

GIFTS

that **CHANGE LIVES**

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT
Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation



Family Medicine
Residency Program



Essentials for
Patients Battling
Cancer



"Duck Pluckers"
Ambulance



Nursing
Scholarships



Medical Bill Debt
Forgiveness

We're on
a Mission

Gifts to Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation support our mission to improve the health of the people and the communities we serve. To join us, contact Foundation and Development Office manager Kristen Ryrle at 618-463-7701 or kristen.ryrie@amhsf.org.

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Gifts come in all shapes and sizes, but their **IMPACT** on our community is enormous.

As with everyone, the past two years have been both challenging and unique for Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation. Throughout, however, we have managed to continue our advocacy and support for delivery of the best possible health care to the communities we serve thanks to the dedication from our health care heroes.

Despite the obstacles caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen the continued financial and human capital necessary to deal with an extraordinarily difficult environment. The unwavering support from our community of donors and volunteers have helped "pull us through." You ensured that nurses could continue their education, that cancer patients received an extra boost during their vulnerable times and, certainly not least, that we have another "Duck Pluckers" dedicated EMS ambulance on our streets.

As well, we have helped pave the way for future health care excellence in our community. Most notably, the Foundation Board of Directors provided significant funding for the first physician residency program in the region at Alton Memorial Hospital. This family medicine program will create a pipeline of new physicians and is attractive to more experienced physicians looking to serve as mentors. We can be very proud of those significant accomplishments.

In this report, we highlighted a few of the gifts we received most recently. They are fine examples of how your generosity creates better health and well-being in our community.

Whether you have been an ongoing loyal donor, a new partner or a volunteer, we thank you for allowing us to be stewards of your generosity. On behalf of the Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation Board of Directors, thank you for your commitment to improving the health of the communities we serve.

Sincerely,



George S. Milnor

George S. Milnor
Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation Board Chairman



Dave A. Braasch

Dave A. Braasch, RPh., FACHE
Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation Board Member and Alton Memorial Hospital President

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Family Credits Health Care Heroes with Miracle

On Jan. 11, Carol Reckman received a phone call from an Alton Memorial Hospital staff member that she wasn't expecting.



Bill and Carol Reckman

"They said that Bill collapsed in the lobby and to have someone bring me to the hospital," said Carol.

The retired state police officer's wife knew that when someone advises you to have someone drive you to the hospital that it usually isn't a good thing. When she arrived at

the Emergency Room, she met with the chaplain and doctors and was told they couldn't keep her husband's heart beating after being shocked several times.

Bill Reckman had come to the hospital that morning because his cardiologist had ordered a cardiac monitor. Bill had recently noticed his heart rate seemed to drop at night to around 35 beats per minute, but never suspected he would encounter a life-threatening situation.

"That morning, I parked my car, went through the COVID-19 screening process, checked in with registration and took a seat, waiting for my name to be called," Bill said. "I was told I dropped my phone and the entrance screener noticed I was slumped over. She called for help."

A code was called and security officers were the first to arrive and administer CPR. He was then transferred to the Emergency Room.

"It was horrible," Carol said. "He did have a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate order) in place, so we were at the point of trying to keep him alive until the kids arrived. The staff was wonderful. They did everything they could to keep us informed and I feel very fortunate that the adult children were allowed in."

That afternoon, Bill was moved to ICU and a heart cath was ordered at AMH. That's when the family learned Bill had been tested for COVID-19 before the procedure and the results came back positive.

"Originally, we thought it was just a heart situation; now we had a potential cause, but he had had no COVID symptoms," said Carol.

During the cath, doctors discovered a previous stent had caught a clot that went to his heart. They removed that clot and kept the original stent in place. They put in a temporary pacemaker and an Impella to help pump his blood. Bill was then transferred to Christian Hospital in north St. Louis County for additional treatment.

"We watched the ambulance drive away," Carol said. "Not being able to follow was really tough."

During the height of the pandemic, visitors to hospitals were restricted to keep patients, staff and the public safe.

"The staff was great and they let us Facetime with him, even during times he was unconscious or mentally confused," Carol said. "It was the best we could do under those circumstances."

A week later, while the Impella was being removed, blood clots were found in Bill's leg and two stents were inserted.

During Bill's stay, Carol made trips to the hospital to drop off clean clothes with hospital security. On Jan. 23, she went to drop off clothes again and was told he was coming home. Their children prepared the home for Bill's homecoming and welcomed him when they arrived.

"Looking back, I am very surprised by the improvements I made in such a short period of time and how quickly my mind cleared," Bill said. "It felt so good to be home."

Bill did two weeks of in-home physical therapy twice per week to help with his balance and continued recovery.

"I am 75 years old, and always have been in pretty good shape," he said.

Bill followed up with Dr. Rama Gondi, his cardiologist at Alton Memorial Hospital who had ordered the heart monitor.

"Dr. Gondi didn't know about my latest episode," Bill said. "When I told him what

happened, he said if it had happened anywhere else, I may not be here. I credit the entire staff - from security, nurses, the emergency room doctor, ICU team, and the chaplain. They all saved my life and we truly appreciate them very much."

To show their appreciation, the Reckmans made a gift to Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation in honor of those staff members.

“The word ‘miracle’ can’t be used often enough.”

"The word 'miracle' can't be used often enough," Carol said.

"The Lord works in mysterious ways. At least five different things had to happen, so many things aligned. This could not have been coincidental."

After a very scary start to 2021, the Reckmans are getting back to normal. Bill is working on the farm.

Other than some upper body stamina that he lost, he and his doctors say that he is recovered.

The couple is looking forward to its annual family trip to explore national parks. They, their children, their spouses and eight grandchildren are planning to visit Yellowstone National Park.

"It really will be a celebration," Carol said. "Our gratitude goes to our kids and grandkids, too. They really pulled together and provided support for each other."

Residency Program Creates a Pipeline of New Physicians

The first residents of the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine Alton Family Medicine Residency Program began their three-year training at Alton Memorial Hospital.

A ribbon cutting was held July 2 in the program's new offices on the ground floor of Medical Office Building B on the AMH campus. Representatives from AMH, BJC, Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation (SIHF) and SIU School of Medicine attended.

"We are excited to be partnering with Alton Memorial Hospital and Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation in this program," said Rebecca Hoffman, MD, MSPH, director of the program. "These organizations have a long and rich history of providing education, care and service to the populations of the area. Our shared vision for education, and patient and community care allow for many opportunities throughout our service areas."

Dave Braasch, president of Alton Memorial Hospital, reflected on several years of planning and thanked everyone for their diligence and patience.

"Today is a momentous day in the history of the hospital," Braasch said. "I really want to thank Dr. Hoffman for her persistence and commitment throughout what has ultimately been a seven-year journey, particularly in the midst of a pandemic. It's a great day for our community as well, as we are training these physicians in Family Medicine."

Dr. Hoffman said she recognized the need for the program after her experience working in express care and private practice.

"There simply weren't enough family physicians around, and patient access was poor," she said. "Those family physicians with thriving practices were also planning retirement within the next 5-10 years."

After years of planning, the green light was given in August 2019. The round of interviews for the first class was all virtual because of the pandemic.

"I would like to recognize these fine resident physicians and their hard work as partners in the success of this program," Dr. Hoffman said. "I wish you a hearty congratulations for all you have accomplished to get to this point and all that you will accomplish and experience over the coming three years of your journey with us as partners in education and training, service, outreach, and scholarship."

SIU School of Medicine's Department of Family and Community Medicine has four other Family Medicine residency programs in Illinois – in Springfield, Quincy, Decatur and Carbondale, which have collectively graduated more than 900 Family Medicine physicians since the first residency program started in 1971.

“We are quite pleased that the Foundation is playing a significant part in funding Alton Memorial’s new Family Practice Residency Program,” said George Milnor, Chairman of Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation. “With it, in coordination with SIUE, we now have six ongoing positions for emerging family practice doctors. These will not only help strengthen our family medical services over time, but will offer the possibility that these Residents will settle in our area for their professional careers. The program is a win-win situation for all.”



The first six residents of the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine Alton Family Medicine Residency Program cut the ribbon on July 2. The residents from left to right are Dr. Christina Govas, Dr. Tyler Wright, Dr. Nazanin Kheirkhahan, Dr. Jonathan Klarich, Dr. Andrea Ramos Richards and Dr. Torry Pledger.

The Class of 2024

Christina Govas, MD

Nazanin Kheirkhahan, MD

Jonathan Klarich, MD

Torry Pledger, MD

Andrea Ramos Richards, MD, MPH

Tyler Wright, MD

Awesome Experience



Sybil Davis came to the Emergency Department at Alton Memorial Hospital and wanted to let everyone know about the excellent care she received.

“My fibromyalgia flared up and I was in severe pain. I couldn't put on shoes, open a door and couldn't hold anything. I asked my sister to drive me to the Emergency Department at Alton Memorial Hospital because I couldn't take it anymore. Within five minutes of arriving, they took me back to be seen. I was confused because I could not concentrate due to the extreme pain. My nurse practitioner, Gail Rene Viviano, was patient, considerate and explained everything to me. They took blood samples right away. I didn't have to sit and wait. They gave me the correct pill to calm the flare-up. I was relieved to feel like someone was truly taking care of me.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, my sister had to wait in the car, but it wasn't long before I was back out and we were headed home.

Alton Memorial has always been my hospital and my doctors are there. I've never needed to use the ER, but I am so grateful it was there when I needed it.

They saved my life. I don't know what I would have done without the excellent care I received at Alton Memorial Hospital.”

— Sybil A. Davis, Dow, IL

Honor a Health Care Hero!

If you or a loved one had an **AWESOME** experience at Alton Memorial Hospital, go to the Foundation's website to tell us about it. You may also choose to make a gift to the Foundation to honor the employee, physician or volunteer. Your honoree will be recognized with a special badge sticker that identifies them as **AWESOME** and your gift will be used to improve patient care at AMH.



The Duck Plucker committee members and hospital leaders gathered around the newest ambulance to join the fleet at Alton Memorial Hospital. The truck, purchased with proceeds from the Duck Pluckers Ball, has distinct, camouflage doors that serve as a tribute to all who supported the fundraiser.

Duck Pluckers Raises More Than \$128,000 for AMH Ambulance

Thanks once again to the overwhelming support of the community, Alton Memorial Hospital's 12th Duck Pluckers, Deer Skinners & Fish Hookers Ball raised \$128,379 on a perfect late summer evening at the scenic NILO Farms in Brighton, Ill.

Attendees perused the auction items and observed the ever-popular Homer Clark Quail Flush Championship, won for the third straight year by Chris Elliot and Eric Williams. An outstanding steak dinner was served up by the Morrison's Food and Nutrition staff from AMH, followed by a fast-paced live auction and the music of Flatliner.

The evening also included several other fun contests, and one "celebrity" winner was Rich Liekweg, President and CEO of BJC HealthCare, who was on the mark in winning the "C-Note Archery Contest."

The online auction, held this year for the first time, raised close to \$9,000. There was no Duck Pluckers event last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but things stabilized just enough this year for the event to resume – much to the delight of all.

(Continued on pg. 8)

“The event is once again a testament to strong community support,” said AMH President Dave Braasch. “It is more evidence of the community standing tall to ensure access to the very best emergency medical care and that state-of-the-art ambulances are here when needed. Alton Memorial is the only hospital-based ambulance fleet in the area.”

“The event is once again a testament to strong community support.”

Each year, the Duck Pluckers Ball raises funds for a new ambulance equipped with life-saving equipment, such as automated CPR machines, Glidescopes for patients in respiratory distress and Zoll cardiac monitors. During the past 12 years, Duck Pluckers ambulances at AMH have made more than 95,000 trips. Out of those, more than 5,000 patients were treated for chest pain and almost 500 patients were in cardiac arrest.

“The FIRSTNET technology on board the trucks allow us to do 12-lead EKGs from anywhere — at home, business or on the road,” said AMH EMS manager Jason Bowman. “The EKG can be transmitted to a doctor at any hospital in the greater Alton area before the patient arrives in the Emergency Department. This critical information helps the doctor determine if the patient is having an active heart attack so treatment can begin immediately on arrival.”

AMH ambulance services cover a 475-square-mile area in Jersey, Macoupin and Madison counties. The newest state-of-the-art ambulance was built out and hit the streets to provide life-saving services this fall.

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Teams of two competed in the Homer Clark Quail Flush Championship, and for the third straight year, Chris Elliot and Eric Williams took home the title. Mary Kirchner, daughter of Homer Clark Jr., presented the award to the winners.

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Riverbend Axe Throwing
Rolling Hills Golf Course
Kristen Ryrie and Matthew Turkovic



For the first time, guests competed in an axe throwing competition. The person with the highest score won a gift certificate to Riverbend Axe Throwing in East Alton, Ill.

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AWESOME Reviews

I can't say enough about the care
I received—the staff is caring and
extremely skilled and kind.





Duck Plucker guest Chrysa Coulsey showcased the adorable yellow lab puppy auctioned at the event.

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Banners with personalized messages created a 101-foot Ribbon of Strength at Gordon Moore Park on March 20. Thank you to the Alton Parks and Recreation Department, Schwartzkopf Printing and Mike Mathus for your partnership on this project.

Symbol of Strength Honors Cancer Patients

Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation is thankful for the dozens of businesses, families and individuals who donated to its first Ribbon of Strength campaign.

Because of their generosity, \$10,295 was raised to support cancer patients at Alton Memorial Hospital. The donations will go to the Foundation's Extra Mile and You've Got a Friend funds which help patients who experience financial hardships as a result of their diagnosis or treatment. The gifts will pay for the patients' essentials - gas, car repairs, rent, mortgage, utilities - so they can focus on treatment, healing and recovery.

Donors could also personalize banners with messages of encouragement for patients, to

memorialize those they have lost and to honor those who have won the fight. The Foundation staff laid out the banners to form a 101-foot purple ribbon at Gordon Moore Park on March 20.

"We hope the patients will see this symbol and it will serve as a reminder that they are not alone, they have an entire community behind them," said Kristen Ryrie, manager of Foundation and Development. "We thank everyone for donating to this fundraiser and we hope to do it again next spring."

Ribbon of Strength Donors

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Winner's Circle Automotive



AWESOME Reviews

We had contact with so many people and I don't remember their names, but it's the same story, kind and professional, both with us, and each other. ”



Lynna Humbert presents Kristen Ryrie, AMHSF manager, a check for \$5,000 on behalf of LoveJoy United Presbyterian Church.

Church Creates New Fund for AMH Patients

The legacy of three churches supporting their communities lives on through a donation to Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation.

The leaders of LoveJoy United Presbyterian Church in Wood River voted to donate \$5,000 to be used to help pay patients' bills resulting from care received at Alton Memorial Hospital. The Foundation and church hope it will prevent patients with financial challenges from going into collections.

The funds were the result of the closing of Elm Street Presbyterian Church in Alton and the merger between the congregations of College Avenue Presbyterian Church of Alton and United Presbyterian Church of Wood River to form LoveJoy.



Minola Jackson (in the front row) celebrated her 100th birthday surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Nursing School Grad Reflects on AMH Experience on 100th Birthday

A birthday party held in suburban Los Angeles has strong connections to the history of Alton Memorial Hospital. Minola (Lueking) Jackson turned 100 years old on April 16, with a party including friends, relatives and city officials from Lakewood, CA.

"The centenarian, a Wood River native, was able to look back at a long, happy life – with one of the key chapters being her time as a student at the Alton Memorial Hospital School of Nursing. She was among the first students of the school, which opened in 1938 and existed until 1973. Minola was part of the second graduating class in 1942 and could be the oldest living graduate.

"Nursing school was a great time for me," Minola said in a phone interview. "I have such good memories of everything. I remember we had to go to chapel every morning since it was a Methodist hospital, then we ate breakfast and were on duty by 7 a.m."

But her best memory might have been one of the patients at AMH named William Jackson. The couple eventually married and had five children. Minola now has 12 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren, "and more on the way," she says proudly.

(Continued on pg. 18)



Minola (Lueking) Jackson graduated from the nursing school at Alton Memorial Hospital on April 17, 1942.

William Jackson, who graduated from Shurtleff College in Alton, was an aerospace engineer and worked in Baltimore, where the couple married before the family moved to California. Minola, meanwhile, worked at AMH as well as the old Wood River Township Hospital and South Bay Hospital in Redondo Beach, Calif. Then she worked as a volunteer in area hospitals for almost 20 years after her retirement in 1982.

But her time at the AMH School of Nursing set the tone for everything, and of course Minola was very familiar with Miss Eunice Smith.

"We saw her out in the flower beds every morning," she said. "Miss Eunice liked to keep everything looking beautiful. And she was very good to the nursing students. She furnished our uniforms and took care of us."

Minola also remembers each day walking up and down the 104 steps that connected the hospital to Rock Springs Drive. Perhaps staying in shape from that helped her reach her 100th birthday, though there could be another reason.

"We didn't have all this junk food when I was young," she said with a laugh.

Her 100th birthday party at her home was a great success.

"She loved everything about it," said Minola's daughter, Barbara Koelkebeck. "We had 100 balloons in the living room, pictures of her life, yard signs and her grandkids made a big rollout sign for the occasion. We also had the mayor and a councilman stop by to make a proclamation, plus the Police and Fire departments came by the house."

Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation sent her some memorabilia honoring the nursing school, and Minola also received boxes of items from both the Los Angeles Lakers and Dodgers. Other nursing school alumnae were asked to send cards to Minola – and she received quite a few from them.

“
Nursing school
was a great
time for me.”

"The great thing was we were able to keep quiet about it until the big day," Barbara said.

The AMH School of Nursing opened March 1, 1938. A graduate nursing staff provided instruction across a range of subjects. Students were rated and needed to meet the maximum requirements of the Illinois State Department of Education and Registration. Tuition at the time for three years (RN degree) totaled \$150. A total of 626 nurses, including nine men, graduated from the school in its 35-year history.

Lewis and Clark Community College began its nursing program in the fall of 1971, which phased out the nursing schools at both Alton Memorial and the former St. Joseph's Hospital in Alton. The LCCC program, however, used practical experiences at the local hospitals. AMH Nursing School alumni from all over the country gather in Alton every two years for a reunion.

Retired Nurse Pays It Forward with Gift to Scholarship Fund

The first recipient of a nursing scholarship gave back to the very fund that propelled her nursing career.

Wilma Pletsch, of Springfield, Ill., made a gift in 2021 to the Templin Scholarship Fund of Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation.

The fund was started by local resident Roger Templin, who died in 1976 at the age of 103. Templin's will designated \$1 million to the hospital for nursing education. Over the years, thousands of nurses and nursing students have benefitted from his generosity.

In the 1970s, Pletsch worked as a nurse in the OR at Alton Memorial and developed an interest in anesthesiology. She was a single mom with two kids, so she wasn't thinking of furthering her education. Then, she learned about the fund and spoke to the doctor who oversaw it.

"The next thing I knew, I was accepted at St. John's College of Nursing in Springfield," Pletsch said.

"Not only did the scholarship pay for my tuition, but it gave me \$700 a month to live on."

The opportunity was too good to pass up, so she packed up and moved to Springfield. After two years, she graduated with a diploma in anesthesia.

"I tell everyone it was the best move I ever made," Pletsch said.

As part of the Templin Scholarship agreement, recipients work at Alton Memorial Hospital to help reimburse the cost of the tuition, so Pletsch moved back to Alton and spent two more years at the hospital. Her career then took her all over the country until she retired in 2011.

"It was such a rewarding career," Pletsch said. "I wouldn't have done anything differently and I would recommend anesthesia to any young nurse. It is extremely rewarding, as well as lots of responsibility."

She wanted other young nurses to have the same opportunities, so she decided to donate to the Templin Fund.

"I would encourage anyone who is looking to further their education to apply," Pletsch said. "It's well worth every minute of their time to work at Alton Memorial Hospital and pay it back."

Nurses or nursing students have received scholarships to further their education. This year, the Templin Fund provided scholarships for 12 staff members, totaling more than \$57,000. An additional \$34,000 was spent on continuing education for staff RNs.



Wilma Pletsch was the first recipient of a Templin Scholarship. She and her husband, Quentin, recently celebrated her birthday at a St. Louis restaurant.



AMH leaders, left to right, Rusty Ingram, Debbie Turpin, Dave Braasch, Brad Goacher and Teri Bequette joined in the photo.

Housekeeper Memorialized after 42 Years of Service

Housekeeping supervisors Don Ackerman and Melissa Lemarr sit on either side of an empty chair honoring the memory of longtime Housekeeping employee Randy Staton, who passed away in February.

When he passed, employees and retired donated more than \$850 in Randy's memory to Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation. A portion of the proceeds were used to purchase a plaque commemorating Randy's 42 years of service and hangs near the cafe entrance.

Ackerman says Randy's two favorite things were the St. Louis Cardinals and Alton Memorial, so it was only right that the plaque included a famous quote from St. Louis Cardinals broadcaster Jack Buck, "That's a winner."



A tribute to Randy Staton for his long-time service to Alton Memorial Hospital hangs in the Beeby Wing lobby near the cafeteria.



Bonnie Wopp delivered stockings filled with layettes that she made for the newborns at Alton Memorial Hospital.

Passion Project Benefits AMH Newborns

A talented sewist who wants to make a difference used her talents to benefit new moms and babies at Alton Memorial Hospital.

In November 2020, Bonnie Wopp delivered dozens of stockings filled with layettes for newborns at the hospital's Women & Infants Department. Staff identified moms who could use some extra help and distributed them.

Wopp first began creating layettes as a member of Newborns in Need when she lived near Springfield, Mo.

"It's always been important to me to give back," said Wopp. "We would hear from nurses and staff about the impact our creations had on moms going through tough times. It really touched me."

After more than 20 years of sewing for the group, she moved to Godfrey and discovered there was

not a Newborns in Need chapter in the area. She took it upon herself to take up the project to benefit AMH newborns.

"This has always been something close to my heart," Wopp said. "You don't hear of many people who sew, so I wanted to continue this project now that I am retired."

Wopp hopes her gifts will warm the hearts of new moms and their children.

"I realized how powerful something like this could be," she said. "You create something for someone you will never meet or see. I hope someday the child realizes a stranger knew how precious they are."



AWESOME Reviews

The care you gave my son was above and beyond. I am truly grateful for your kindness.





Jessica Phelan, a board member for the Givin' It All for Guts Foundation, dropped off comfort bags and snacks to AMH Outpatient Infusion Center assistant nurse manager Jill Allen on April 2. The goodies were distributed to patients with Crohn's disease and colitis.

AWESOME Reviews

“She took the time and showed compassion and is the true meaning of an RN.”

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In honor of AMH employees

AWESOME Reviews

“I was made to feel comfortable and safe while I was here. This is the best hospital.”

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AWESOME Reviews

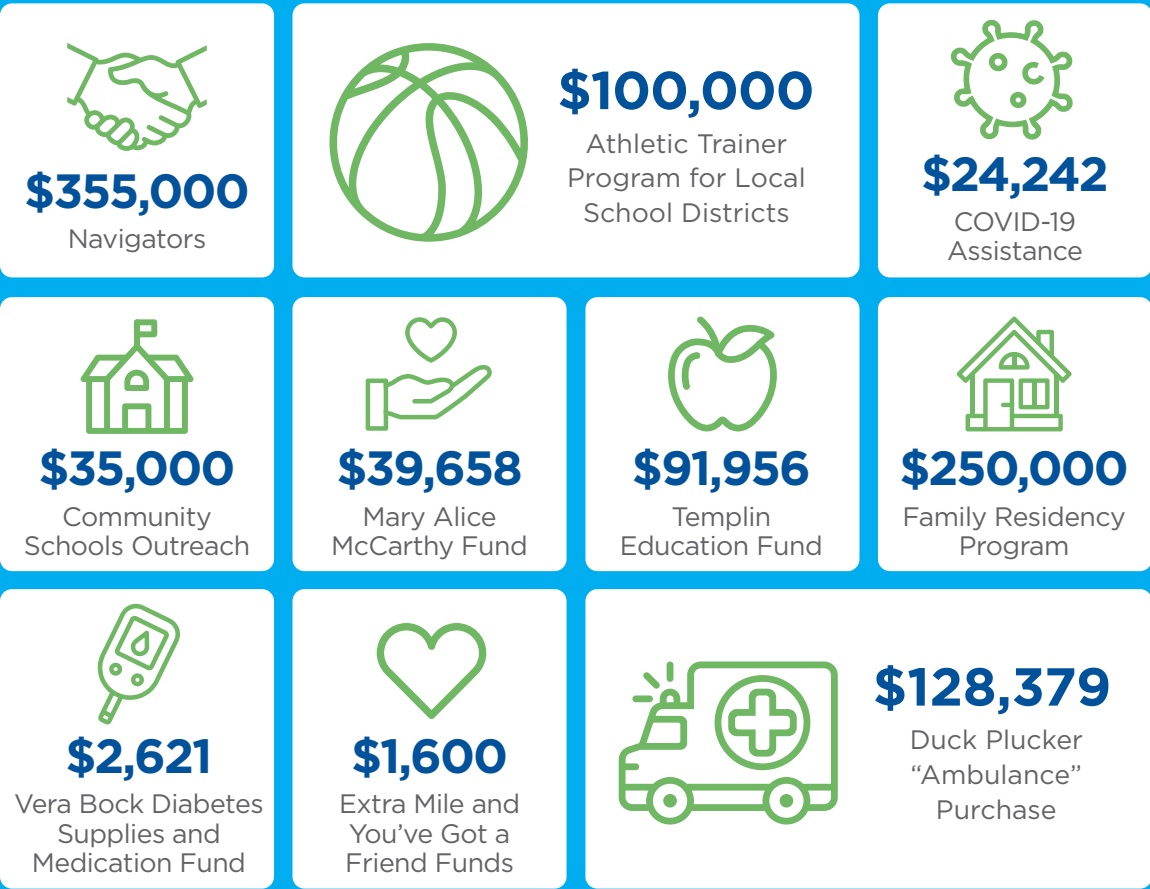
“She is a stellar nurse. She listens to her patients and hears what they say. She is a blessing to the staff at Alton Memorial Hospital.”

Financial Highlights



Your Support at Work

In fiscal year 2020-2021, these are 10 areas that were funded through donations made to Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation.



The logo consists of a light blue diamond shape. Inside the diamond, the text "Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation" is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font, stacked in four lines.

Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation

AltonMemorialHealthServicesFoundation.org

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