



Lifeline

1963 **50** 2013

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Abby works on one of the exercises that is part of her vision therapy program.

Seeing is Believing

Abby, age 5, is right where she needs to be in terms of school readiness as she attends kindergarten. A year ago, however, that was not the case.

The signs were easy to overlook, especially in a child so young. Abby was clumsy, her eye-hand coordination was poor and she had trouble concentrating on tasks.

Abby's mom, Heather, credits Abby's preschool teacher for recognizing the symptoms and recommending that Abby get her vision tested. That first step started a process that got Abby back on track in school readiness skills. The solution, however, was not as simple as a pair of new glasses. It involved a vision therapy program offered by Moose Lake Eye Care and Mercy Hospital that got her seeing how she's supposed to see.

For people of all ages, vision therapy is a type of physical therapy for the eyes and brain. It is a highly effective non-surgical treatment for many common visual problems such as lazy eye, crossed eyes, double vision, convergence insufficiency and some reading

and learning disabilities. It is also used for sports vision improvement.

Visual processing or developmental vision problems can't be detected unless an optometrist specifically tests for them. In Abby's case, her eyes' ability to converge (turn inward towards each other) was poor. This is important for all near tasks, like reading. Her eye movements were also inefficient, making it difficult for her to follow a slow moving object with her eyes accurately and to jump her eyes from one target to another accurately—which can affect reading, balance, depth perception and eye-hand coordination.

VISION THERAPY CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Inside Lifeline

A HEALTHY INVESTMENT

Financial factors are key in plans for new building and renovation project.

Page 3

FIFTY YEARS OF CARING

Mary Nelson, Mercy's first Head Cook, talks about the hospital's early days.

Page 4

SPIRITUAL CARE

Augustana Mercy welcomes their first chaplain. **Page 6**

VISION THERAPY FROM PAGE 1

Working with Dr. Sasha Narayan, Optometrist, Moose Lake Eye Care, and LeAnn Poirier, Occupational Therapist, Mercy Hospital, Abby began a six-month vision therapy program to strengthen her eye muscles and improve their coordination in order to improve the eye-to-brain-to-motor process. Therapy included a one-hour session once a week in Moose Lake followed by five days of “homework” with her mom each week for 15-20 minutes per day. The hard work has made a big difference, says mom.

“When Abby was first asked to track a light, she would move her head all over the place,” Heather explained. “Now, she can follow with just her eyes. It is just amazing that she has come so far.”

While she is very pleased with the results of the program, Heather does acknowledge that parents need to be heavily involved. “You must do the homework (with your child) to make this work,” she commented, adding that she cannot imagine what struggles Abby would have had in school without the therapy. “If these things were not fixed, she would not learn to read,” she said. “I will do anything I can to help her succeed in school.

“There were lots of tears in the beginning,” she added. “But some of the most difficult exercises are now her favorites.”

Heather also had high praise for Dr. Narayan and



Pictured above, front row, left: Heather and Abby Haribson. Back row, left: Dr. Sasha Narayan, Optometrist, Moose Lake Eye Care, and LeAnn Poirier, Occupational Therapist, Mercy Hospital.

LeAnn. “As a mom, to see us all work together for a common goal is overwhelming.

“I am so thankful and grateful that this program is available in Moose Lake,” she added, which saved the Sandstone family from having to make a weekly trip to the Twin Cities for therapy.

“I never thought she’d ride a bike without training wheels,”

Heather said. “When she took off on her own, that was an aha moment. It was so amazing.”

For more information about vision therapy, please contact Moose Lake Eye Care at **218.485.8495**.

Moose Lake Students Learn BLS & First Aid

In January, Mr. McDonnell’s 9th grade health classes in Moose Lake learned BLS and First Aid with Mercy Hospital instructors Sara Thiessen, Andrea Peterson, and Sue Bengtson.

BLS stands for Basic Life Support and is more commonly known as CPR or cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Students gained an understanding of why BLS is needed and how to properly perform BLS and use an AED until rescuers with more advanced training arrive. The students also learned the basic steps of First Aid. The course briefly covered a wide variety of medical, injury and environmental emergencies. The students watched instructional videos and participated in hands-on practice sessions involving basic bandaging and splinting, as well as the steps of BLS on mannequins. Upon successful completion of the class, the students received an American Heart Association BLS and First



Aid card.

The students have been encouraged to take pride in completion of this course and to make sure that they note that they are currently certified as they

start to fill out job applications in the next couple of years.

We would like to thank Mr. McDonnell for allowing us to come into his classroom to teach. We would also like to thank the 55 students that participated and completed this course. A job well done!



A Healthy Investment

To our hospital district:

In June of 1963, Mercy opened its doors for the very first time. Over the course of 50 years, Mercy has provided quality health care close to home to the people of our region, to the young and the old and everyone in between. During those 50 years, Mercy has continually evolved, updating technologies and expanding services in order to meet the health needs of those we serve. What hasn't changed, however, is our commitment to provide the highest standard of personalized care to our patients. That commitment is what continues to make Mercy, and the care we provide, special.

Later this spring, Mercy will break ground for a major building and renovation project that will enable us to deliver modern health care services safely and effectively well into the future. The project will allow us to enhance the patient experience by improving both the flow of services for our patients and patient privacy while addressing some serious space needs. Several years in the planning, this project has been carefully developed with a focus on its sustainability and affordability. There are several financial factors that make this an opportune time to invest in this project.

First, Mercy is in a healthy financial position. In seven years, we've increased available cash by \$4 million to a total of \$5 million, increased investments by \$3.6 million to a total of \$8.6 million and increased net assets by \$6.2 million. In addition, we have \$4 million less debt. Mercy has accomplished this with no tax levy support from the hospital district; in fact, Mercy has not issued a tax levy for 13 years.

Second, Mercy intends to support this investment through its operating budget. That means we plan to pay loan costs through the revenues in our annual budget. The plans for this project, including the

ability to pay for it, were carefully developed based on a thorough feasibility study that looked at current and projected demographics, patient volumes, patient services as well as revenue.

Third, Mercy's status as a Critical Access Hospital (CAH) allows for reinvestment in new construction. As a result of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, CAHs receive cost-based payment from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This improved the profitability of many CAHs, including Mercy Hospital, making renovation or facility replacement a realistic consideration for many small, rural hospitals. That is certainly the case in our region where hospitals in Mora, Aitkin and Cloquet have already completed major building upgrades.

Finally, the terms of the \$38 million USDA loan for the project are very favorable. The majority of the new loan offers a fixed, lower interest rate of 3.5% on a longer term of repayment (40 years) than the terms on our existing debt. The new loan will also allow us to refinance most of our existing debt, making it very cost effective.

Together, these financial factors were key considerations in the decision of the Mercy Board of Directors to proceed with the building and renovation project. Like the Mercy Wellness Center, this project is an important investment into the current and future health care needs of the region, setting the stage for Mercy's next 50 years.

If you have any questions about the new project, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Jason Douglas, CEO

Mercy Hospital is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Fifty Years of Caring: One Person at a Time



Mary Nelson

has 21 years' worth of days at Mercy to her credit. She began her career in spring of 1963 and retired in 1984. It is a history she is proud of and one which she recalls with genuine pride and fondness.

"Ina Aho and I were at work for two weeks before Mercy opened its doors," Mary recalled. "We had to get everything ready before the food was delivered. We washed our new commercial equipment and lined up the cupboards and made sure everything was clean. And we even loved doing *that!*"

Mary and her husband, Victor Nelson, owned and lived in an apartment building in Moose Lake as the new hospital was being built. One of their renters was Mr. Clifford Johnson, who was serving as Mercy's CEO at the time of construction. "In those days, we all kept our front doors opened and were more like a family," said Mary. "Mr. Johnson ended up coming in to our place for dinner quite often. He liked my cooking, and told my husband that one day I would be working at the new hospital as the head cook. It didn't sit well with Victor at first—but then it happened. And I LOVED every minute of it."

Mary has a hard time saying what in particular made her years with Mercy so thoroughly enjoyable. She

The twinkle in her eyes belied the fact that Mary Nelson was reminiscing not about a favorite vacation from years gone by, but from her days of work as the first Head Cook at Mercy Hospital. Mary

thinks part of it was that the staff was quite small, and many of them were women of the same age, so it felt more like an extended family rather than a workplace. "We started out with just a few patients and then it started to get busier. I can remember times when there were patient beds lining the halls until rooms would become available. We just made it work. I was in charge of creating all the menus and making sure our patients got three hot meals a day and one good snack. There was no employee cafeteria. We had a little kitchen table in one corner of the kitchen and the employees would come in to grab a bite when they could get some time. We knew each other well."

Mary shared a few interesting insights into the workings of a small rural hospital in 1963. She recalled that Mercy provided nice yellow uniforms for kitchen staff—but they had to provide their own aprons. She ordered much of the food from Aslesen's and Upper Lakes Foods, but the fresh meat came from The Moose Lake Co-op Store. Her son, Ed, was a delivery boy at the time, so she would let him sneak in for a snack when he made a delivery. Leftover food was collected and picked up each evening by Dick Nordstrom, who had a truck with a "slop cooker" on the back. He went to area restaurants as well as to Mercy and picked up the remnants of meals, cooked them all up and fed them to his pigs. There was no ambulance at the time, either. "The Hamlins (Hamlin-Hansen Funeral Home owners) had a station wagon back then, and they would get patients and bring them to the hospital."

Mary has kept a list of her Mercy friends over the years, and mentioned that it is hard to write down the dates when they die. "There are 23 people on that list now," the 91-year-old said. "I suspect it will keep getting longer. But I sure did have good friends at Mercy. REALLY good." It seems that, even though 50 years of change and growth have passed since Mercy opened its doors, one thing has remained constant: the quality of folks who work together has remained high. Mercy continues to care for our community, one person at a time.



THE MERCY FOUNDATION

Tributes & Memorials

The Mercy Foundation receives gifts from those who wish to honor the memory of their friends and family as well as those who wish to pay tribute to others or to celebrate happy occasions, great or small. Following is a list of tributes and memorials received by The Mercy Foundation from November 1, 2012 through January 31, 2013.

MEMORIALS

In memory of Dale Gregory Anderson
Mr. Carl Anderson

In memory of Joseph Berube
Mercy Hospital

In memory of Frances Broten
Mercy Hospital

In memory of the Danelski Family
Mrs. Marie A. Danelski

In memory of John & Jerry DeRungs
Mrs. Jean DeRungs

In memory of Frances Majerle
Dr. & Mrs. Frank Skalko

In memory of Janice Mapes
Mercy Hospital

In memory of Robert M. Nelson
Mercy Hospital

In memory of Julia Modec
Dr. & Mrs. Frank Skalko

In memory of Shirley Peterson
Mercy Hospital

In memory of Ann Smrekar
Dr. & Mrs. Frank Skalko

In memory of Jordan Lee Tucker
Mr. Jeffrey L. Tucker

In memory of William R. Timmons
Mrs. Marie L. Kajer

Blood Donors are (another) area lifeline!

On January 18, 2013, The Mercy Foundation hosted a January Blood Drive to support the efforts of Memorial Blood Centers, northeastern Minnesota's main supplier of fresh blood and blood products to hospitals, including Mercy Hospital.

"The extremely cold weather and influenza had us concerned," explained Foundation Director Cindy Carlson. "But our blood donors came through—and so did Mercy's staff. MBC sent an urgent e-mail a few days before the drive, stating that supplies of certain blood types were getting dangerously low. When I shared the memo with staff, many of them helped." MBC reported that of the 66 folks who were scheduled to give blood, 57 were able to give, 9 were deferred and there were four first timers.

"As one unit of blood can help as many as three people, 171 patients could benefit from the units collected at The Mercy Foundation Blood Drive," Carlson said. "We are most grateful for this most recent act of generosity by our friends and neighbors."

Taxing Issues

The Mercy Foundation mailed all 2012 tax statements the week of January 23, 2012. If you do not receive a tax statement by the second week of February, but believe you should have, please contact us at 218.485.5586 or via e-mail at ccarlson@mercymooselake.org. Thank you for your continued support of The Mercy Foundation!

NAME _____ PHONE _____

DELIVERY ADDRESS: _____


E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

I WISH TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING:

- GIFT
- PLEDGE
- I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS PAYMENT OPTIONS, please call me.

I'D LIKE MY GIFT TO BE LISTED IN THE FORM OF A:

- MEMORIAL _____
- TRIBUTE _____

 **THE MERCY FOUNDATION**

710 South Kenwood Avenue • Moose Lake, MN 55767 • 218.485.5586 • FAX 218.485.5855

Thank You for Supporting Spiritual Care



Rev. Karen Linné

and other donors that contributed to Augustana Care's Spiritual Care Fund, we were able to call our first chaplain as of January 2013.

We are grateful to all those that have supported the chaplain program through their partnership, time and donations. Your support will help provide spiritual care to the current residents and the hundreds of people who will come in the future to live, or to heal and return home. Welcome Pastor Karen Linné!

**Steve Mork, Administrator, and the
The Mission Advancement Council:
Cindy Carlson, Louis Butkiewicz,
Ernie & Janette Muller, Curtis & Natalie
Frohrip, Romayne Storck, and Lynn Youso**

During the past year our Mission Advancement Council has been working to improve spiritual care. With the assistance of area congregations, individuals

From Pastor Karen Linné

I am excited to join the Augustana Mercy Team in the newly established chaplaincy position. Moose Lake is familiar territory for me. My first call was as pastor at Salem Lutheran Church in Mahtowa from Jan 2002 until December 2007. Our family also enjoyed Sand Lake for about 20 years after my parents purchased their cabin in 1983.

Since 2010, I've been serving in specialized ministry as a chaplain at Essentia, St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth and look forward to also serving in this role at Augustana Mercy. I'll be supplementing the good care that area clergy already provide for their congregational members and expect to be at Augustana about two days each week this year.

My husband Mark (the accountant in the Carlton County Transportation Department) and I have been married 32 years. We have two sons Brian (29 yrs) and Keith (24 yrs). Both married wonderful women and all four of "our kids" live in the Twin Cities. I enjoy time with my family, scrapbooking, traveling, genealogy, cross country skiing, canoeing and gaining flower gardening skills.

As I begin at Augustana Care, I come very aware of the preciousness and uncertainty of life. You will find that I see humor to be an essential element of life. As we live life together, I am grateful that our God accompanies us on all of life's journeys whether on the mountaintops or in the valleys. In the coming months, I look forward to getting acquainted with the residents and their families as we share the joys and sorrows of life and how we've seen God (or not seen God) in those experiences.

Rev. Karen Linné
(pronounced Li-NAY)

News Notes

Cholesterol & Lipid Screenings

February Walk-In Tests

Mondays/Tuesdays/Wednesdays in February

7:30 - 9 a.m.

Mercy Hospital Lab

\$5 - Cholesterol

\$15 - Complete Lipid Profile

(12-hour fast required before lipid test)

No appointment required.

Call 218.485.5549 for more information.

WOMEN'S HEALTH & FITNESS AT EVERY AGE

Women of every age are invited to a monthly focus group to learn about and discuss women's health and fitness issues. Sponsored by Mercy's Rehab Department, the free group is held at 6 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month at the Mercy Wellness Center.

"We hope this will become a valuable group for women to learn more about health and fitness issues that are a concern to them," said LuAnn Charboneau, Mercy Physical Therapist and facilitator of the group. "We will feature guest speakers and open discussion on all things that impact our health and well being, from top to bottom, inside and out. We want this to be a group that encourages questions and discussion. Topics will be driven by the interests of group members."

On March 6, the group will bring in guest speaker Linda Appelgren, Dietitian, Mercy Hospital, to talk about nutrition. On April 3, Dr. Lynn Stottler, Gateway Family Health Clinic, will discuss fitness for women.

Women interested in attending the group may choose to attend all or selected sessions. There is no charge for the group. Call Mercy's Rehab Department at **218-485-5597** for more information.

NEW! ONLINE BILL PAY

Mercy now offers patients a convenient and secure online option for paying their hospital bill. To pay a bill online, go to www.mercy moselake.org and click on Online Bill Pay at the top of the screen. Call **218.485.5589** with any questions.

ASK MERCY PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

If you are recovering from illness, injury or surgery, Mercy's skilled therapists are ready to provide the individualized care you need to return to your home, work and sport activities.

Mercy's Rehab Department offers many specialty therapy services. If you feel you might benefit from therapy services, please give us a call—our rehab staff would be happy to talk with you about your concerns.

The choice is yours. The decision about where to receive therapy is yours. When you choose Mercy, your community hospital, for your therapy, you will receive high quality, personalized care in spacious, private treatment areas featuring specialized equipment. We also provide home care services.

Additional Mercy Therapy Services:

Exercise Equipment for Outpatients

Current outpatients have free use of exercise equipment located at Mercy Hospital, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

FREE Injury or Balance Screening

Is a nagging strain or pain bothering you? Are you concerned about your balance and falling? Mercy Physical Therapists can help you answer these questions with a FREE Injury or Balance Screen available by appointment at Mercy Hospital Physical Therapy. Please call **218.485.5597** to schedule your appointment.

FREE One-Month Membership--Mercy Wellness Center

To encourage our patients to continue exercising on their own, adults completing Physical or Occupational Therapy outpatient treatment for a physical ailment receive a free one-month membership to the Mercy Wellness Center.

For More Information:

Call Mercy at **218.485.5597** for more information about our services.

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Mercy Hospital offers a new cancer support group for those living with any type of cancer and for their caregivers.

Cancer, Coffee & Conversation meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month in Community Room 1 at Mercy Hospital. There is no charge for the group.

"This group offers people a time to connect with others who are faced with the same challenges and emotions," said Barb Orth, RN, OCN, Mercy Hospital. "We hope people will come to share conversation or just to listen and enjoy a cup of coffee with friends. We look forward to sharing and supporting one another."

This group replaces Mercy's Breast Cancer Support group. Please call **218.485.5599** for more information.

Caring for Your Community, One Person at a time

Urgent Care

Monday-Friday: 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturday-Sunday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Birthing Classes

■ March 5 & 7; 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
■ April 13; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
■ May 2 & 7; 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Call **218.485.5572** to register

Caring for Your Newborn

■ March 19; 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
■ May 21; 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Call **218.485.5572** to register

Breastfeeding Education Class

■ May 8; 6:30 to 8 p.m.
■ July 17; 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Call **218.485.5572** to register

Diabetes Education Program

Moose Lake (Mercy):

■ March 12 & 26; May 14; August 6; 2 to 5 p.m.
■ April 9 & 23; July 9; October 1; 2 to 5 p.m.
■ May 7 & 21; July 9; October 1; 2 to 5 p.m.
Call **218.485.5836** to enroll.

Hinckley (Gateway Clinic):

Call **218.485.5836** to set up individualized sessions.


Diabetes Support Group

Meets the second Monday of every month; 2:30 p.m.;
Conference Room, Mercy Wellness Center.

Grief Support

■ **Grief Support Group:** Meets the fourth Thursday of every month; 10-11:30 a.m. or 7-8:30 p.m.
■ **Child Loss Grief Support Group:** Meets the first Thursday of each month; 7-8:30 p.m.

Call **218.485.4481** for more information.

www.mercyooselake.org 

Community First Aid/CPR

■ May 9; 6 to 10 p.m.
Call **218.485.5572** to register. Cost: \$50.

CPR for Health Care Providers

■ March 14; 6 to 10 p.m.
Call **218.485.5572** to register. Cost: \$50.

Cancer Support Group

For those with any type of cancer and their caregivers; meets the second Tuesday of every month; 6:30 p.m.; Community Room I. Call **218.485.5599**.

Cardiac Rehabilitation - Phase II

This monitored outpatient program for heart patients is offered on a continuous basis. Call **218.485.5696**.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program

An eight-week program of exercise, education, breathing retraining and nutritional counseling. Call **218.485.5677**.

LUNGS R US - A Better Breathers Club

Meets third Wednesday of month; 2 p.m. Call **218.485.5677**.

Women's Health & Fitness at Every Age

Focus Group meets first Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m. at the Mercy Wellness Center, 30 Arrowhead Lane. Call **218.485.5597**.

Exercise Classes at the Mercy Wellness Center

Our wide array of classes are offered on a continuous basis unless otherwise noted. That means you can join a class any time there is an opening. You will purchase either individual sessions or a package of sessions, then sign up for specific session dates that work best for your schedule. Check our website for class descriptions and schedules. To register for an exercise class, call **218.485.5557**.

Alzheimer's Group for Family Caregivers

Meets third Thursday of month; 10 a.m.; Hope Lutheran Church. Sponsored by Carlton County Public Health.