

Momentum.

Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation Newsletter

Volume 35 / Winter 2025

Mary Free Bed[™]
Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation



UPCOMING EVENTS

April 30
Let Freedom Spring Luncheon
Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park
Benefiting Mary's Mission

May 10
Amway River Bank Run
25k Wheelchair & Handcycle Divisions
Downtown Grand Rapids
Sponsored by the
Mary Free Bed Guild

June 2
Mary Free Bed Open
Presented by Kent
Quality Foods
Thousand Oaks Golf Club
Benefiting Wheelchair and
Adaptive Sports

WHAT'S NEW

THRIVE GALA SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON STROKE REHABILITATION

The Mary Free Bed Foundation's annual Thrive Gala, presented by Buist Electric, brought together over 1,200 supporters on November 9 for an unforgettable evening celebrating hope and resilience in stroke rehabilitation. Held at DeVos Place, Thrive was a resounding success, raising funds to enhance and expand programs and services for patients recovering from strokes. Guests enjoyed an inspiring night of stories, entertainment, and generosity, all in support of Mary Free Bed's mission to restore hope and freedom.

Guests were welcomed by WOODTV8 anchor and journalist, Brittany Flowers, who set the tone for a night of inspiration. A heartfelt invocation was given by Mary Free Bed Kids graduate Ariyana James, who shared how her time at Mary Free Bed following a stroke at age 16 transformed her life. The moment showcased the dedication of Mary Free Bed's compassionate team members to serving patients of all ages.

Following the invocation, Mary Free Bed CEO Kent Riddle delivered energetic remarks, highlighting Mary Free Bed's commitment to advancing stroke rehabilitation and the critical role community support plays in transforming lives. Kent also emphasized the transformative power of gratitude, reflecting on how it strengthens connections and inspires healing within us all.

The highlight of the program was a powerful story shared by speech-language pathologist Jaimie Farrington, who recounted Jennifer Vredeveld's stroke recovery journey through the metaphor of climbing a mountain. She described Jennifer's determination, setbacks, and triumphs, painting a compelling picture of resilience and teamwork that left event guests deeply inspired.

Because of the generosity of Growtrust Partners, AdvisaCare, and Dave and Carol Burgess who provided a matching gift fund, supporters rose to the occasion with enthusiasm, surpassing the match and amplifying the evening's impact for stroke rehabilitation programs. Thrive concluded with a live performance from Bluewater Kings Band, who had guests dancing and celebrating well into the evening.

Thanks to the guests, sponsors, and donors, the 2024 Thrive Gala raised over \$300,000 in net funds, which will directly support hope and healing for those at Mary Free Bed who have been impacted by stroke. The Foundation extends heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made the event a success!

To make a gift in support of Mary Free Bed's stroke rehabilitation programs, visit maryfreebed.com/give.

Save the date for the 2025 Thrive Gala to be held on Saturday, November 8 at DeVos Place in downtown Grand Rapids.

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Discover
the impact
you've made.



Scan the QR code to explore Mary Free Bed's 2024 Impact Report.

THANK YOU, THRIVE SPONSORS!

Presented by: **BUIST**
Raising The Standard
Electrical | Technology | Engineering

EXCLUSIVE

Afterglow Party: **THE STEVE & AMY VAN ANDEL FOUNDATION**

Bar: **PET SUPPLIES PLUS**
Minus the hassle.

Elite Sponsor Reception: **The Currie Foundation**

Entertainment: **MERRILL**
A BANK OF AMERICA COMPANY

Photobooth: **CARELINC**
Medical Equipment & Supply

Technology: **TRACE3**

Welcome: **MILLER JOHNSON**
Attorneys

WOW Moment: **Jenny M. Peterson Foundation**

Freedom Sponsor: **GROW TRUST**
partners

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Connection Sponsor: **Kapnick**

Dessert: **cluster**

Lounge: **Joan Secchia**

Orange Carpet: **CARELINC**
Medical Equipment & Supply

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Dave & Carol Burgess

Corewell Health

Take His Hand Foundation

Bradley & Jennifer Taylor

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MOMENTS TO REMEMBER: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THRIVE GALA



INSIDE MARY FREE BED

VANDY'S PAW-SITIVE RETIREMENT

Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation bid a fond farewell to a beloved member of its team—Vandy, the hospital's first animal assisted intervention (AAI) therapy dog. Vandy, a furry beacon of hope and joy, has been dedicated to restoring hope and freedom for patients since joining Mary Free Bed in 2016.



Vandy, the first-ever AAI graduate from Paws With A Cause®, has over 1,200 therapy visits under her collar by engaging patients of all ages and abilities in a range of therapeutic settings. Vandy would encourage patients to walk a little farther or sit up independently. Patients in speech therapy would give verbal commands, while others improved their strength by brushing Vandy or throwing a ball.

Throughout her years, Vandy has been supported by the Mary Free Bed Foundation, including generous individual donors and corporate partners such as Pet Supplies Plus. We are wishing Vandy a paws-itive retirement filled with tail-wagging adventures and well-deserved belly rubs!

BREAKFAST WITH THE CEO: SERVING UP SUCCESS AND WHAT'S TO COME

This fall, Mary Free Bed Foundation donors, leaders, and friends came together for the annual Breakfast with the CEO. After enjoying a delicious meal and meaningful conversation, attendees heard from Mary Free Bed CEO Kent Riddle, who shared inspiring highlights from the past year and offered a glimpse into the exciting developments ahead.



BRIDGE FOR KIDS: A WINNING HAND FOR MARY FREE BED KIDS

In September, community members Iva Tol, Marty Campbell, Sharron Reynolds, and Laurie Webster once again rallied support for Joan Secchia Children's Rehabilitation Hospital by hosting their third annual Bridge for Kids event, sponsored by Honor Credit Union. The event drew over 100 participants for a lively and meaningful bridge marathon. We are deeply grateful for the hostesses and guests who generously raised over \$58,000 to build a healthier and brighter future for children in our community.



MATTHEW FITZPATRICK SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTS MFB EMPLOYEES

For the fourth year, the Matthew Fitzpatrick Memorial Scholarship has awarded a Mary Free Bed employee with funding to support their continuing education. In 2024, the scholarship went to Alexis Anderson, a speech-language pathologist at Mary Free Bed at Munson Healthcare in Otsego Memorial Hospital. Alexis used the scholarship to attend the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention to further enhance her training and skills as an SLP. Congratulations, Alexis!

Matt Fitzpatrick was a beloved employee of Mary Free Bed who was well respected among his colleagues, patients, friends, and

family. Matt always brought joy to his patients and coworkers through his work as a nurse. Sadly, the Mary Free Bed family lost our friend and colleague when Matt passed away in December of 2019. The following year Matt's family established this scholarship fund to aid current Mary Free Bed employees looking to further their education.

Submissions for this annual scholarship award will open for employees to apply again in April of 2025. Over the past four years, the fund has awarded \$6,500 in scholarships.



Alexis Anderson (fourth from right) with Matt Fitzpatrick's family

BUILDING HOPE, ONE PARTNERSHIP AT A TIME

Eastbrook Homes is more than a homebuilder—they're a cornerstone of the community, dedicated to fostering hope and healing. To date, Eastbrook Homes has invested over \$40,000 into transformative programs that empower children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities. Their support spans vital programs such as the Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports program, the inpatient Recreation Therapy woodshop, the beautiful Live Wall in the Therapy Garden, and bringing holiday cheer through the annual Deck the Halls tradition. Beyond financial support, Eastbrook Homes employees generously volunteer their time at events, demonstrating their hands-on commitment to making a difference.

Through their generosity, Eastbrook Homes is helping Mary Free Bed deliver innovative care and life-changing experiences. Their dedication to building strong communities extends far beyond their homes, shaping brighter futures for all those they touch.

As Josh McGraw, Sr. Vice President of Sales and Marketing with Eastbrook Homes, shares, "Eastbrook Homes is honored to support Mary Free Bed, simply because they provide hope, healing, and dignity through their various rehabilitation programs. We were struck by the way Mary Free Bed brings joy and levity to the healing process, through activities like birdhouse building, video games, sports, and more. We hope that Mary Free Bed can continue this healing work in even greater capacities in the years to come."



Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports

THE MARY FREE BED SONICS: COMPETING, CONNECTING AND CONQUERING.

The Mary Free Bed Sonics Goalball Team, a new addition to the Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports program, has quickly made its mark. Goalball is a team sport specifically designed for athletes with vision impairments. Played indoors, typically on a basketball court, teams of three compete to throw a ball with bells inside into the opponent's goal. Players use ear-hand coordination to track the ball's movement, relying on the sound of the bell to gauge its position. Eyeshades level the playing field, allowing partially sighted players to compete alongside those who are fully blind.

The Mary Free Bed Sonics team, comprised of eight players ranging in age from 17 to 45, traveled to tournaments in Atlanta, Nashville, Fort Wayne and Chicago during the inaugural season. This team exists thanks to the generous support of Mary Free Bed Foundation donors, as well as invaluable partnerships with the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. These collaborations made it possible for the Sonics to compete, gain vital experience, and showcase their skills on the national stage.

KEEPING UP THE PACE

The Mary Free Bed Invitational, presented by CareLinc, brought together 80 athletes across seven teams for a weekend of spirited wheelchair basketball competition. Our own Mary Free Bed Pacers Division I team delivered an impressive 4-0 performance, delighting friends and family as they prepared for the season's second half on the road to Nationals, where they currently hold a 7th-place ranking.

Under the guidance of new coach Don Aversano, the Pacers Division III team demonstrated significant progress, achieving a 2-4 record and strengthening their teamwork.

We extend our deepest gratitude to CareLinc, whose generous sponsorship and volunteer support was instrumental in the event's success. It's important to note that programs like Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports are funded solely through philanthropic contributions. Your support enables athletes of all abilities to experience the joy and empowerment that sports bring. Thank you for being an essential part of our community and for helping to restore hope and freedom through your generosity.



PEDALING TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

Thanks to the generosity of the Grand Rapids Lions Club, the Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports (WAS) program was able to purchase a Fun2Go Tandem Adaptive Bike, which plays a vital role in our partnership with the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI). Last year, the WAS program launched a highly successful Tandem Cycling Program for the blind and low vision community, offering 1-on-1 tandem cycling sessions. The purchase of this bike will allow us to expand the program, enabling more individuals to stay active, enjoy the outdoors, and experience the freedom of biking—helping to eliminate barriers to participation.

MARY MOMENTS

SPREADING SMILES AND SPOOKS

Each year around Halloween, the Mary Free Bed Kids Inpatient Rehabilitation team, in collaboration with the Mary Free Bed Guild, turns our Therapy Garden into a festive wonderland filled with spooky decorations and eerie surprises. Adding to the excitement, we host a parade of cars loaded with treats to delight our young patients and their families.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our incredible community partners, Lake Michigan Credit Union and Cavallo, for their generous support in making this event truly unforgettable. We also extend our gratitude to the amazing participants, dedicated staff, volunteers, and the community for coming together to create a frightfully fun and memorable celebration!



HOLIDAY MAGIC BRIGHTENS THE SEASON

Mary Free Bed's annual Deck the Halls event brings holiday cheer to inpatients and their families during the festive season. Staff, volunteers, and community partners come together to transform the Grand Rapids hospital into a winter wonderland, complete with decorations, music, and holiday treats. Patients are invited to join in the festivities, creating ornaments, decorating cookies, and enjoying a much-needed dose of holiday joy.

GIFTS & GRANTS

The Mary Free Bed Foundation is grateful for the significant support from the following generous donors and organizations.

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| AdvisaCare | Harvest Foundation | Peter C. and Emajean Cook Foundation |
| Arcadia Capital | Howard Miller Company | Princess Alli Foundation |
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Mary Free Bed

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maryfreebed.com

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CONTACT

Phone: 616.840.8137

Web: maryfreebed.com/foundation

Email: foundation@maryfreebed.com

STAFF

Timothy J. Pietryga

Vice President, Advancement

Jocelyn Dettloff

Major Gifts Director

Laura Dulay

Development Director

Kelly Fitzgerald

Executive Administrative Assistant

Darrow Goodspeed

Major Gifts and Donor Relations Director

Brad Kaufmann

Director of Development and
Foundation Operations

Ashley Koop

Event Planner

Maggie Smitt

Annual Fund Director

WISH LIST

Items on our wish list, like therapy equipment or specialized tools, play a critical role in transforming lives and empowering recovery. Your generosity ensures that our patients continue to receive the care and resources they need to thrive—thank you for making a difference!

Leckey Squiggles Adaptive Seating System

Used for direct care in our Pediatric Feeding Program, this seating system will provide ideal posture and positioning of the pelvis, torso, head, and legs for the young patient during feeding sessions. Currently, the number of patients served annually are over 20, served multiple times weekly. (\$5,200)

Vital Stimulation Therapy – Electrotherapy and SEMG Biofeedback System

Used by speech-language pathologists certified in neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES), also known as vital stimulation therapy. This can be a helpful tool for treating children at risk for aspiration. The non-invasive treatment, in conjunction with exercises, promotes swallowing safety. (\$3,200)

Pediatric Crash Mat

With durable construction, the pediatric crash mat stands up to jumping and the ample foam filling makes it safe for a crash landing and comfortable for sitting or resting. Kids of all abilities need to move to channel restless energy; the crash mat provides an ample cushion to help keep them safe! (\$375)

If you'd like to fulfill a wish, please contact Darrow Goodspeed at 616.840.8196 or darrow.goodspeed@maryfreebed.com.

