



## **EVERY DAY HERO**

### **Pam and Terry Roach**

In sickness and in health.

I'm not sure where to start. I'm nominating my parents, Pam and Terry Roach as every day heroes. They have been thru more than anyone I know and I nominate them together.

In the 10th grade, my dad was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Almost every day he went to work. EVERY DAY. Chemo and radiation kept him sick, but he'd put on his baseball cap and suit and tie and go to work at Bank One. He is now cancer free.

Fast forward to 11 years ago. My mom (who's parent's are also both cancer survivors) is diagnosed with Melanoma. She undergoes Interferon. The Dr. said he knows military men that can't even handle that treatment. Not my mom. She does and doesn't look back. She is now cancer free.

Partners thru life. Partners thru cancer.

They have been involved with the Relay for Life of Forest Hills for years. Whether chairing the event or being on several committees every year, their team has raised over \$100,000.

My mom and dad are also instrumental in the volunteer work at the ACS Hope Lodge in Grand Rapids. My mom started the Prayer Shawl ministry at the Hope Lodge and has expanded it to cancer centers around GR. Each person that stays at the Hope Lodge is undergoing cancer treatment. They stay free of charge. My mom gets/makes prayer shawls donated (600 a year) so the patients can stay warm during treatment. They have met her, not knowing her story and cry when they hug her. They get that one bit of comfort during their treatment.

Have I rattled on too long? I hope so. I hope that you are crying because of how wonderful these two people are. They are amazing and hero isn't a strong enough word.

Ask anyone that knows them. They are two amazing people to know.

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## INNOVATION HERO

### Care Resources

The ideal of healthcare reform would include a model that is cost effective, preventative, high quality, holistic, coordinated by an interdisciplinary care team, considered a one-stop shopping medical home and that which addresses the fastest growing segment of the population-- senior citizens, There is a model of healthcare in Kent County that includes all these components and is already being implemented. The model is known as PACE, an acronym for Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, and the organization that implements it is Care Resources, based out of Grand Rapids,

Care Resources is the first PACE healthcare program in West Michigan and began providing services in 2006. As a comprehensive, long-term model it answers the question of how to care for our aging seniors while keeping them at home (where they truly want to remain). And so Care Resources provides everything the elderly need to allow them to age in place.

Care Resources responds to all of the challenges seniors face by providing primary and specialty care (keeping them out of the ER), managing & dispensing medications with an on-site pharmacy, providing medical transportation, offering physical and occupational therapy (without benefit limitations), providing recreational activities at our adult day center to increase socialization and reduce isolation, coordinating primary care, dental, audiology, optometry and podiatry care all under one roof at our health clinic and having a personal care team for them to walk with through the end of life.

The best of healthcare exists in Care Resources through the PACE program. While PACE is designed for senior citizens it could become an innovative healthcare model for any segment of the population, Why not emulate this model for children with cancer or women with heart disease or teenagers with Type II diabetes?

Care Resources is providing truly innovative care for the seniors in Kent County. We are honored to be able to serve the people we care for each day. We believe our mission is fulfilled one person at a time by offering long-term care choices that promote independence, dignity and a high quality of life for the elderly members of our community.

Thank you for considering Care Resources as an Innovative Health Hero.



## **ORGANIZATIONAL HERO**

### **Catherine's Health Center**

Catherine's Health Center is a non-profit community-based health facility dedicated to serving low-income, uninsured residents of the northeast sections of Grand Rapids, Michigan, primarily those who live in the Creston and Belknap neighborhoods. Supporting the center's activities are a governing board and group of volunteers working to make health care available to those in need.

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### **Health Intervention Services**

Health Intervention Services is a medical mission in our own back yard. Serving the uninsured working class of the greater Grand Rapids area, HIS relies heavily on the gifts, talents and generosity of its 150 volunteers, 88 of whom are health care professionals. They are committed to providing good quality health care and patient education on health issues affecting the well being of their patients.

Many HIS patients are Hispanic. However, the clinic also meets the needs of many refugees and immigrants from countries in Europe, Central and Southeast Asia, Central and South America, the Middle East and Africa. We offer our services in both English and Spanish having an extensive list of interpreters who volunteer when needed.

HIS has 1300 patient contacts/month who receive medical, dental, optical services as well as psychological and spiritual counseling. They also have access to a social worker. Most of the patients at HIS are within 150% of the poverty level based on Federal guidelines. Since all of the patients are without health insurance, Medicaid or Medicare, they are asked to participate in paying a small fee based on their current income level. The minimum fee for a medical and dental visit is \$20. This partnership brings about a sense of dignity and respect between patient and provider.

The volunteers are supported by a small staff of professionals many of whom are bilingual, including a medical and dental director, executive director and a development staff.



HIS would not be able to provide the services we do without the financial support of individuals, organizations and foundations in West Michigan. We are very appreciative of all the support shown since our doors first opened over 12 years ago.

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## **West Michigan Therapy Dogs**

When a child with cancer lights up with excitement on the day they visit, a patient thought to be immobile reaches out to stroke their soft fur, or a teenager with severe injuries puts her pain aside to soak up their unconditional love...lives are touched, health is improved and challenges are overcome. The "Health Heroes" making this lasting impact on our community don't wear white coats or dispense medication. They have four legs, wet noses and open hearts. They are the compassionate canines of West Michigan Therapy Dogs, who along with their dedicated handlers have been doing their healing work on an entirely volunteer basis for the last ten years.

WMTD is a non-profit organization with more than 250 active members. After undergoing special training and testing, these local dog owners and their family pets provide pet therapy in more than 50 facilities across West Michigan. From hospitals and rehab centers to schools, nursing homes, hospice, and programs for troubled teens... handlers and dogs not only provide comfort to patients and families, they team with health professionals to advance recovery.

Anyone who's had a dog put his head in their lap at the end of a rough day knows how a loving animal can lift your spirits. Medical research has also shown that pet therapy has a positive impact on health... reducing stress, lowering blood pressure and altering behaviors. Studies support what the volunteers at West Michigan Therapy Dogs have witnessed first hand.

Knowing they could make a difference in countless lives is what motivated Terrilynne Lymburner and Jeanne Lewis to create West Michigan Therapy Dogs in 2001. Terrilynne had been visiting Kent Community Hospital with her Portuguese Water Dog, Maxine, for over two years, and she knew Jeanne, a dog trainer and animal enthusiast, shared her passion for using dogs to promote health and well-being. Both Terrilynne and Jeanne are trained evaluators for an international pet therapy organization called Delta Society International. Their expertise, training and enthusiasm gave birth to organized pet therapy here in West Michigan, and it wasn't long before they pulled others into the fold.

Today, West Michigan Therapy Dogs is also very committed to nurturing new handlers. The organization trains about 60 new teams every year, as the group's leaders encourage others to learn about pet therapy and develop the skills needed for high quality care. More than 700 people have gone through the program since classes began in 2003. Volunteers are also continually establishing relationships with facilities in our



community that could benefit from therapy programs, while donating their time to give presentations, participate in special events and spread the message of how dozens of local canine companions from 6-pound Yorkies to 200-pound Great Danes are truly "Making a Difference... One Wag at a Time!"

## REGIONAL HERO

### Mary Free Bed Guild

The history of healthcare in Grand Rapids is full of stories featuring generous and forward thinking groups and individuals. One of the most **influential** groups, whose impact has been felt all over the region, is the Mary Free Bed Guild of Grand Rapids.

The Guild's story began with a purse found on the street containing a small amount of coins. Since the owner of the purse couldn't be located, the woman who discovered it decided to do something **charitable** with the money.

This woman and her friends recognized the **need for medical care for patients of limited financial means** in our community, so they embarked on a fund-raising campaign to secure the use of a free bed in one of the local hospitals. They asked community members to add to the coins found in the purse.

Their approach was creative – they solicited contributions from everyone named Mary, as well as from those having friends or relatives with the name. Soon, enough money was raised to **support one free bed**. Because of the campaign, the bed became known as the "Mary Free Bed."

As the fund and community need grew, more women joined the effort. In 1911 the group of ladies became incorporated as the Mary Free Bed Guild of Grand Rapids.

These ladies were constantly attuned to the changing **needs** in the community, and in the 1930's the Guild realized that one bed wasn't enough to meet community need. A 12-bed children's convalescent home was opened at 1411 East Fulton Street.



Throughout the 1940's, the guild became more focused on treating and rehabilitating children, and **expanded its services** to provide care for patients with cerebral palsy as well as inpatient and outpatient care for amputee patients. Patients from all over the region were attracted to the services provided by Mary Free Bed. The Guild continued to grow and expand services over the next several decades, and added programs for adults in the 1960's.

Today, the hospital is owned by the 120 women who serve as members of the Mary Free Bed Guild of Grand Rapids. These dedicated ladies continue the tradition of **servicing those with disabilities** through the operation of the 80-bed Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital.

The hospital is now a **regional** facility, treating patients from Michigan as well as other states in the Midwest. A wide range of programs are offered at Mary Free Bed, and patients are cared for by a team of clinicians who work collaboratively to help restore independence. The hospital provides comprehensive inpatient, outpatient and clinic rehabilitation programs, treating people of all age. Not only does the guild own the hospital, but it manages an endowment, known as the Mary Free Bed Fund, that is committed to **financially supporting** the programs at Mary Free Bed as well as community organizations that address the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Over the last 22 years, the guild has contributed **more than \$16.4 million dollars** to hospital and community programs exclusively focusing on increasing the quality of life for those living with disability. More than 50 different organizations and countless residents of our state have benefitted from the generous support of the Mary Free Bed Guild of Grand Rapids. This commitment to west Michigan, as well as the surrounding communities, will surely have an impact for many years to come!

## **RISING HERO**

### **Leslie King-Borrego**

Leslie has overcome addiction and prostitution to become an advocate/activist for other women still in this destructive lifestyle. She offers environments in which women can heal, embrace sobriety and



receive support in one of 3 transitional homes. Leslie will receive her college degree in April as a social worker. She is also a survivor of sexual abuse as a child and 2 heart attacks, yet she remains a tireless advocate. I personally am a Sacred Beginnings Graduate and am thriving in college. I must give thanks to Leslie for seeing in me what others couldn't. She saved my life and I'm sure many others would claim the same. Sacred Beginning is also going to become a licensed inpatient our patient rehab. License is pending.

## **UNSUNG HERO**

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### **Margaret Howard**

Margaret is the single parent of three. The oldest is a special needs adult whose young daughter she is also raising. She first came to my attention when she offered to organize Flu shot clinics at our inner city church some years ago, an effort she continues to arrange annually serving a Spanish speaking, low income population. A couple of years ago her ex-husband was diagnosed with cancer. She immediately took on much of his care commuting back and forth to Chicago to help out. She discovered that minorities were vastly under-represented in the marrow donation registries and that her African American ex-husband was in need of a transplant. Margaret began organizing donor registration drives targeting minority populations. She contacted Churches with large African American congregations. She passionately educated pastors and ministers in her effort to recruit donors. Her children's father never found a donor and died a year or so ago.

She continues her efforts to educate on health concerns with a health fair run in conjunction with our Parish festival. She is always ready with a helping hand for others facing illness. When Margaret arranged for them to stay with members of her family living there.

I am in awe of this woman's heart for service in the health care arena. I am sure there are more examples that I know nothing about. Margaret doesn't advertise or toot her own horn. She rolls up her sleeves to see what she can do.