Transforming Lives
READING HEALTH SYSTEM FOUNDATION & THE FRIENDS OF READING HOSPITAL / WINTER 2017

GIVING FROM THE HEART
Inspired efforts like HeartSAFE Berks County make the community healthier

INSIDE: The second cycle of the Reading Health System Foundation’s grant program / Mobile apps for moms-to-be / Projects and partnerships with The Friends of Reading Hospital
Dear Colleagues and Friends:

Welcome to the second issue of Transforming Lives, the publication of the Reading Health System Foundation and The Friends of Reading Hospital. Our first issue was received so positively by the community, and we are looking forward to keeping this line of communication open.

As you know, the key to the Foundation is being able to award grants to support the many initiatives of “innovation, education and research.” Outcome reports of the grants issued during the first cycle last year have yielded many encouraging results. The Babyscripts program that was initially launched last year has been getting glowing reviews from both patients and doctors. There is interest in expanding that program, which means the Foundation truly has invested in transformative care.

In this issue, you will find information regarding the second round of grants, announced on December 13. These grants offer a new array of opportunities that promise to advance the future of healthcare and improve the quality of Reading Health System’s services for our patients. With far-ranging ideas such as a clinical trial for studying groundbreaking bariatric surgery, to the use of fitness-tracking devices among congestive heart failure patients, we are proud that the Foundation supports projects that are having such a positive effect on our Reading Health community.

Sincerely,

Chris G. Kraras, Chairman
Reading Health System Foundation

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

A GENEROUS GIFT SUPPORTS ADVANCES IN NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH

As a member of The Friends of Reading Hospital, Jeanne Ripple had a passion for service and to making a difference in the lives of Reading Hospital patients and their families. When Jeanne suffered a debilitating stroke, things became even more personal. To honor and recognize his wife and her contributions to others through her volunteer work at Reading Hospital, Milton Ripple recently made a generous donation to the Reading Health System Foundation to support advances in neurosciences.

“My wife was very committed to the hospital,” says Milton, Jeanne’s husband of 64 years. “Given her condition, I felt a gift to support neuroscience research would be most appropriate.”

A plaque recognizing the contribution will be placed in the patio garden at the new Reading HealthPlex for Advanced Surgical & Patient Care.

“The Ripples’ gift comes deeply from the heart,” says Kate Thornton, President of the Reading Health System Foundation. “It is a tremendous responsibility when families come to Reading Health seeking the most advanced care and cutting-edge treatment options. The generosity of the Ripple family will help advance our nationally recognized stroke and neuroscience care for generations to come.”

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris G. Kraras, Chairman
David Thun, Vice Chairman
Paul Cohn, Treasurer
Dan Ahern, Secretary
James S. Boscov
Gary Conner
Michael Ehlerman
Dick Ehst
David George, MD, FACP
Jack Gruber, MD

Victor Hammel
Kathy Herbein
Clint Matthews
Terry McGlenn
Marlin Miller
Karen A. Rightmire
Larry Rotenberg, MD
Brent J. Wagner, MD
C. Thomas Work, Esq.
Helene Zintak, PA, LLC

ADMINISTRATION

Kate Thornton, President
Rachael L. Scheffler, Director of Development
Jody Rapp, Development Coordinator

www.readinghealth.org/foundation
Innovations in Prenatal Care

In 2016, Reading Health became the first hospital in Pennsylvania to offer expectant women an exciting new way to manage their prenatal care. Using Babyscripts — which consists of a mobile app, a blood pressure cuff, a digital scale and educational materials — women can track fluctuations in their health on their smartphones. The information is then transmitted to their physician, who can promptly address any issues or changes in the patient’s health.

“This technology increases the frequency of vital prenatal monitoring while decreasing the number of physician visits,” explains Mark B. Woodland, MS, MD, FACOG, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Reading Health. “And women take comfort in knowing they are being evaluated more regularly.”

The pilot Babyscripts program was launched in 2016 with funding from the inaugural cycle of the Foundation’s grant program. The reception has been so positive that Dr. Woodland says he and his colleagues want to offer Babyscripts to even more moms-to-be. “We have already used 100 percent of the Babyscripts kits we acquired with the grant,” he says. “It has been a major success story for us.”

Support for Nursing Education

The immense job satisfaction that can come with a nursing career is often due to the immediate impact nurses have on patient care. This is precisely why Emylio Cutiva, RN, 26, chose it as his profession. “The direct contact we have with patients and their families is what drew me to nursing,” he says. “It is rewarding to know you can make a difference.”

Cutiva enrolled in the Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences’ part-time program to earn his nursing diploma. The acclaimed program, with a nearly 130-year history, gives students the opportunity to participate in clinical experiences within a nationally recognized healthcare system.

“Reading Hospital has always taken an active role in educating the next generation of healthcare professionals,” says Debbie Rahn, EdD, MSN, RN, Director of the School of Health Sciences. “We provide flexible opportunities for people who may otherwise not have been able to become RNs.”

“It’s a wonderful program, and the teachers are excellent,” says Cutiva. “They all have clinical backgrounds, which makes a big difference.” However, Cutiva was not sure he would be able to complete his studies: He had qualified for financial aid, but it did not cover his last two semesters. “I was working full time, and my wife and I were about to have our first child,” he says. “I kept thinking, ‘How will I ever finish my education?’”

Fortunately, one of Cutiva’s mentors nominated him for a scholarship. The School of Health Sciences, which offers scholarships to qualifying candidates based on academic merit and financial need, awarded Cutiva the funds that enabled him to graduate in 2014. Today, he is employed full time as a nurse at Reading Hospital, working the night shift in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit. “A lot of fields help people, but I find nursing to be especially gratifying,” says Cutiva. “I wouldn’t have realized my goal without all the incredible support I received along the way.”

For information about honoring or memorializing an individual by funding a scholarship at the Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences, please call the Foundation at 484-628-2243.
The Reading Health System Foundation began its grant program in 2016, funding select proposals aimed at improving healthcare in the community. With two grant cycles each year, the program is made possible by donors’ generous contributions to unrestricted funds. In the first cycle, the Foundation awarded grants to nine projects, all of which demonstrated ingenuity, vision and best practices. In December, the Foundation announced its second cycle of grants: nine equally forward-thinking ideas in the areas that have the greatest impact — innovation, education and research.

SPARKING INNOVATION
One of the most significant trends in healthcare today is the application of cutting-edge technology to patient care. This can take many forms, from improving electronic records management to engaging patients in their own care by using dynamic health apps. Many of the successful proposals will study and/or implement new technologies with the goal of increasing efficiency and improving patient outcomes.

One such grant builds on a project launched in Cycle I, in which epidemiologist Ali Yazdanyar, DO, proposed using geographic information systems (GIS) technology to better understand the incidence of chronic disease in Berks County. The targeted use of GIS will help to identify populations with the greatest rates of readmissions, Dr. Yazdanyar says, allowing the health system to focus on greater education and outreach in these communities. “This project will assist us in our planning, with the goal of ensuring that the community we serve has access to the right care at the right time at the right place,” Dr. Yazdanyar explains. The current grant will fund two research interns to aid in the project’s execution.

Another tech-based project that received funding is what Wellness Program Director Sarah Luber, DO, calls “Walking Away from Heart Failure.” This program will give Fitbits — wearable fitness-tracking devices — to congestive heart failure patients, ideally motivating them to move more. “We had great success with a similar program we initiated among employees,” Luber says, “and this funding allows us to extend the program to cardiac patients. Our goals are to reduce hypertension levels, decrease hospital stays and readmission rates, and improve patient satisfaction.”

Additionally, John Dougherty, MD, will use grant funding to begin working with FileMaker, a scalable database application that users can access across different platforms. “FileMaker will enable Reading Health to make custom apps that can collect information and track and evaluate residents’ proficiency and progress,” he says. “And that’s just the beginning — FileMaker has the potential to be customized for other medical applications to enable state-of-the-art data analytics.”

“Implementing evidence-based practice is about changing the culture, and we realized that a significant and lasting way to do that is through educating champions who can teach others.”

— ALAN HOWARD, RN, MSN, M. DIV., CEN
EMERGENCY DIVISION, RHS
PROMOTING EDUCATION

The continuing education of both patients and physicians is a top priority of the Reading Health Foundation, and Robert Jones, DO, Medical Director of Infection Prevention, has proposed an innovative way to share important health information with the community. Dr. Jones suggested working with Choosing Wisely — a combined effort of the American Board of Internal Medicine and Consumer Reports — to create four videos on topics of vital importance to patients and their providers. “The quality of care we deliver is predicated on evidence-based medicine,” he says, “and our goal with these videos is to give patients and physicians the tools they need to achieve optimal care.”

Another important way to provide continuing education is to train members of the Reading Health community in evidence-based practice (EBP), which entails using the best current evidence as a basis for decision making. “High-quality care that’s evidence-based delivers better outcomes and reduces costs,” says Debra Stavarski, PhD, RN, Nursing Research/Council Facilitator. “It affects hospitals in many positive ways, including empowering and satisfying nurses.” Stavarski notes that Reading Health recently received Magnet® recognition, the most prestigious distinction a healthcare organization can receive for nursing excellence and quality outcomes, and adopting EBP is aligned with the Magnet mission.

“Implementing evidence-based practice is about changing the culture,” adds Alan Howard, RN, “and we realized that a significant and lasting way to do that is through educating champions who can teach others.” This year, 15 registered nurses from Reading Health will attend special EBP training sessions — what Howard calls “EBP boot camp” — at Johns Hopkins. Upon completion, they will integrate their new skills into the culture of care at Reading Health and serve as mentors to others.

Another successful grant application will use educational tools to benefit patients with Parkinson’s disease. Currently, Reading Health offers patients with Parkinson’s an effective program known as LSVT therapy, which helps them increase their vocal ability and range of motion. However, because
some patients are unable to commit to the full LSVT program, members of Reading Health’s Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation received a grant to offer a similar large-amplitude program to patients in a group setting twice a week. “The principle behind LSVT is to encourage patients to speak louder and make larger movements than they might think they need to,” says Kevin Fratis, PT, “and we are pleased to make these techniques available to the maximum number of patients in our community.”

INSPIRING RESEARCH
Reading Health supports cutting-edge clinical trials that investigate new therapies and procedures; the health system is also committed to studying protocols that promise to increase efficiencies systemwide. This dedication to research can be found in all the Cycle II grants, including the following projects that will establish internships and study a new bariatric procedure.

The latter, proposed by surgeon Stephan Myers, MD, is a clinical trial for bariatric patients using stomachintestinal pylorus-sparing surgery (SIPS). SIPS is a modified, simpler version of the duodenal switch operation (which decreases the size of the stomach and shortens the length of the intestines). Recommended for patients with a high body mass index and/or advanced diabetes, the SIPS procedure was introduced about seven years ago in Europe and has only recently been adopted by U.S. surgeons. Dr. Myers is partnering with other surgeons across the country in this clinical trial, of which he is the lead investigator. “We are excited to be conducting this trial, which has the potential to reach a lot of patients,” says Dr. Myers. “The aim is to determine if the SIPS procedure will lessen the potential risk of nutritional deficiencies among patients, as compared with the deficiencies that can occur with the classic procedure.” Moreover, two research internships will support initiatives to streamline operations. One of these, a project proposed by Dr. Dougherty, will fund research interns from Lehigh University to work on various health systems engineering projects designed to improve processes and patient flow. The other, initiated by Dr. Yazdanyar, will fund an intern from Carnegie Mellon to assist him in the study of queuing theory (the study of queues to predict wait times). “The mathematical modeling of patient volume will assist Reading Hospital’s Emergency Department in matching demand with supply in terms of anticipated resources needed to provide emergency care, which will benefit patients, physicians and staff,” Dr. Yazdanyar says. “Without the grant support from the Reading Health System Foundation, none of these ideas and initiatives would have come to fruition,” Dr. Yazdanyar adds. “The grants have provided me with funding to support the stipend of graduate students with the necessary skill sets from my alma mater, Carnegie Mellon University, to assist me with these projects. In turn, I hope that the findings from these projects will benefit Reading Health System and the community it serves.”

The third round of grant recipients will be announced on June 12.
Honor Your Doctors!

Is there a special doctor who went above and beyond for you or a loved one? Help celebrate the physicians who do so much to care for our community on National Doctors Day, held March 30, 2017. On this annual day of recognition, grateful patients and their families are invited to honor their doctors by making a contribution to the Reading Health System Foundation. The doctors’ names will be shared throughout the health system, and the Foundation will send your special note of appreciation directly to your doctor. (If we receive your gift by March 24, your physician’s name will be included in Reading Health System’s published communications.)

By making a gift, you will be helping us continue to make a difference in the health and well-being of our community members. By making a tax-deductible gift to the Foundation, you are supporting our vital mission to advance care and transform lives through innovation, education and research.

Visit www.readinghealth.org to donate.

Say thank you to your doctor today!
From the President of The Friends:

Greetings, Friends! February is a time when we celebrate what’s in our hearts. That’s why this month, The Friends of Reading Hospital are highlighting our HeartSAFE Berks County program.

HeartSAFE Berks County is an initiative that is dedicated to distributing automated external defibrillators (AEDs), as well as educating members of the community in their proper use, to help save the life of a cardiac arrest victim. To date, The Friends of Reading Hospital have invested more than $800,000 in this initiative and have placed more than 500 AEDs in our community.

At the heart of every successful volunteer organization is its members. We couldn’t do what we do without the support of all our Friends. Thank you for opening your hearts to The Friends of Reading Hospital and for your dedication and passion for bettering our community. We are grateful for our Friends, past and present, and we welcome new Friends with open arms.

Sincerely,

Tina Ziolkowski
Board President

The Friends of Reading Hospital received the Herbein Community Hero Award in September, earning a $500 grant. The award from certified public accountants Herbein + Company Inc. recognizes groups and causes that fill a crucial need in our communities. The Friends were honored for their 125 years of supporting healthcare in the region and projects such as HeartSAFE Berks County, Centering Parenting and Pregnancy, Reach Out and Read, and Diabetes Education, among others.

Sincerely,

Tina Ziolkowski
Board President

The Friends Are Recognized as Community Heroes

The Friends of Reading Hospital are Recognized as Community Heroes

The Friends of Reading Hospital received the Herbein Community Hero Award in September, earning a $500 grant. The award from certified public accountants Herbein + Company Inc. recognizes groups and causes that fill a crucial need in our communities. The Friends were honored for their 125 years of supporting healthcare in the region and projects such as HeartSAFE Berks County, Centering Parenting and Pregnancy, Reach Out and Read, and Diabetes Education, among others.

Sincerely,

Tina Ziolkowski
Board President

THE FRIENDS OF READING HOSPITAL: EVENTS

Valentine’s Day Plant Sale, February 14
Tower Ball, March 4
Golf Classic, August 8
Road Run, October 15
Holiday Happening, December 7

SPECIAL SALES

Books Are Fun
Sheet Spot
The Candy Lady
Discovery Toys
In the Bag
Ideal Jewelry
Jules Jewels
Weaver’s Orchard
Mother’s Day Sale
Masquerade Jewelry
Somewhere in Time
Pretty Pickins
Dynamic Cookware
Boutique on Wheels

PROGRAM COMMITMENTS

Arctic Cold Cap Therapy
Berks Alliance (commitment over a five-year period)
Centering Parenting
Centering Pregnancy/ RPS Midwifery
Farm Bucks (ReDesign Reading)
Glucose Monitors (Relion)
NICU Cycled Lighting
Patient Assistance Fund
(Public Health and McGlinn Cancer Institute)
Patient Assistance Program
Reading Recreation (van)
Telemedicine Stroke Assessment

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Patient comfort items: Baby hats, Chemo caps, lap blankets, shawls, neck pillows, boppy pillows, compression pillows, eye masks, and many more!
HeartSAFE Berks County
The Road Run’s Biggest Fan: Bob Myers

Bob Myers, retired vice president of human resources for Reading Hospital, is a longtime participant in the Road Run (witness the wealth of Road Run T-shirts he has collected every year since 1983). When The Friends of Reading Hospital brought back the popular event in 2010 after a brief hiatus, Myers happily hit the road again. Myers calls the race, which is coordinated by The Friends, the premier running event in Berks County. “It is very organized and well-run with many wonderful volunteers,” he says. Myers first began running as part of a plan to quit smoking and participated in races throughout the region, competing alongside fellow Reading Hospital employees. The camaraderie of running with friends has always been more important than winning for Myers; he considers his many T-shirts his trophies. However, at this year’s Road Run, Myers finished first in his age group of 65 and older. Thank you for being the Road Run’s most loyal participant!

Left: Bob Myers shows off his extensive collection of Road Run T-shirts.

Right: The Friends of Reading Hospital’s annual Road Run was held on October 16 in downtown Reading. Six hundred runners participated in the half-marathon, the 5K or the 1-mile run.

PHILANTHROPY AT WORK

A LOOK AT PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE FRIENDS OF READING HOSPITAL

THE READING HOSPITAL KNITTING GUILD BRINGS WARMTH TO PATIENTS

Using yarn provided by The Friends, 103 knitters in the Reading Hospital Knitting Guild made 3,705 baby hats, 648 chemo caps, 600-plus holiday ornaments and 498 shawls for patients in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The newest Guild project is knitting Twiddle Muffs, which are helpful to memory care patients. The multicolored muffins warm hands and provide an outlet for nervous fingers, which studies have found decreases anxiety.

READY, SET, READ

The Friends-supported Reach Out and Read is a literacy project at the Children’s Health Center and is part of a national program that gives new books and developmentally appropriate reading guidance to children ages 6 months to 5 years during wellness checkups. Friends’ funds go toward new books, providing participants with a library of 10 new books by the time they reach kindergarten age. More than 100 books are given out at the Children’s Health Center each week.
Each year in the United States, there are approximately 359,400 cardiac arrests assessed by emergency medical services (EMS) outside of a hospital setting; on average, less than 10 percent of victims survive.

Immediate cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and early defibrillation with an automated external defibrillator (AED) can more than double a victim’s chance of survival. In fact, in many cases of cardiac arrest, early defibrillation, along with CPR, is the only way to restore the victim’s heart rhythm to normal. For every minute that passes without CPR and defibrillation, the chances of survival decrease by 7 to 10 percent. The 2013 update of the American Heart Association’s “Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics” shows that 23 percent of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests are “shockable” arrhythmias, which makes keeping AEDs in public places extremely valuable. Yet there are not enough AEDs and people trained to use them and perform CPR to provide this vital treatment — resulting in lost opportunities to save more lives. In fact, 64 percent of Americans have never even seen an AED.

Reading Hospital is working in partnership with The Friends of Reading Hospital on an initiative to establish Berks County as a HeartSAFE Community. Launched in 2010, the program aims to improve the survival rates of people who suffer sudden cardiac arrest, addressing the four links in what medical experts call the “chain of survival”: instant activation of 9-1-1, early and effective CPR, early defibrillation, and immediate access to advanced cardiac care. Under the initiative, hundreds of AEDs have been donated to first responders; Berks County schools of all levels; sports arenas; movie theaters and malls; and nonprofit organizations, including the YMCA, the Berks County Food Bank, and Hope Rescue. 

Firefighters Provide Emergency Medical Aid at Maple Grove Raceway

In late October, just three days after The Friends of Reading Hospital donated an AED to the Brecknock Township Fire Company in Mohnton, members of the fire company responded to a call about an unresponsive man at Maple Grove Raceway. Firefighter Brandon Lonaberger immediately started CPR. Then, with assistance from Fire Chief Jason Lutz and Fire Captain Zach Koehn, Lonaberger utilized an AED in an effort to revive the victim. The patient was transported to Reading Hospital for advanced cardiac treatment and was discharged days later. The Brecknock Township Fire Company is staffed by volunteers who are trained and certified in first aid, CPR and the use of AEDs.

Above: Lifesaving heroes Brandon Lonaberger, left, and Jason Lutz hold an AED.
Mission, in hopes of delivering defibrillation to sudden cardiac arrest victims within three to five minutes. The impact of the HeartSAFE program has been felt throughout the community. Read on for a few of the inspiring tales of lives saved by swift defibrillation.

HEARTSAFE BERKS COUNTY SUCCESS STORIES

• Just before 10 a.m. on May 3, 2012, Jim Coxey’s world turned upside down when he underwent sudden cardiac arrest. Thankfully, several of Coxey’s co-workers quickly set into motion a lifesaving chain of survival. They called 9-1-1 and began CPR. Officer Vincent Mazza of the Bern Township Police Department arrived moments after the call was placed and applied the HeartSAFE Berks County AED provided by The Friends of Reading Hospital, shocking Coxey’s heart back into a normal rhythm. Because of these actions, the quick response of the Schuylkill Valley EMS team and the expert care received at Reading Hospital, Coxey has recovered, and he is deeply grateful to everyone who helped save his life.

• When 45-year-old Marybeth Esposito went into cardiac arrest on January 29, 2001, her husband, Steven, immediately called 9-1-1. Spring Township police arrived ahead of the paramedics, three minutes after receiving the call. Steven had already started performing CPR on his wife when Officer Nathan Getz delivered the first shock. Sergeant Todd Peterson arrived moments later to assist, followed by Western Berks EMS paramedics, who connected their own defibrillator and delivered a second shock, restoring Marybeth’s heartbeat.

• After Gary Boone, 69, crashed into a car while working in Shillington and suffered sudden cardiac arrest, a joint effort by two police officers — one from the Shillington Police Department and an off-duty officer from Bern Township — helped save his life.

• On May 10, 2014, just before midnight, teenager Skylar Livinghouse experienced cardiac arrest. “I thought she was going to die,” says Ellen Livinghouse, Skylar’s grandmother, who discovered the teen and called 9-1-1. Within minutes, four officers from the Birdsboro Police Department arrived: Officer Craig Reinhart; Officer Dave Seidel; Sergeant Seth Riegals; and Officer Adam Borz, a friend of the Livinghouse family. “[Skylar] had no heartbeat,” says Borz. The officers performed CPR and used a HeartSAFE AED to shock Skylar back to life. Officers said the teen flatlined multiple times but was ultimately revived. “The AED actually did its job three separate times,” says Reinhart.

All of those actions — along with the quick efforts by emergency dispatchers — were critical links in the chain of survival. Michael Koslow, MD, a cardiologist with Reading Health System and one of the individuals who initiated the HeartSAFE Berks County program, says, “Of all the links in the chain, the most critical is defibrillation.”
SAVE THE DATES!

Tower Ball 2017
March 4, 2017
Join us at the Crowne Plaza for One Hot Havana Night, an energized evening of sultry sounds, cool drinks and tantalizing Cuban delicacies! Hit the Grand Ballroom dance floor and enjoy music from the Uptown Band with Erich Cawalla. Attendees will also get a chance to take home raffle prizes. Black tie optional. Cocktails begin at 6:30 p.m. Proceeds go toward The Friends of Reading Hospital’s support of Reading Health System and greater Berks County community programs. For more information about The Friends or Tower Ball 2017, please call 484-628-8477 or email friends@readinghealth.org.

Gifts of Spring
Stop by one of the three hospital gift shops to find the perfect present for your gift-giving needs. Don’t miss out on the new spring merchandise, including seasonal specials, clothing, accessories and much more!

GRANT CYCLE III RECIPIENTS TO BE ANNOUNCED JUNE 12

Thanks to generous donor contributions, the Reading Health System Foundation will award its third round of grants to projects that support and advance the highest level of patient care.

To learn more about The Friends of Reading Hospital and the events they sponsor, visit www.readinghealth.org/contribute/volunteer/friends-board, call 484-628-8477 or email friends@readinghealth.org.