Winter 2012

Grateful Patient Story:
Linda Danielson

The holidays with the Danielsons, including Linda and Gary (pictured top center) and Gary’s mom, Bea, far left.

We met at a dance on Feb. 2, 1974. I was 16. He was my dream come true. Together we had such good times—and that was only the beginning. Who knew after three kids, six grandchildren and 33 years of marriage I’d have to say good-bye so soon.

My 53-year-old husband, Gary, died of pancreatic cancer in our home surrounded by our kids, Shawn, Kevin and Katie, and me.

During Gary’s two-year battle, he fought, laughed, cried and endured so much. Sadly, when it was time, I whispered, “I love you. It’s time to go.” He took a few seconds, looked up to the ceiling and closed his eyes.

It’s never good-bye until it’s good-bye. That was it, and it hurt.

Years of memories. Hundreds of friends. A close-knit family. A life lived out loud—now gone. I remember the things Gary said as he neared the end, like how much he’d miss us, how bad he felt that he’d never see our grandson play baseball and how rough his journey would be. It was. But thanks to Ridgeview Hospice, their above-and-beyond goodness and outstanding care helped us through it.

It wasn’t surprising. I’m a Ridgeview employee myself. But being on the other side is different. You don’t realize how vital these people are or how valuable their services are—until you experience it first-hand. What a joy it was to have the people I know and work with help take care of not only my husband, but the kids and me too. They alleviated worry from medication administration. And from thoughtful care baskets to mental strength, I am so grateful for what they did for me when I needed it most.

So many people I love lost their battle with cancer: Gary, his mom and dad, my sister and my mom. I don’t dwell on it, but I have found what gets you through it is compassion—the reason Ridgeview Medical Center positively touches so many.

Your support will help Ridgeview Hospice continue to offer services that Medicare fees and other insurer reimbursements won’t cover—for hospice patients and families like ours.

Please join the kids and me by making a gift to Ridgeview Hospice. Lives will be uplifted to the very end because of you.

So blessed and grateful,

Linda Danielson
A widow, mom, grandma, Ridgeview employee and advocate of Ridgeview Hospice
Dear Friends,

As we reflect on 2012, it has been a success because of you. Thank you for your continued support of Ridgeview Foundation and Ridgeview Medical Center. Our most recent event, 1970s Under the Harvest Moon, raised more than $200,000 supporting the Innovation for Generations campaign, Ridgeview Foundation’s effort to help renovate Ridgeview Medical Center’s nearly 50-year-old medical/surgical wing and to help aid in the expansion of critical services at Ridgeview.

We are grateful for your support in making Ridgeview a leader in health care innovation. Support and involvement from donors has a direct impact on the level and sophistication of health care that Ridgeview can provide. Many people choose to make year-end gifts and, as you plan your 2012 year-end options, please keep Ridgeview Foundation close to the top of the list!

My commitment as Ridgeview Foundation Board chair ends this December with the closing of 2012, and I want to introduce our new Board chair, Jean Buller. Jean is a committed Ridgeview volunteer who has served on the Foundation Board for the past five years and also volunteers her time at the Marie Steiner Kelting Hospice Home.

I have been humbled by the commitment of everyone involved in this very giving medical community. It has been a pleasure working with the Board, staff and volunteers, and I look forward to continuing my relationship with Ridgeview Medical Center and to Jean’s leadership as the new Board chair.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Foundation Focus. Happy Holidays and have a wonderful and fulfilling 2013.

Brian Mark
Chair, Ridgeview Foundation Board

Jean Buller

Brian Mark, left, and Jean Buller enjoy themselves at Ridgeview Foundation's 1970s Under the Harvest Moon event.
Pet Therapy Program takes off at Ridgeview

“Mom, there’s a dog here to see you,” said an elderly woman’s son to his unresponsive mother, who was near the end of her life. The son took his mom’s fragile hand and placed it on top of Gracie Mae’s beautiful golden head. Magically, his mom’s eyes opened and she tried to talk and pet Gracie, the golden retriever. It was such a beautiful moment in time—one that Robyn Helland, a pet therapy volunteer, will never forget.

Helland is a Ridgeview Medical Center volunteer and one of seven Ridgeview pet handlers who, along with Gracie, her four-and-a-half-year-old beloved golden retriever, trained for 10 weeks through Pet Partners, a national program on pet therapy. She now visits Ridgeview patients with Gracie, who brightens the days of not only the patients, but also staff and visitors. Helland is a passionate believer in the Pet Therapy Program. “There are physiological reactions and many healing properties for patients,” says Helland. Quoting an article by Steve Dale:

“When we feel good, we are more likely to smile. Studies show that when petting a dog, a hormone called oxytocin kicks into high gear. Oxytocin, which is sometimes dubbed as the “cuddling hormone,” helps reduce blood pressure and decreases levels of cortisol, a hormone related to stress and anxiety.”* 

It’s apparent the impact Gracie has on people as Robyn leads her through the hallways and patient rooms at Ridgeview. Many of the staff know Gracie by name.

When Helland says ‘Gracie, we’re going to work’ and holds out her therapy vest, Gracie knows the routine. She trots comfortably down the halls of Ridgeview, eager to befriend her next patient.

*2011 petsincondos.org

Mortenson Construction makes a difference:
The Pet Therapy Program

M. A. Mortenson Company memorialized Ann Mortenson and her close relationship to Ridgeview Medical Center with a generous gift of $25,000 to fund the Ann Mortenson Endowment Fund for Pet Therapy. Ridgeview was fortunate to know Ann as a valued employee and a loyal volunteer.

Ridgeview’s Pet Therapy Program offers its patients the opportunity to heal through companion animals. The intent of the Pet Therapy Program is to offer care delivery options that create a more personal touch at a time that health care has introduced so much technology.

In the years after the initial expansion and formalization, the fund will provide ongoing operating support to the Pet Therapy Program.
“Delivering the best care in the best facilities is Ridgeview’s constant goal. The Innovation for Generations campaign is helping us fulfill that promise, whether for our youngest pediatric patients or our senior patients. Renovating patient rooms and support areas to meet the unique needs of our patients and their families is a challenge that we embrace and are excited to complete. We need your support to achieve this vision. As a supporter and donor, you continue to exceed our hopes and dreams. Ridgeview is a phenomenal health care system that owes much of its success to you.”

–Robert Stevens, President and CEO, Ridgeview Medical Center

Have you or a loved one experienced a hospital stay at Ridgeview Medical Center? If so, you very well may have been in the last original part of the hospital on the second floor. Whether you were here in 1970 or as recently as 2012, you may have noticed the critical need for upgrades in this area.

Support for the Innovation for Generations campaign will help renovate Ridgeview’s nearly 50-year-old medical/surgical wing and aid in the expansion of critical services at Ridgeview Medical Center.

It’s hard to imagine what our region would be like if area families and loved ones didn’t have the facilities, technology, or skilled doctors and staff to turn to at Ridgeview Medical Center.

From “kids to cancer” and from the “very oldest to the very youngest,” the 1963 wing is one of the most important and used spaces in the hospital. New patient rooms will be designed to serve as “universal rooms”—allowing tremendous flexibility for the hospital as they will have similar layouts and equipment, yet offer unique features to meet individual patient needs. The improved care areas and expanded Ridgeview services are part of an ongoing effort by leadership to ensure that Ridgeview Medical Center meets the ever-changing needs of patients in our region ... for generations to come.

This much-needed renovation will include:
- State-of-the-art technologies, including a new patient-nurse communication system
- Decentralized nursing stations to maximize nurse proximity and interaction with patients and families
- Universal rooms for patients young and old
- Renovated private patient rooms designed with a warm, healing environment and décor, yet equipped with the latest technology to provide advanced therapies and information
- Office and work space available for nurses, doctors and staff
- Gathering space for families
- Support, education and counseling spaces

The expansion of critical Ridgeview services will include:
- Complete redesign of Infusion Therapy suites to provide privacy and comfort for patients and their families
- Geriatric Mental Health Unit—a new inpatient program on the second floor dedicated to helping older adults address issues such as depression, confusion, delirium and anxiety

Ridgeview is a nonprofit, independent health care organization; almost 100 percent of its net revenue is required to maintain operations, leaving a very small percentage to invest in technology, facilities and new services. The estimated cost of the renovated space is $4.7 million. We need your help now.

Thanks to the generous financial support of our donors, we have the resources in place to provide a variety of essential services to the patients we serve. We invite you to please consider a gift to Ridgeview Foundation to help us continue to provide the highest level of care with kindness, compassion and intuition.
“Never before has philanthropy meant so much to Ridgeview Medical Center. Your generous support and involvement has a direct impact on the level and sophistication of health care that Ridgeview can provide. Without these significant facilities and the donors who helped provide them, we couldn’t enhance the lives of those entering our world, or those leaving it.”

—Doug Stasek, Vice President Corporate Communications & Philanthropy

Philanthropy is a key factor in helping us fund future innovation and leading-edge technology. More than 30 projects have been funded by philanthropy in the last decade, including:

- Cafeteria Renovation
- Cardiac/Intensive Care Unit (CICU)
- Center for Women & Children
- Communications Center
- da Vinci® Surgical System
- Marie Steiner Kelting Hospice Home in Chaska
- Minneapolis Heart Institute® at Ridgeview Heart Center
- Ridgeview Specialty Clinic–Pediatric Integrative Medicine
- Ridgeview Community Auditorium
- Ridgeview Community Chapel
- Two surgery suites

Imagine the relief of our patients and staff like ...

- 2-year-old Maddie, who needs a comforting area to have a painful procedure done, separate from her hospital room—she won’t be afraid of her room.

- 16-year-old Jake, who has just undergone a surgery for a severe sports injury and has a private room for his many visitors—he will experience privacy.

- 48-year-old Mary, who visits Ridgeview for weekly chemo therapy treatments, hoping peaceful surroundings will ease her anxiety—she will feel calm.

- 82-year-old Bob, who has issues with dementia and needs a stabilizing environment so he can go home to his family—his family will know he is in a safe place.

- All of the Ridgeview nurses, who need adequate support space allowing them to stay close to their patients—they will never be far from the patients.
Ridgeview Foundation raised more than $200,000 at its 1970s Under the Harvest Moon event, held Nov. 17 at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska. More than 300 people attended the '70s-themed event, which combined far-out music, food, a live auction and memorabilia items, and some “out-of-sight threads” and costumes from the past.

Co-emcees and auctioneers Frank Vascellaro and Amelia Santaniello from WCCO-TV entertained the crowd with their humor and wit. Several volunteers worked collaboratively to organize and raise funds for the event.

Auction items included an electric guitar signed by the Rolling Stones, trips to beautiful Kiawah Island and California’s wine country, and a framed movie poster of The Godfather, signed by the entire cast.

Events like 1970s Under the Harvest Moon are a great way for people in the community to support Ridgeview, while having an enjoyable experience with their friends, family, colleagues and others within Ridgeview’s service area.

All funds raised were in support of the Innovation for Generations campaign, Ridgeview Foundation’s effort to help renovate Ridgeview Medical Center’s nearly 50-year-old medical/surgical wing and to help aid in the expansion of critical services at Ridgeview. With the changing face of health care and the many unknowns Ridgeview will face in the coming years, Innovation for Generations is the greatest opportunity to adapt at minimal expense.
Ridgeview Foundation celebrated 10 years of community and connections, information and inspiration, and motivation and momentum at the 2012 Achieving a Healthy Balance event. It was a milestone anniversary event that brought together over 200 women for a day full of fellowship and fun.

Keynote speaker Dan Buettner shared “down shifting” as one of the Power 9 ways to live a longer, healthier, happier life. The rest of his Power 9 and the pyramid graphic he shared are available on his Web site, www.bluezones.com/live-longer/power-9. Robin Getman helped us laugh for the health of it! She insists on laughing from your toes, leading from your soul and serving from your heart. Laura Erdman-Luntz inspired us to “Know What You Want.” For a weekly shot of inspiration, visit Laura at www.muselaura.com. Kris James, the tea lady, taught a new technique by guiding the guests through the Tea Meditation, now available on her site, www.artfulbrewtea.com.

The wonderful, artisan exhibitors displayed a wide array of items from which to peruse and purchase in the artisan boutique and spa room. And to our sponsors who believe in this day and the impact it has on health and wellness, we are very grateful! Achieving a Healthy Balance would not be possible without their financial support.
Year-end giving idea—
The Charitable IRA

The extension of the provision in the Pension Protection Act of 2006 that allows donors over age 70 to make direct transfers of up to $100,000 from traditional and Roth IRAs to qualified charities may expire on Dec. 31. Consider this unique year-end gifting option!

Ridgeview Foundation can suggest special gifting ideas if you are:
• 70 years or older
• Your IRA gifts total less than $100,000 for the year
• You transfer funds directly from your IRA

Your benefits:
• The gift generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction on your federal income tax return, so you receive the benefit even if you don’t itemize on your tax returns
• You can witness the good that comes of your generosity!

For more information, call Ridgeview Foundation at 952-442-6010.

Classes, events & ways to get involved

Advance Care Planning . . . It Is About the Conversation
Advances in medical technology have made it possible to support life in situations where previously natural death would have occurred. Sometimes people receive aggressive medical care they would not have wanted. It is important for people to have accurate information in order to make informed decisions about treatments they would or would not want for end-of-life care. Then it is important to talk about one’s wishes with family members who may need to make health care decisions, and to record your wishes in a document that will be available if a time comes when it is needed. Ideally this planning is done by anyone over the age of 18.

Ridgeview Medical Center offers a free service to help people understand this process. Please join us for an information session that will explain why advance care planning is important and the steps involved. You will also have an opportunity to sign up for free assistance with this process.

• Thursday, Jan. 17, 6:30 p.m.
• Saturday, Jan. 26, 9:30 a.m.
• Thursday, Feb. 28 6:30 p.m
• Saturday, March 2, 9:30 a.m.

Ridgeview Medical Center, Ridgeview Community Auditorium, 500 S. Maple Street, Waconia
This is a free event. Register at www.ridgeviewmedical.org/events. For more information or to register by phone, call 952-442-2191, ext. 5575.

9th Annual Ridgeview Friends & Family ‘Come Together’ Event
Join Ridgeview Foundation, Ridgeview Medical Center, Safari Island and more than 35 other organizations for a free, interactive healthy living event that promotes the health, wellness and safety of the entire community.

Enjoy a wide range of activities and presentations designed for children and adults of all ages, including health screenings, community and personal health and safety information (childhood obesity, nutrition, bullying and acceptance, diabetes education), alcohol/tobacco/drug awareness, organics/glutenfree/food and allergies education, integrative medicine and holistic healing, Silver Sneakers®, emergency preparedness/FBI Citizens’ Academy and much more!

• Kids will move their bodies in Youth in Motion Center
• Live performances
• Silver Sneakers® fitness class for active agers
• 5th Annual On-Site Memorial Blood Centers’ Drive
• Healthy snacks

• Saturday, March 23, 9 a.m. – Noon

Safari Island Community Center
1600 Community Drive, Waconia
This is a free event and advance registration is not required. For more information, call Ridgeview Foundation at 952-442-6010 or visit www.ridgeviewfoundation.org.