Winter 2024

Cancer journey made easier with treatments close to home

As birthday messages go, it was not a happy one for Lisa Hammond.

“I was diagnosed with Stage III breast cancer,” recalled Lisa, who got the news on her 45th birthday. “It was a shocker. After I was diagnosed, I had just two weeks to figure out my life.”

However, thanks to outstanding donor support, one thing Lisa did not have to figure out was where to receive her chemotherapy. She was one of the first patients at the newly opened Carol Danielson Suzuki Cancer Center at Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center, just “a mile and change” away from Lisa’s home in Gladstone.

Donors gave more than $3.5 million to help build the center, which expands the reach of the Providence Cancer Institute and eases access to its world-class care. Here, patients can receive chemotherapy and immunotherapy treatments, as well as consultations, clinic visits and surgery.

“The new center makes it easier for Clackamas County residents to participate in innovative treatments and clinical trials that offer the very latest in cancer care,” said Lyn Dobrunick, MN, FNP, AOCN, executive director, Providence Cancer Institute.

Lisa did not relish the idea of driving to Portland for chemotherapy. “I wasn’t sure how I would feel after my treatments,” she said. “I was so excited I could have them at Willamette Falls. Having them close to home was very helpful.”

Lisa looks at the donor wall in the Suzuki Cancer Center each time she visits. “I don’t know if they have been through cancer, but I am very thankful for the people who donate. I feel a lot of gratitude.”

― Lisa Hammond
Remodeled BirthPlace better for nurses, families

Much can change in 30 years: just ask the nurses of the BirthPlace at Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center. Until recently, they were working at a nursing station that was built three decades ago – before they needed computers and other equipment. Over the years, the area became crowded, inefficient and unwieldy.

“We had totally outgrown our station,” explained Kellie Canchola, BSN, clinical operations manager of the BirthPlace. “It even became a safety issue because we couldn’t see visitors when they came onto the unit.”

With the help of your donations, the nurses have a better workspace. A $1 million renovation of the nursing station was completed in July.

“It’s much better, much improved,” said Kellie. “We have a lot more storage, a better layout, more space. We are really enjoying it, and it’s better for patients and their families.”

– Kellie Canchola, BSN
New foundation officer “ready to dive in” to improve community health

Julie Newsome’s first life experience took place at Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center – she was born there. Fast forward, she’s back at the hospital, having recently joined the staff with a meaningful goal: working to make sure everyone in the community receives the care they need.

“I want to help increase access to health care,” said Julie, a philanthropy officer with Providence Willamette Falls Medical Foundation and Providence Milwaukie Foundation. “I would like to see that people in this community have a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.”

Julie, who’s been a member of the community for several years, lives a short drive away from the hospital of her birth.

“It’s such a reassuring feeling to know that you are in your hometown,” she said. “I believe the warm, welcoming aspects of the community are reflected in the hospital – what you enjoy about your neighborhood, you see in the doctors and nurses. Everyone knows everyone, and we offer excellent, high-level care.”

Julie works to connect those in the community with opportunities to make donations and gifts that impact people’s lives through the care provided at the hospital.

“I’ve just dipped my toe in the water,” she said. “Now I’m ready to dive in and meet more people inspired by our Mission.”

Interested in meeting with Julie to find out how you can help? Email her at Julie.Newsome@providence.org or call 971-415-5572.
Gala at the Falls benefits kids in crisis

Generosity. That’s a word that comes to mind when thinking back to the annual Gala at the Falls in September, which raised more than $112,000 to support kids in a mental health crisis at our hospital.

“We are continually amazed and impressed by the selflessness of this community,” said Brad Henry, CEO, Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center. “In difficult financial times, people still find a way to give. And those gifts make a difference in the lives of so many in this community.”

The money will benefit the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Inpatient Unit at Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center. A small construction project will allow the adolescent side of the unit to flex up by as many as three rooms. “We have a waitlist for young people in crisis,” Brad said. “Flexing our beds means fewer patients are waiting for lifesaving care.”

Grateful. That’s a word we use to describe how we feel about our donors. Without you, we couldn’t help the community the way we do. Thank you.