New Rehabilitation Institute Helps Make Patients Whole Again
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Message from the President & CEO
Working Towards a Healthier Future

Dear Friend,

It’s been a full year since the first coronavirus cases began appearing in our community and upending our lives. So much has happened in that time. The first trickle of cases quickly became waves that threatened to overtake the capacity of healthcare facilities across the country. More than a quarter of a million COVID-19 cases have been diagnosed in San Diego County and sadly more than 3,400 residents have lost their lives.

We stood together through those frightening days and now have hope that the worst is behind us. In February, Palomar Health opened a one-of-a-kind COVID-19 Resource Clinic, offering testing, vaccinations and monoclonal antibody therapy for our community. Meanwhile, safety and cleaning protocols have been strengthened across all our facilities, a move that will serve our patients and employees long into the future. As a healthcare system, we are showing our resilience and are better prepared for future challenges.

So many people have pulled together to help turn the tide on COVID-19. We want to first thank our amazing doctors, nurses, staff and volunteers. Their commitment and compassion have made a meaningful difference in the lives of so many patients. As a grateful patient wrote to tell us, “Doctors, nurses and medical staff were all friendly, courteous and attentive to my needs. I am thankful for the people who cared for me. I felt they loved their job.”

The support of Foundation donors like you has been another great source of strength for us. From helping to purchase emergency supplies, to funding the new Physician Quarters and Conference Center of the Future to treating our COVID-19 Resource Clinic volunteers to lunch while they selflessly serve others, your support of Palomar Health is something we remain most grateful for.

As we look to a time beyond COVID-19, we are laying the groundwork for many important new areas of service. In this issue of Purpose, you’ll read about plans for the new Rehabilitation Institute that is a partnership with Kindred Healthcare; discover how Palomar Health Medical Group is connecting patients with a broader network of doctors; and learn about some of our phenomenal people and projects.

The experiences of the past year have shown us how much we can accomplish when we work together. Thank you for being a part of our Palomar Health team and for helping us work towards a healthier future.

Sincerely,

Diane Hansen
Palomar Health President and CEO

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iPads Transforming Palomar Health’s Emergency Departments

Apple iPads aren’t just for streaming Netflix or browsing the web. These tablet devices are finding their way into the healthcare setting. Fifteen Apple iPads are now in use in the Emergency Departments at Escondido and Poway thanks to funding by supporters of Palomar Health Foundation.

The iPad, with its portability and intuitive operation, is an ideal solution to overcome workflow disruptions common in emergency departments. Rather than running back and forth between a patient and a computer, physicians can now carry an iPad — and patient information — with them.

Bret Ginther, MD, sees the iPads as a way to improve both workflow and physician-patient interaction. “They will play a crucial role in optimizing our ability to care for patients,” he said. “Providers will now have their patient care tools with them wherever they are seeing patients.”

New DEXA Scan Technology is Palomar Health’s Latest Weapon Against Osteoporosis

Thanks in part to Palomar Health Foundation’s generous supporters, a state-of-the-art Hologic® Horizon DEXA scanner was installed at the Jean McLaughlin Women’s Center for Health and Healing.

A DEXA scan is a non-invasive test that assesses a person’s bone mineral density. It is used mainly to detect osteoporosis in its early stages due to its sensitivity to slight changes in bone density. Each year, osteoporosis results in two million broken bones in the U.S. A bone density test is the only test capable of diagnosing osteoporosis before a broken bone occurs. The test also can determine if a patient has a lower bone density level (osteopenia), brittle bone disease or osteomalacia (vitamin D deficiency).

The new machine features the latest innovations in bone densitometry technology, to generate ultra-fast, high-quality and accurate images.
Heart Monitors Make New Moms More Comfortable

A new state-of-the-art monitoring system purchased with Foundation support is making labor and delivery more comfortable for Palomar Health patients.

The Novii Wireless Patch System monitors maternal and fetal heart rates as well as the contractions of an expecting mother via thin patches that adhere to the belly. They wirelessly transmit patient data, eliminating the need for a cord between the patient and a monitor.

Gifts to the Foundation made it possible to purchase two systems for Palomar Medical Center Escondido. With this wireless technology, mothers have much more freedom to move around before and during labor, explained Amy Murray, District Director of Women’s Services. Older types of fetal monitors are worn on a belt, which can be more restrictive and uncomfortable, she said.

The Novii monitor can be worn for up to 48 hours and is waterproof, so it can be left in place during a bath or shower. Because of the extra freedom of movement, the Novii system is also a great help to mothers who prefer alternative delivery methods such as using a birthing ball.

In addition to the two new systems at Escondido, Palomar Medical Center Poway has three Novii monitors, having been part of early trials with the technology.

Trauma Team Receives Advanced Training

Forty-five members of our trauma team will attend a course on Trauma Care after Resuscitation (TCAR). This training was made possible because of the generous gifts to Palomar Health Foundation. This two-day course aims to sharpen the clinical thinking skills necessary to provide excellent care to patients in the post-resuscitation phase of their care.

The Foundation not only raises funds to support technology and capital improvements at Palomar Health. We also support the professional development of our employees. An investment in their continuing education is an investment in improved care and a healthier community.
Harrah’s Delivers Lunch and Gratitude to Emergency Departments

To celebrate Giving Tuesday, Harrah’s Resort SoCal provided lunches to hundreds of our team members in the Emergency Departments at Palomar Medical Center Poway and Escondido. Giving Tuesday, an annual event that takes place the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, was created to focus attention on generosity and helping others in your community. Thank you to Harrah’s for your “giving back” spirit and the delicious lunches provided for our staff.
Foundation Funds New Discharge Lounge

Patients being discharged from Palomar Medical Center Poway have a comfortable new waiting area thanks to Foundation funding. The new patient discharge lounge offers privacy and amenities such as phone charging ports for patients who are completing the discharge process or waiting on transportation.

Foundation Welcomes New Board Members

**PAULINE GOURDIE**
Pauline, a native of Scotland, had a very successful career with a large global IT and service provider. In 2016, she established Escondido-based CSL Staffing to provide general staffing solutions, primarily for businesses in Southern California. Pauline has given her time to many non-profits and civic organizations over the years both in Scotland and here in San Diego.

She lives in Del Sur with her husband Ross of 19 years, and their son, Rhys, a student who plays soccer at UCSD.

**JASON POLK**
Jason is a financial advisor at Edward Jones in Rancho Bernardo with more than 25 years of experience in investments and insurance. He specializes in estate and legacy planning, retirement strategies, college savings, and insurance and annuities.

Originally from Montana, Polk is a long-time San Diego resident and graduated from San Diego State University. He is an avid golfer and volunteer in Rancho Bernardo.
Palomar Health received a series of paintings donated by Dr. Michael Peelle. The artwork was created by his son, contemporary painter Max Makewell. The first paintings were installed in the new Outpatient Center in Escondido. A total of five paintings were donated to Palomar Health and will be installed at facilities across the district.

The installation of Max Makewell's colorful paintings in the Outpatient Center was recently completed.

SAVE THE DATE
2021 Palomar Health Miracles in Motion Gala

GET READY TO
glamp IT UP

We’re back and better than ever!
Stay tuned for more information on the most unique and fun Miracles in Motion Gala to date. We’re going glamping!

Saturday, October 2, 2021
Rancho Bernardo Inn

Proceeds to benefit the Physician Quarters and Conference Center of the Future.
Message from the Foundation Chair

Community Steps Up Support

If there is any silver lining to the dark cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic, it might be the newfound appreciation by many for the dedication of the men and women within the healthcare community. As the husband of a nurse, I have witnessed firsthand the professionalism and caring that she and all of her colleagues bring to bear every day. That dedication and professionalism have been on display in bold relief within the Palomar Health system.

Palomar Health cannot accomplish its mission without help, nor can Palomar Health Foundation do our work alone. Our role at the Foundation is to provide financial support to the Palomar Health system by soliciting donations from community members such as yourself, applying for grants and holding fundraising events.

During the past several months, the Foundation has raised more than $1,100,000 in cash contributions, provided 30,000 masks and more than 36,000 supply and food items, all in support of COVID-19 relief. This was obviously not an appeal that had been on our radar before 2020 began, and it’s a testimony to the generosity of our community that so much was achieved in such a relatively short time.

Even once the current pandemic subsides, there will always be more need, and your support will always be a significant factor in the success of the Palomar Health system. Consider joining the 650 volunteers who give their time and talents, or thanking a Palomar Health staff member through our Guardian Angels program. If you’ve had a great experience at our facilities, share that experience with friends and others via social media.

One of the Foundation’s current priorities is to raise funds in support of the building of the Physician Quarters and Conference Center of the Future at the Escondido facility. This initiative, once completed, will provide sleeping quarters for physicians who often put in long hours and need a place to rest between cases – a need that has been particularly acute during our current healthcare crisis. It will also provide conference space to hold meetings and events including district board meetings, a need made necessary following the closure of the Downtown Escondido hospital. You can support this effort by purchasing a brick to honor a friend, a family member, or to display any message of support to the hospital district. Details are provided elsewhere in this issue.

As we look forward to the gradual elimination of the threat of this global pandemic, please do your part by wearing your mask in public, maintaining social distancing and getting vaccinated when the vaccine becomes available for you. In the meantime, be well, be safe and be kind.

Kirk Effinger
Palomar Foundation Board Chair

Palomar Health Foundation

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Gerry Gennoe hasn’t let age get in the way of living an active lifestyle. At 87, she drives to lunch dates with friends, volunteers at a history museum near her home in Knoxville, Tennessee and keeps busy with activities at her church. Before becoming a full-time mother and then grandmother, she worked for an airline and IBM. These days, she’s enjoying retirement and makes frequent visits to San Marcos, where she dotes on the four grandsons who call her “Gigi.”

The coronavirus pandemic prevented her from going on outings with her family and kept her mostly indoors instead. (“I’ve watched more movies in the past year than I think I ever have,” she jokes.) It wasn’t COVID-19 that upended her life, though. It was a sudden fall at her daughter’s home.

“It happened so fast. I just hit the floor,” she recalled from her bedside at Palomar Medical Center Poway. “I bumped my head and broke my femur. I knew something was broken because I’ve never had pain like that before in my life.”

After surgery and transfer to the Acute Rehab Unit (ARU), Gerry spent nearly two weeks working with physical and occupational therapists learning how to walk and do the daily tasks that will help her remain independent. It’s been hard work, but Gerry has been encouraged by the friendly faces of the ARU staff and their prompt help with her requests.

Safely tucked away behind her printed therapy schedule, Gerry keeps an iPad with a photo of her grandkids. Her face lights up as she introduces each child by name and age. With a little more rehab, she’s looking forward to getting back to them soon.

“I didn’t realize what a challenge it would be, but the therapists have been patient with me and we are just taking it step by step,” she said with a smile. “I’m getting better and better every day. Or at least I’m told that. And I think I am!”

Palomar Health currently has 15 beds in its ARU unit at Poway, far fewer than the community needs. That will change in April, when the new...
Rehabilitation Institute opens adjacent to Palomar Medical Center Escondido. The 52-bed project is a joint venture with Kindred Healthcare, a nationwide health provider that serves rehab patients at specialized facilities in 22 locations.

Natalie Germuska, the new CEO of the Rehabilitation Institute, explained that the new facility is designed to get patients like Gerry back into their homes and active again, typically after 10–14 days of therapy.

“The goal of going to rehabilitation is really to go home,” she said. “That’s our ultimate goal. We give specialized intensive care specifically for rehab patients so they can continue with their lives at home. We get the patient in, give them specialized care and help them go home with their loved ones.”

Over time, all acute rehab services will transition to the Rehabilitation Institute, which offers more beds, more staff and more specialized equipment and technology. That includes an Ekso NR — a battery-powered, wearable robotic suit that lets patients with weak legs or paralysis stand and walk — and a Smart car that gives patients a chance to practice getting in and out of a vehicle.

Three separate gym areas are included, one of which will feature a variety of outdoor ramps, stairs, putting greens and garden therapy areas. A transitional living apartment will help patients navigate a home environment and get accustomed to doing daily household tasks on their own.

While patients and their families are sure to appreciate the state-of-the-art facilities, Germuska says it’s the highly trained staff who make all the difference.

“The reason this hospital is successful is that we are able to have specialized nursing staff who are certified in rehabilitation,” she said. “We either hire nurses who have the Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse (CRRN) credential or we send them to classes where they obtain that credential. And we have Dr. Angel Chang, our medical director, who is a physiatrist with expertise in brain injuries.”

Physiatrists, also known as physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) physicians, treat a range of conditions affecting the spinal cord, brain, nerves and musculoskeletal system and aim to help patients regain as much functionality as possible.

Palomar Health is highly regarded for its stroke care and treatment of brain injuries and neurology disorders. A secure 12-bed unit at the Rehabilitation Institute dedicated to the unique needs of brain injury patients will further improve its reputation for excellent specialized rehab care. That unit will have its own private dining area and therapy gym.

The Rehabilitation Institute will employ about 100 staff by this summer and will eventually ramp up to 200 as it reaches full capacity. It’s expected to draw patients from across San Diego, the Inland Empire and Arizona. A ribbon-cutting for the facility is planned for April 23 and patient services will begin soon after.

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**REHABILITATION INSTITUTE AT A GLANCE**

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<td><strong>ESTIMATED DAILY PATIENT CENSUS IN 2021</strong></td>
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Palomar Health Offers One-Stop COVID-19 Resource Clinic

The COVID-19 Resource Clinic is Palomar Health’s new hub to help fight COVID-19. Located at Palomar Medical Center Downtown Escondido, it offers vaccinations by appointment to those who are eligible under San Diego County guidelines.

The drive-through vaccine clinic is unique in all of San Diego County because the location also provides testing and monoclonal antibody therapy, a one-time drug infusion that can significantly reduce hospitalization and death among patients who have a mild or moderate case of COVID-19.

The vaccine clinic is a massive logistical feat made possible by hundreds of medical workers and volunteers who are sharing their time and talents. They are on-site each Tuesday – Saturday to help with important tasks like traffic control; greeting visitors and answering questions; managing check-in; screening patients and administering vaccines.

Volunteers, many of whom are medical students or retired health care workers, are donating up to nine hours of their time each day for one single reason: to stop COVID-19 from spreading in our community.

With additional support from:
- Bang Energy Drinks
- The Church at Rancho Bernardo
- La Croix Sparkling Water

With gratitude to our community:

Many individuals and businesses have stepped forward to provide lunch as a show of thanks to the staff and volunteers who run the COVID-19 Resource Clinic. The Foundation gratefully acknowledges these lunch donors and the service of our clinic staff and volunteers:

- Air Methods
- Brian Cohen
- Chick-fil-A Escondido
- Inter Compassion Charities, Inc.
- Kevin and Andrea Harkenrider
- Harrah’s Resort SoCal
- Jersey Mike’s Subs
- Landon’s East Meets West
- Dr. Osman Khawar & Inlight Institute
- Oracle
- Andy and Stephanie Mathews
- Bob Peek
- PinPoint Legal Marketing
- Cathy Schulte
- Stone Brewing
- TRH Professional Bookkeeping
- Urban Plates
- David and Jennifer Wilson
- Wine Warehouse
- Yakult USA
Jim Hines was recently honored with the first-ever Birkhoff Family Home Caregiver of the Year Award. Jim was chosen for his work to improve the lives of patients.

The award, which carries a prize of $1,000, was created by Bill Birkhoff, a Palomar Health homecare patient for the past four years, and his wife, Anne, and daughter Britainy.

At a ceremony, Birkhoff thanked doctors and homecare workers for keeping him alive in his forty years as a patient at Palomar Health. Aside from helping with basic daily tasks, he said homecare workers have saved his life on at least three occasions: twice when they were called upon to perform the Heimlich Maneuver on him and once when a homecare worker driving him to an appointment avoided a potentially serious car crash.

He and his wife explained how their quality of life was vastly better because of the help they get from Hines six days a week. Anne described the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual support they receive as “phenomenal.”

“It’s not just getting socks on in the morning. It goes much deeper than that,” she said. “I am so grateful because I could not do one-sixteenth of what the caregivers do; I’m just not physically able to do it. So I want to say thank you.”

Bill Birkhoff celebrated the occasion by blowing out candles on four cupcakes, each one representing a year of life that he has had since suffering a catastrophic stroke.

In accepting the award, Hines described how the smallest details can make all the difference to a patient and their family. He recalled a previous experience caring for a couple in hospice. When he took the time to clean the windows of their home, Hines gave them the satisfaction of being able to look out and see their garden, a truly priceless moment for them. It’s that kind of approach, Hines said, that makes for great homecare.

The Birkhoff family is helping to create a legacy of excellence at Palomar Health, according to Joe Parker, Transitions Officer. He said the annual award will serve as a permanent source of encouragement for other caregivers to go above and beyond in their work.

“Quality homecare is all about giving our patients a better life,” Parker said. “That’s exactly what Jim does and why he is so deserving of this award. We’re grateful that the Birkhoff family have chosen to recognize Palomar Health home caregivers for all the important work they do.”

Do you have questions about the Palomar Health Home Health Services? Call 442.204.0306 for more information.
Years ago, the hospital chaplain was usually a member of the clergy summoned for end-of-life issues. The field once known as pastoral care has evolved into spiritual care and the role and scope of hospital chaplains have evolved with it. Chaplains are now an important part of the interdisciplinary patient care team who contribute to the improvement of the patient’s experience and wellbeing.

Studies demonstrate that physical and spiritual wellbeing are often connected. In his book, *Love and Survival*, physician Dean Ornish wrote that no other factor in medicine, “not diet, not smoking, not exercise, not stress, not genetics, not drugs, not surgery,” affects our health, quality and length of life more than feeling loved and cared for.

This connection is recognized by the Joint Committee on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations — the largest healthcare accrediting body in the United States — which mandates that all healthcare facilities have a spiritual-support program in place.

Over the past decade, the role of the chaplain has markedly shifted from one more religious-based to one with a much stronger psychological component, according to Dionne Blaha, Palomar Health’s Supervisor of Chaplains and Spiritual Care. “We support people in hearing their own wisdom,” she explained. “We don’t look at people as broken, needing to be fixed; instead, we trust everyone has the resources they need to deal with their situation. In that sense, we are about connection: connecting each person with their own power, their own path and their best self.”

Dionne oversees a team of four part-time chaplains, as well as volunteer chaplains from all religious faiths. At Palomar Health, chaplains do not make unsolicited patient visits. Patients answer a spiritual assessment question when they are admitted and are made aware of chaplains’ presence and the right to request their services.

Collectively, these chaplains average 30,000 patient, visitor, and employee visits annually.

To support Palomar Health’s diverse patient population, the chaplains — each with their own set of beliefs and traditions — strive to understand the belief systems and traditions of others and demonstrate respect for them.

Recently retired chaplain Susan Pliner reflected on her deep appreciation for her colleagues’ gifts. “Palomar Health’s Spiritual Care team is so diverse in their backgrounds, which is its great strength and a source of much respect between each other,” she recalled. “We have a really powerful team of chaplains and I admire them all so much.”

In 2020, the pandemic radically transformed the way chaplains performed their duties. By mid-March, they were working remotely, providing their support and counsel over the telephone. The intimate and personal nature of their work made this challenging, but they learned to improvise and adjusted to the new dynamic.

When the chaplains returned to the hospitals, they found the nature of
COVID-19 and its aftermath made for a fast-paced environment. The disease also changed their method of interacting with patients.

When a COVID patient is nearing end-of-life, family members and chaplains can be present but must remain in the hallway, separated from the patient by a glass door. That partition means support is directed towards the families and their needs. “We stand in front of the glass and hold them as they cry. It’s stirring,” Dionne said. “It’s very meaningful work for us because we can be there for them in their time of deepest grief.”

Chaplains don’t just attend to the spiritual needs of patients. They are also an important spiritual resource for the staff. This has been especially important during the pandemic when caring for COVID patients can be intense and emotionally draining.

Chaplain Sharon Ackerman recalled an encounter with nurses that clearly illustrated the emotional toll caring for COVID patients was taking on many of the staff. “One day, as I was leaving a patient’s room, two nurses at the patient’s bedside asked me to pray for them,” Sharon recalled. “I told them, ‘Absolutely. You are in my prayers every day.’ It was their way of reminding us not to forget about them.”

When she got wind of the ICU staff wearing down, Sharon made it a point to be visible and available to them. She stopped by both shifts, dropping off cards with a personal note to call her if they wanted to chat, have tea or meditate with her. She handed out chocolates. These small gestures made a big impact on their morale.

Dionne hopes to change the perception of the chaplain’s role, which is widely misunderstood. She points out that they are perhaps most well-known for supporting patients and families through the stages of loss and death, but they provide emotional and spiritual support all along with the experience of being in the hospital.

“What we need to shift the perspective that chaplains are only called on to support the patients or for religion-based concerns,” she stressed. “We’re also here to support their family members. We’re here to support their caregivers. We’re here to support the medical staff and we are here to support every single employee, intern, and volunteer. We are here for everyone.”

Arch Health and Graybill Medical Groups Affiliation Creates Medical “Super Group”

Members Will Receive the Same Great Care with Expanded Options

Two of San Diego County North Inland’s largest medical groups, Graybill Medical Group and Arch Health Medical Group, have joined forces to create the region’s largest health network, Palomar Health Medical Group.

The affiliation, which became effective on December 1, 2020, will expand access and improve the coordination of patient care. Patients will now have access to a broader network of providers who will be able to collaborate on the best care plan while being able to continue seeing their same physicians in the same offices.

“We are excited about the opportunity to bring an expanded network of high-quality providers to our community,” said Arch Health Medical Group Chairman of the Board Harvey Hershkowitz. “This closer coordination of care will improve the health of our community.”

“Patients will immediately reap the benefits of having more physicians to choose from in their network and a smoother referral process to specialists,” said Graybill Medical Group CEO Floyd Farley.

“Copays, deductibles and insurance premiums will not be affected by the merger although it has the potential to reduce the cost of care in the long term.

“Palomar Health Medical Group will have 20 locations throughout North San Diego County, Murrieta and Temecula, employ 170 multi-specialty physicians and 600 support staff and serve more than 150,000 patients. Graybill Medical Group will continue to operate its two offices in Vista and Oceanside independently outside of the Palomar Health Medical group network.”

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Ask Jane Radatz about being named Volunteer of the Year and she is a bit uncomfortable. She would much rather sing the praises of her fellow volunteers. “I am amazed at the power of volunteers and what we can accomplish when we work together,” she marveled.

Nonetheless, Palomar Health Foundation recently recognized Jane as its Volunteer of the Year in a regional awards program organized by North County Philanthropy Council.

The former Poway resident and current Rancho Bernardo resident began volunteering following her retirement. Somehow, Jane found her way to Palomar Health where she has volunteered for the past 26 years.

Jane co-coordinates The Needlework Group, which creates handmade items for patients, including the babies. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jane shifted gears, coordinating a community effort to get thousands of hand-sewn masks for the hospital.

“When Palomar Health asked me to organize some sewing volunteers to make critically needed masks, I put the word out in my community, hoping for six to eight helpers,” she recalled.

To her surprise, more than 100 neighbors responded, initially making 10,000 masks. To date, the group has sewn more than 30,000 masks, which have been distributed to employees, community members and local organizations that serve the vulnerable population.

Jane stresses that this was not her project but the work of a group of talented and dedicated seamstresses. “It was a privilege to be part of this extraordinary achievement of neighbors coming together,” she said.

She especially credits her co-coordinator, Mary Lou Betts, for her role in the project. Jane stressed that Mary Lou was instrumental in getting the project off the ground and is vital to the program’s success.

Palomar Health is just one of many organizations Jane volunteers for, putting her considerable management skills to work.

She is Director of Seniors Helping Our Kids (SHOK) and OASIS tutors at Poway Unified schools. Volunteers work as reading tutors, classroom helpers, library assistants, or they can serve in other capacities.

Jane is the coordinator of The Backyard Produce Project, where volunteers visit homes to harvest excess fruit and vegetables the residents can’t use. This food is donated to low-income families and seniors. “When I started I knew absolutely nothing about fruit trees, but I knew how to coordinate,” she said with a chuckle.

Jane is also involved with Gently Hugged, an organization that collects new or gently used baby clothing and distributes them to local families in need.

When asked what compels her to devote much of her time to volunteering, Jane answered without hesitation. “I just like to help where I can,” she said.
Volunteers are the Heart of Palomar Health

Volunteers are integral to Palomar Health’s day-to-day operations, providing valuable services that free up staff members to focus on providing the best care to their patients. More than 300 volunteers work in a variety of roles throughout Palomar Health.

Volunteers are assigned duties based on skills, preferences, location and experience. Opportunities run the gamut: shuttle drivers, chaplains, lobby desk, surgical waiting room, emergency department, sewing, musicians, and so much more. Wherever their assignments take them, volunteers touch the lives of countless people every day.

“It’s hard to quantify our volunteers’ contributions because they are truly invaluable to Palomar Health,” said Margaret Mertens, director of Volunteer Development and Spiritual Care.

“To give you an idea of how much they contribute to our organization, in 2019 our volunteers provided services worth the financial equivalent of $1.5 million. That amount is staggering and underscores how important the volunteers are and how much we rely on them.”

― Margaret Mertens

While volunteers give so much of themselves, they also receive much in return. There are social benefits as new friendships are formed and a sense of family develops. They also can gain new skills or sharpen old ones. Most importantly, volunteers receive satisfaction in knowing they have made a real difference to Palomar Health and their community.

In early 2020, the pandemic transformed the way Palomar Health delivered care. As a result, the roles of the volunteers changed as well. Because of COVID-related health concerns, volunteers could no longer work in the facilities. For some, that meant temporarily stepping away from their duties.

“This has been extremely difficult on our volunteers who were unable to work during the pandemic,” recalled Margaret. “They are used to being active and also miss the social aspect of their work.”

Other volunteers continued working off-site — some from home doing tasks such as data management. Other volunteers gathered at an off-site location to perform a variety of hand assembly jobs.

As we turn the corner on COVID-19, with vaccinations rolling out and numbers dropping, volunteers will begin to return to the roles at Palomar Health, though only when their safety is ensured.

Meanwhile, Palomar Health’s COVID-19 Resource Center has created a host of new volunteer opportunities, as retired healthcare workers assist with vaccinations and community members providing public safety support at the site.

“It’s hard to describe the gratitude we have for our volunteers,” said Margaret, her voice filled with emotion. “It’s a blessing to work with them. Their kindness, selflessness, and perseverance motivate us to work all the harder to ensure they are safe and well.”

Volunteers Contribute During Pandemic

During the past year, a small group of volunteers gathered off-site to assemble kits and packets for the Palomar Health facilities. Below are the impressive numbers they racked up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOBS</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folding Bio Bags</td>
<td>15,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folding Patient Bags</td>
<td>6,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgery Packets</td>
<td>3,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disinfectant Buckets</td>
<td>2,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syringe Kits</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folding Trash Bags</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing Prep</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Palomar Health Welcomes New Executives

Michael Bogert
Chief Financial Officer
Michael has more than 25 years of experience in strategic healthcare finance. Most recently he served as the CFO of Prime Healthcare where he successfully helped grow the health system.

Trisch Turner, RN, BSN, MSN
VP, Perioperative Services
Trisch is tasked with growing the surgical business and overseeing all OR and interventional platform services. She was previously AVP of Perioperative Services at Methodist Hospitals in Indiana.

Tricia Kassab, EdD, RN, FACHE
VP, Quality
Tricia leads quality and patient safety performance and reporting metrics for the health system. Previously, she served as the VP of Patient Safety/Quality for Adventist Health and served in the same role at City of Hope.

Ryan Olsen, MPH, MBA, Executive Director
of Palomar Health Medical Group
Ryan heads Palomar Health’s new medical group. He previously held the position of CEO at Providence St. Joseph Health. Ryan has also held CEO positions at Memorial Care Saddleback Medical Center and Cedars-Sinai Kerlan Jobe Institute.

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Palomar Health Recognized for Quality Care

Palomar Health is proud to provide nationally recognized care to our community. Time and time again, our services and programs across many specialties are being recognized for clinical quality. These awards mean we demonstrate best practices and clinical success – the results being superior outcomes for our patients. These awards also highlight the commitment of our employees and medical staff to delivering exceptional care. Below are just a few of the honors we recently garnered for our quality care.

Healthgrades 2021 America’s 250 Best Hospitals Award

We’re proud to announce that Palomar Medical Center Escondido has earned the Healthgrades 2021 America’s 250 Best Hospitals Award! The distinction places Palomar Medical Center Escondido in the top five percent of nearly 4,500 hospitals assessed nationwide for its superior clinical performance as measured by Healthgrades.

“This award recognizes the amazing work of our nurses, technicians, environmental service workers, facilities crew, physicians and support staff who perform miracles every day,” said Palomar Health Chief Operating Officer Sheila Brown. “It’s also a reflection of our commitment to providing the best health care to our community.”

Maternity Services Awards

Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care

The Birth Centers at Escondido and Poway have been recognized by Blue Shield of California with a Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) for Maternity Care designation for providing higher quality maternity care. The birth centers met rigorous quality selection criteria for maternity care set by the BDC program.

Maternity Honor Roll

The California Health and Human Services Agency have placed both Poway and Escondido on the “Maternity Honor Roll” for achieving low cesarean section rates for 2020. This was the third year in a row for Escondido and the second year for Poway.

Birth Center Nationally Ranked

Newsweek Magazine has ranked the Palomar Medical Center Poway Birth Center as one of the nation’s “Best Maternity Hospitals 2020.” The rankings were compiled in cooperation with The Leapfrog Group.

The criteria include standards of excellence in maternity care including low C-Section rates, episiotomy and early elective deliveries and following crucial protocols to protect mothers and babies.

Palomar Medical Center Escondido Named America’s 100 Best in Four Specialties

Palomar Medical Center Escondido is one of America’s 100 Best Hospitals for Orthopedic Surgery, Joint Replacement, Spine Surgery and Stroke Care according to Healthgrades, the leading resource that connects consumers, physicians and health systems. Every year, Healthgrades evaluates hospital performance at nearly 4,500 hospitals nationwide for 32 of the most common inpatient procedures and conditions using Medicare data.

The hospital also received Specialty Excellence Awards in critical care, stroke care, neurosciences, orthopedic surgery, joint replacement and spine surgery.

Palomar Medical Center Escondido Makes Newsweek’s World’s Best Hospitals 2021 List

Newsweek released its World’s Best Hospital list for 2021 and PMC Escondido achieved an impressive ranking of 138th in the U.S., 20th in California and 4th in San Diego. The rankings were based on recommendations from medical experts, results from patient surveys and each institution’s key performance indicators.

According to Newsweek, these hospitals stand out for their consistent excellence, including distinguished physicians, top-notch nursing care and state-of-the-art technology.

The World’s Best Hospitals 2021 recognized 2000 of the best medical institutions across 25 countries.
Join us for the

May 3, 2021
Maderas Golf Club in Poway

We’ve lined up an exciting day of fun and philanthropy to benefit Palomar Health. Registration and/or sponsorship includes breakfast, golf cart, lunch, happy hour reception and cool swag from TaylorMade.

All proceeds from the event support the new Physician Quarters and Conference Center of the Future at Palomar Medical Center Escondido.

See you in May!

For more information, please call Palomar Health Foundation at 760.739.2787. You can also visit our website at www.palomarhealthfoundation.org.
HONOR SOMEONE IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE.
Reserve your personalized brick and help support Palomar Health.

Purchasing a commemorative brick gives you the unique opportunity to honor a family member or loved one or show gratitude to a special person who has made a difference in your life. The personalized commemorative bricks will be permanently featured at the highly visible Jacobs and McCann Courtyard entrance.

Act now to reserve your personalized brick and create a lasting legacy. To learn more, call Alex Arana at 760.739.2787 or email Alex.Arana@palomarhealth.org.