UAMS Young Professionals Bring Home the Bacon to Support UAMS Patients & Families

The UAMS Medical Center Auxiliary plays an important role in providing for the needs of the patients and guests of the UAMS Medical Center. Part of this commitment includes giving back to programs and departments at UAMS that work directly to support the mission of the UAMS Medical Center Auxiliary, which is to promote, improve and advance the welfare, health and comfort of the patients of UAMS. The UAMS young professionals auxiliary, or the UAMS Aux Crew, was formed to help further support this mission.

Membership in the UAMS Aux Crew provides individuals the opportunity to make differences in the lives of UAMS patients and families, as well as develop professional skills in a variety of areas, including leadership, philanthropy, event planning and networking. The program is also designed to help make UAMS more accessible to the community, raise funds to support patients and families and promote awareness.

Susannah Monk, UAMS human resources manager and past board member of the UAMS Medical Center Auxiliary, led the effort to form this group. “I really felt like there was a place for young professionals to be of service in spreading the mission and values of the UAMS Auxiliary,” said Monk. “I don’t think people fully realize the different needs of patients and families when they end up hospitalized at UAMS. I am really proud of this group for jumping right in and investing in the goals of this group.”

The group of around 30 members has come together to support this effort for various reasons from personal to professional.

“Both my little sister and I battled and beat breast cancer this year,” said Lindsey Hale-Bender, UAMS Aux Crew member. “We were both treated at UAMS. After going to sit with Devon during treatment, having our surgeries here, overnight stays and countless doctor appointments we could not be more grateful to each and every person who works at that fantastic place. Not just for saving our lives, but for the laughs, the smiles and the best care I’ve ever had in my life. I joined the Aux Crew to give back, to say thank you to a hospital who made my sister and me cancer-free and helped us smile through the whole thing!”

Reed Willett, one of the first Aux Crew members, said, “As members...

Continued on page 3
A Letter from the President

I hope you enjoy this edition of the UAMS Medical Center Auxiliary’s Better Together newsletter. In this edition you will learn about our young professionals auxiliary, the UAMS Aux Crew, and its latest fundraising efforts. Volunteers and hospital staff share their thoughts about the great work that takes place when patients, families, staff and volunteers all work together for the best possible patient experience.

Our auxiliary has been working hard to support UAMS in many different ways. In addition to providing new trees in the hospital lobby for our Tree Lights program, the auxiliary, with the help of local churches, community groups and the UAMS Aux Crew, made sure every patient received a gift for the holidays.

In November, we held our annual jewelry sale. If you missed it, you’ll want to add it to your calendar in the future. For four days, the Lobby Gallery was filled with a huge variety of fashion items all costing $5. We had fantastic support from auxiliary members and hospital staff, which made this sale the largest in our history. All of the money raised goes toward our patient and family support fund.

Another focus of our auxiliary is to learn about the extraordinary services and programs available at UAMS. Susan McDougal, supervisor of clinical pastoral education at UAMS, spoke at our general meeting in October about the palliative care program. UAMS has Joint Commission Advanced Certification for Palliative Care and is the only hospital in Arkansas to achieve this designation. The hospital’s palliative care program is nationally recognized as demonstrating exceptional patient- and family-centered care in order to optimize quality of life for patients with serious illnesses.

The auxiliary is making a difference in the lives of our friends and neighbors receiving medical treatment at UAMS. Please share this newsletter with others and encourage them to join us as we continue to support patients, families and staff at UAMS.

Sincerely,

Susan Marsh
President, UAMS Medical Center Auxiliary
of our community, we need to assist those who are less fortunate or are in need of support. Also, there is a great social aspect to this group. With our lives becoming more digitized every day, we need as much real human-to-human experience as possible, and it is a great way to network.”

On October 5, 2013, the Aux Crew hosted its first major fundraising event, the Rock Town Bacon Throwdown. The event was held at War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock and featured 10 local professional chefs all serving samples of dishes that included bacon. Friends and supporters of UAMS Medical Center sampled their creative bacon-based dishes and voted for their favorite. Proceeds from the event went towards the UAMS Patient Support Fund.

“We were pleased to sell out of tickets for a very fun event that will go a long way in helping our Patient Support Fund,” said Erin Gray, director of the UAMS Medical Center Department of Volunteer and Auxiliary Services.

The judges selected as first place winner Greg Wallis from Afterthought Bistro & Bar and his bacon-wrapped meatloaf with truffle mashed potatoes and caramelized onion.

Second place went to Scott Rains from Table 28, and Jeffrey Owen from Ciao Baci received third place honors. Rains also received the People’s Choice Award by having the most votes from ticket holders.

“The participants, volunteers and guests combined made the event successful. I think for a first event, we couldn’t have drawn it up any better,” said Willett.

The group is ready to expand and host future events to support patients and families at UAMS. “The Aux Crew is doing outstanding work, and we are excited to have them participate in the ongoing efforts to provide comfort, hope and healing to UAMS patients and their families,” said Susan Marsh, UAMS Auxiliary President.

For more about the Auxiliary’s Aux Crew, visit www.uamshealth.com/auxcrew or visit their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/UAMSYoungAuxiliary. You also can follow them on Twitter or Instagram: @uamsauxcrew.
The Value of Volunteers

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.”

People ask me all the time why I got involved in health care. I’m not a nurse or a clinician, and quite honestly, I never wanted to work in the health care field.

That was before my youngest son, Daniel, was diagnosed with congenital heart disease. Early on, my husband and I recognized that we would need to be totally engaged in his care so that we could make the best decisions in partnership with our medical team. However, initially, the health care system in Georgia where Daniel received most of his care considered us—his mommy and daddy—as ‘visitors’ instead of allies in his care. Because of restrictive visiting policies, we found ourselves sitting in the waiting room more than we were at his bedside because we weren’t allowed to be in his hospital room during physician rounds.

When patient- and family-centered care became the framework of care in our hospital, positive changes began to happen. Because of volunteer family leaders speaking up and partnering with clinicians and the administrative team, “family presence” was instituted, replacing the outdated “visitation policy.” This meant that parents could be with their child 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It also meant that parents could participate in medical rounds at their child’s bedside as well as during nurse change of shift report instead of being sent to the waiting room. I am delighted that UAMS also supports “family presence” at all times and works closely with patient and family advisors to improve health care.

At UAMS, as we engage in patient- and family-centered programs to support our patients and families, we are grateful to the many volunteers who contribute in significant ways—those who sit at a patient’s bedside, deliver magazines, participate in the SPOT animal therapy program, plan fundraising events, or serve patient and family advisors. These and other opportunities support our patients and families in meaningful ways at UAMS.

As we move forward into an exciting new year with our patient- and family-centered initiatives, there are additional volunteer opportunities that we invite you to explore.

Similar to the experience that led me into the health care field, perhaps you, too, have had an experience that changed your life. Are you, or have you been, a patient at UAMS? Does your family member receive care here? If so, do you have a story to tell? Consider sharing your story as Patient/Family Faculty so health professions students and clinicians can learn from you. Perhaps you will consider supporting patients and their families as they prepare for surgery as part of our new O.R. BUDS Program (Better Understanding During Surgery).

Yes, at UAMS, there are many opportunities to serve. We value our volunteers because, indeed, our volunteers are priceless.

Inspired by her young son’s battle with heart disease—multiple surgeries and heart transplant—Julie Ginn Moretz, of Augusta, Ga., has spent the better part of her career as a family leader passionate about improving health care. In May 2013, Julie assumed the role of associate vice chancellor, Center for Patients and Families, at UAMS where she has leadership responsibility for developing clinical and academic programs related to patient- and family-centered care. Prior to this, she served as director of special projects with the Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care, based in Bethesda, Md. Initially, Julie was chairman of the Family Advisory Council at the Medical College of Georgia, and then, director, Family Services Development, overseeing programs supporting adult and pediatric services, managing advisory councils, and developing the Family Faculty program to incorporate patient- and family-centered care concepts in medical education. Julie and her husband, David, have three children—Lee, Morgan and Daniel, forever 14.
Patient and Family Advisors Serve in Key Roles Across UAMS

Nearly 75 UAMS patients and family members are now serving on advisory councils and committees across the institution. From the Internal Medicine Clinic Council to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, the MyChart steering committee and the Reynolds Institute on Aging council, each advisor plays an important role in sharing the patient and family perspective in decision-making.

“Our advisors are making a big impact on a wide variety of projects,” said Barbie Brunner, director of patient- and family-centered care for UAMS Medical Center. “In the past we often made the mistake of assuming we knew what patients and family members wanted. We’re learning that sometimes what they value is different than what we thought.”

Featured members of the advisory councils in this edition of Better Together are:

Cathy Christian of Little Rock serves on the Thomas and Lyon Longevity Clinic Advisory Council. “I experienced some pretty serious health care issues personally, and know what it can do to quality of life,” she said. “In addition, I have been caring for my mother through her health care journey including repeated hospitalizations, tests and treatments. I became a reluctant caregiver but also came to know some of the most dedicated, compassionate providers who treated us with the utmost respect and consideration. I have sincere respect and admiration for the efforts of UAMS to improve delivery of patient care with total patient and family involvement. I am honored to be able to participate in these efforts.”

Joyce Taliford of Little Rock serves on the Thomas and Lyon Longevity Clinic Advisory Council. “I have been a patient at UAMS for years in many of the clinical areas,” she said. “Being a member of the Advisory Council has increased my knowledge about UAMS operations and has given me a different perspective. My doctors treat me as an individual. They know me and my family, and they invite my family to be a part of my care. I want to give back to UAMS for all they have done for me and my family.”

Beth Foti of Little Rock serves on the Thomas and Lyon Longevity Clinic Advisory Council. She was recently elected chair of the Council, and also serves on the UAMS MyChart Steering Committee. “My whole family comes to UAMS,” said Foti. “I care about quality and safety, and I want to know all I can about how to improve the care we receive. UAMS wants to hear about concerns, and they are open to receiving suggestions. I have seen the work of the council in action through changes we have made. As an advisor, I am able to share my experiences in a way that contributes to improvements.”

Brad Westbrook of Cabot serves on the Hospital Advisory Council and the Hospital Medical Board. “When patients and families are given a diagnosis, it can be devastating,” he said. “As a patient, you feel helpless in the process. You feel like things are out of your control. The care I received at UAMS was the best I could have imagined. My family and I were well-informed and cared for in every way. I want to give back and help make someone else’s experience as good as mine.”
Volunteers Share Cancer Experiences, Deliver Hope and Hugs

In 2011, two friends and cancer survivors decided to join forces to make a difference in the lives of patients and families in the oncology unit of the UAMS hospital.

Lisa Yarnell of Little Rock was volunteering at the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at UAMS and approached Connie Ratcliff, her friend and fellow cancer survivor, about joining her as a volunteer there.

“Once Connie got to the hospital’s Volunteer Services Department and learned about the needs on the oncology unit on H7, she jumped on it and called and told me I had to come do it with her. My original plan was for her to come volunteer with me at the Cancer Institute, but she had a different plan in mind. Of course, I told her I was too busy and had more than enough to do over at the Cancer Institute, but Connie wouldn’t hear of it. She read me the position description and asked who the job sounds like. I had to answer ‘me,’ and the next thing I know we started doing our thing up on H7.”

“Cancer touches every area of a person’s life,” said Ratcliff. “It leaves many people without hope. Our job is to show them that there is life and hope on the other side of cancer. As one of the palliative care docs told me, ‘You and I have the same job here – just passing out hugs and hope.’”

“Our volunteer work is important for the patients, but we are the ones who really benefit,” said Yarnell. “It really is true that the way to find oneself is to lose oneself in the service of others. I have gained so much more from my service to these patients than I have ever been able to give to them. This volunteer opportunity has really been a blessing to both Connie and myself. It really was Connie’s purpose for the last year of her life. She loved it.”

Two weeks after being honored as the UAMS Medical Center Volunteer of the Year, Ratcliff passed away, leaving Yarnell to continue their work and expand on their mission.

“I feel this is my God-given mission,” said Yarnell. “My life was spared for a reason. By most medical opinions, I really should not be here. My chances for survival were pretty slim. But, as you see, I’m here!

“I’m not just surviving, but thriving in an abundant life full of peace and joy that I can’t wait to share with cancer patients who question whether they can make it through the next five minutes. They need someone to care about them – more than just about the surgery, chemo, radiation, the treatment plan or follow-up care – but about who they are outside the disease; who they are on the inside.

“Often, they just want someone to listen to about any little ole thing they want to talk about or answer any question they think is too stupid to ask the doctor or nurse, or for someone to help them cry or to make them laugh,” she said. “Being with these patients helps keep my life in balance. I just can’t get all wrapped up in my little petty stuff when I come to UAMS and spend time with these wonderful patients who are going through such trying times. As I try and bring joy into their lives, the truth is they are the ones who bring joy to mine. I thank UAMS and God for this opportunity.”
Volunteer Opportunities

There are many ways to make a difference at UAMS. Here are just a few of the areas where volunteers are needed:

WAYFINDERS

Lost? Often first-time visitors are overwhelmed with the size and complexity of the UAMS campus. Volunteers welcome patients and visitors, creating a friendly, helpful atmosphere. When needed, volunteers also help patients and visitors find their way to doctors’ appointments, labs, the cafeteria, etc.

GIFT SHOP

Volunteers provide assistance in our gift shop located on the first floor of the hospital in the Ward Tower. Responsibilities include assisting customers, cashiering, stocking, straightening and dusting shelves. Proceeds from the gift shop support individual patients in the hospital and their families as well as projects and programs throughout the UAMS campus.

SECOND FLOOR PATIENT AND FAMILY AMBASSADORS

If you have compassion for others, a positive attitude, empathy and respect for people going through tough times because of illness or injuries; then consider becoming part of the UAMS effort to provide excellence in service for patients and families on the second floor. Patients in this area are being admitted and prepped for surgery and their friends and family are preparing to wait and worry. Our volunteers help guide patients through the admissions process and escort them to their procedure. They are there to answer questions that friends and family may have as they wait and provide them with books, magazines and other distractions.

If you are interested in volunteering in one of these areas or would like information on additional volunteer opportunities, please visit our website at http://www.uamshealth.com/hospitalvolunteer or contact Jennifer Huie at (501) 686-5657.

Why I Volunteer

I volunteer in two areas at UAMS – the Family Resource Center and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, or NICU. I have been volunteering in both of these areas for about two years. I became a volunteer because I wanted to be able to use my time and talents to serve others.

The Family Resource Center gives me an opportunity to meet people from all over Arkansas and beyond. The center is what the name says – a place where family members of patients in the hospital can find resources to help them while they are at UAMS. I like being able to serve the people who come to the center, whether it’s giving directions to somewhere in the hospital, faxing, charging cell phones, or just providing a person with someone to listen to what they are going through. The social interaction is always interesting, and I hope I serve the families well. One of our most popular features is the computers we have available. I’m no technical wiz, but I know enough to help people check their email or post updates or search for information. The computers really help people stay in touch, and that’s important.

The NICU is a very special place to volunteer. My main job there is cuddling babies. We have a wonderful time just rocking and talking and singing nursery rhymes. Newborns, especially preemies, need that warm human touch to thrive. I love babies, and I love holding them.

I also like being able to help Erin and Jennifer in the Volunteer Services office. They often have projects like making copies, folding clothes or restocking supply carts that I can help with so they can devote their time to helping others.
UAMS Organ Donor
Featured in Rose Bowl Parade Float

Eli McGinley, infant son of Jodie and Jesse McGinley, formerly of East End and now of Hewitt, Texas, was one of 81 organ donors honored on the Donate Life float in the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, Calif. on January 2.

Eli and his twin brother, Walker, were born at UAMS Medical Center on August 3, 2009. His parents knew from an ultrasound early in the pregnancy that Eli had spina bifida, a neural tube defect that causes paralysis, and had made arrangements for him to be transferred to Arkansas Children’s Hospital for treatment immediately after birth.

“Eli’s MRI results were worse than we thought, and he had multiple anomalies associated with his spina bifida,” said Jodie. “We learned that if he survived, Eli would have problems for the rest of his life. We knew we were facing some very difficult decisions but we immediately felt a rush of strength that God was preparing us for what was to come.”

“Early on we met with an organ donation organization so Eli might be able to give the gift of life. A representative from ARORA (Arkansas Regional Organ Recovery Agency) informed us that Eli’s heart valves could save possibly two other babies. We planned the removal of his ventricle and prepared our entire family to say their goodbyes.”

The McGinleys were told to expect minutes with their baby once his ventilator and monitor wires were removed on August 6. Members of the UAMS care team asked the McGinleys if they wanted the twins to be together for a little while. With the stress of having tiny babies at two different hospitals, they were encouraged to bring Eli from Children’s Hospital to UAMS to be with his twin brother.

Eli joined Walker in his bassinet. “Once Eli’s hand was placed onto Walker’s little body, his color began to return and a slight smirk came across his face,” said Jodie. “For the first time, we were able to enjoy our Eli, celebrate his life and mourn peacefully, as a family.”

The McGinleys have stayed in close contact with the UAMS team who cared for their sons in the neonatal intensive care unit, and Jodie serves as a volunteer advisor on the unit’s patient and family advisory council.

“The partnership we developed with our care team at UAMS and Children’s brought meaning to our experience and helped us form lifelong relationships with care team members,” said Jodie. “Everyone made sure that we were able to participate in the best way we could in every decision. We are forever grateful to UAMS and Children’s for supporting us in this way.’

Before the parade, a photograph of Eli recreated in seeds and other organic materials was brought to UAMS for finishing. Members of the McGinley’s care team along with representatives from hospital administration helped the family complete the image by placing tiny seeds into the image.

Eli’s heart valve was transplanted into a baby girl in Maine, and she is doing well.

The McGinley family and UAMS employees help complete the image of Eli for the Donate Life float for the Rose Bowl Parade.
The Power of Stories

As people have been doing for centuries, we at UAMS use stories to teach,” said Jeanne Heard, UAMS provost and chief academic officer. “When students come to UAMS, their parents and grandparents are usually fairly young and healthy, and the students have typically had limited exposure to health care.

“Students often struggle to put themselves in the patients’ shoes and cannot relate to the fear and anxiety that patients often feel,” she said. “Personal stories told by patients and family members bring authenticity to the experience. Those stories can make a lot of what we do real to a new student. Hearing one person’s view of an actual patient experience can help explain the philosophy behind patient- and family-centered care.”

UAMS often invites current and former patients as guest speakers for a variety of courses in its medical, nursing, pharmacy, public health and health profession colleges. The colleges also assemble groups of patients to participate in panel discussions on topics such as breast cancer, chemotherapy or patient communication.

“Hearing the patient’s perspective is very powerful,” said Heard. “It’s vital that we support the scientific learning with exposure to actual patients and their perspectives of their care experience. We continually look for opportunities to incorporate patients and families into our curriculum.”

Perhaps the ultimate example of a patient-as-teacher experience took place at Holyoke Community College in the fall of 2012. Martha Keochareon, a retired nurse, called the nursing school there and left a voice message offering herself for a student project on a hospice patient.

A counselor at the college was intrigued and returned the call. A few weeks later, two students arrived at Keochareon’s house and began talking with her. They learned about her first symptoms, which were dismissed as psychosomatic, and her diagnosis with pancreatic cancer in 2006, after she had been sick for several years. The two nursing students working with her were outraged on Keochareon’s behalf at the delay in her diagnosis and were surprised to learn that her reaction was relief because she finally knew what was wrong.

The two nursing students visited with Keochareon at her home for about six weeks and witnessed the disease’s progression and the pain it caused. One of the students said in an interview with The New York Times that she would remember Keochareon “until the day that I die” – especially her resolve. Keochareon died nine days after the students’ last visit.

“It is a privilege to offer students this type of once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience health care from the patient’s perspective, especially with very difficult circumstances and we need to find more ways to do this for our students at UAMS,” said Heard. “In the meantime, we are working to integrate patient and family perspectives whenever possible, especially opportunities to listen to others tell their personal stories and how these experiences made them feel.”

Jeanne Heard, M.D.
Provost, Chief Academic Officer

Join UAMS O.R. BUDS
(Better Understanding During Surgery)!

Compassionate individuals — former patients, family members, retired clinicians, school teachers, etc. — who have time, energy and the willingness to support others during challenging times — are great candidates to participate in the O.R. BUDS Program at UAMS. An O.R. BUD offers support to patients and their families as they go through surgical or interventional procedures. With our trained team of volunteer O.R. BUDS, the focus is to support patients as they prepare for surgery or a procedure and to keep their families — or designated caregiver — informed with the most up to date information. While doctors and nurses provide expert medical care, O.R. BUDS are patient and family advocates sharing timely information, serving as escorts from one area to another and sharing resources and services offered within the hospital.

For more information about how to get involved, contact: Barbie Brunner (501) 296-1237 BWBrunner@uams.edu.
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Jeanne Heard, M.D.

We Want Your Ideas

Qualities of an Advisor:

• Shares ideas in positive ways
• Respects others
• Good listener
• Passion for excellence at UAMS

Important Considerations:

• Current UAMS Medical Center patient
  and/or family member
• Willing to make a one year commitment
• Willingness to learn more about the role of
  an advisor
• Ability to attend monthly meetings

If you would like to learn more about sharing your ideas as a patient or family advisor,

please call Barbie Brunner at (501) 296-1237.