteers working the All-day Drive-thru for COVID shots several times.
- ⇒ **Crafts** for pediatrics for March/April
- ⇒ The Board members **paint "We Miss you" rocks** and place them in fellow volunteer's mailboxes.
- ⇒ **Group Texts** are sent daily to all Volunteer Board Members to keep in constant contact.
- ⇒ **Birthday cards** are mailed to all volunteer birthdays.
- ⇒ **Make and sell Holiday earrings and hand-made holiday wreaths** all year to raise funds for a large group to attend the Annual TAHV convention.



In addition, the Volunteer Board does **Drive-by Monumental Birthdays** for volunteers celebrating 50, 60, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Drive-bys include making posters, balloons, cards, and more. We contact newspaper and TV stations to publicize the event as well. (See article in the Fall 2020 Outlook, pg 6)

*Continued on page 11*

***If you want to walk FAST, walk alone.  
But, if you want to walk FAR, walk together!***



# Health Matters

In the last issue, we covered the importance of nutrition at any age, but especially important in the age group that includes most volunteers. We talked about Dr. Joel Fuhrman's GBOMBS... Greens, Beans, Onions, Mushrooms, Berries and Seeds. With the pandemic we've been through, I'd like to talk about things that impact our immune system, where *keeping the wrong things out is as crucial as bringing the right things into our bodies*. We're all at different points in our health journey, but if you can take away just a few points to improve your health, that would be great.

## Here are some things to keep OUT of your body:

**Contaminated Produce:** Conventional produce is often grown using cancer-causing pesticides. If organic foods are not accessible to you, *be sure you wash those foods by soaking in a solution of 1 tsp baking soda to every 2 cups of water for 10-15 minutes.*

**Processed Foods:** Though convenient, they are often stripped of much of their nutritive value and contain sneaky sugars and hidden ingredients. *Check out the ingredients panel when shopping.*

**Excess Animal Products:** Dairy can be incredibly inflammatory, especially for people with autoimmune disorders. Meats can reflect how the animal was raised. *The best choices are antibiotic and hormone-free, grass-fed, organically fed and possibly locally raised.*

**Excess Alcohol:** The gut microbiome (normal beneficial bacteria) can be disrupted and can trigger an immune response in the liver.

**Smoking:** Cigarettes contain over 7000 chemicals and chemical compounds and smoking suppresses the immune system, destroys antibodies and more.

**Typical cosmetic and personal care products:** Unless USDA Certified Organic, most are loaded with toxic and synthetic chemicals which penetrate skin and go through your bloodstream to various organs. The average woman uses 12 personal care products/day which contain an average of 186 different chemicals. One particularly common toxin is aluminum which is in deodorants. Also *beware of parabens, siloxanes, sodium lauryl sulfate, mineral oil, ethanolamines and fragrances.*



**Too Much Time Indoors/Sedentary Lifestyle:** Volatile Organic Compounds (or VOCs) are vaporous biproducts commonly found in glues, paints, air fresheners, dry-cleaning fluids, and other household products that can irritate eyes and respiratory tract just for starters. Gases that can be in the home include Radon, Carbon Dioxide, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen dioxide. **Up to 50% of homes in the US may have mold problems.** In older homes there's a possibility of Asbestos or Lead. *Outside, the sun's warm rays are mood-boosting and produce Vitamin D (15-20 minutes/day). In fact, spending time in Nature helps regulate sleep patterns, impulse control and increases virus-fighting white blood cells.*

**Typical Cleaning Supplies:** These products contain chemicals that kill the good germs in your lungs and on your skin that are key to immunity as well as the germs you're trying to get rid of on hard surfaces. Harmful ingredients include "2-Butoxyethanol", phthalates, ammonia, bleach, parabens and more. Over time, breathing them in can lead to immune system disorders and even kidney and liver damage. *Where you can, opt for organic cleaners free of toxins.*



**Lack of Sleep:** Sleep regulates many normal functions like heart rate, respiration and digestion. Too long without proper sleep makes you more susceptible to seasonal colds and flus and leads to chronic low-grade inflammation and immunodeficiency.

**Excess Screen Time:** A sign of the times!!! Smart phones, TV, computers, lap-tops, tablets... they all emit 'blue light'. Blue light exposure from the sun is normal, but the excessive amount from electronics can increase eye strain and cause macular degeneration.

**Excess Stress:** (As in anxiety) Though it's important to get to the root of the stress, *spending time outside, exercise, yoga, and meditation can help.*

**Loneliness:** Over extended periods of time, this can impact inflammation and the immune system. *The best solution is to reach out to loved ones or try joining new groups or classes.*



## Coexisting With COVID?

by **Gypsie Hufnagle**, Gift Shop Manager,  
Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Medical Center,  
District 9 TAHV Board Member

Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Medical Center Auxiliary Volunteers have been shuttered since March 10, 2020 except for the short time we were allowed to return in November for about three weeks. After Thanksgiving, the COVID positivity rate inched back up and the volunteers were once again shuttered for safety. The Memorial Hermann Healthcare System in the greater Houston area decided volunteers could only return when the COVID Positivity Rate became 5% or lower. But that did not keep a good auxiliary down!

Even though unable to be physically present in our hospital, volunteers have been active within the community and with activities relating to our hospital. Volunteers sent cards and posters to departments, delivered baked treats, and participated in a “Super Hero’s” parade to thank staff and employees. We also made “Extra Thanks for Going the Extra Mile” Snack Baskets (*below*) which were delivered by our Director and Manager of Volunteers, causing smiles to abound. It’s a great feeling to know you brightened someone’s day if only for a moment.



One of our volunteers made a poster for a photo moment for the staff. As you can see by the picture (*above*), our staff members are nothing short of “Angels”.

We have continued to have Board Meetings at a medical building adjacent to the hospital. Thanks to our Volunteer Manager, Karen Bilasing, we have stayed in touch with the needs of the medical staff and employees.

Most, if not all our volunteers, have received the Pfizer vaccine and are grateful and blessed to have received the vaccine. We appreciate our hospital system and their continued support. Speaking for ALL our volunteers.... ***We cannot wait to return to our auxiliary activities and do what we do best.... VOLUNTEER.***

## ***How to Keep Functioning in YOUR Auxiliary....***

*Continued from page 9*

Before Covid, we would have annual **Christmas parties** and a **Summer Luau** at someone’s house which were highlights of the year.

All volunteers were offered classes by **Discover Odessa**, an entity of the **Odessa Chamber of Commerce** that highlights the many things that Odessa has to offer for when patient families inquire of things to do. This also includes a tour of many exceptional places such as White Pool House, new Marriott Convention Center, Ellen Noel center, and more, many of which have never been on the tour.

I extend my sincere thanks to my MCHS Volunteer Board Members who brought me and my husband medicine, food, drinks, things to read, and kept in constant contact with us while we were both down with COVID-19 for 2 weeks. **You are all the very best friends and I consider you “FAMILY.”**



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