

# Gift of Health

Our Philanthropy Magazine

SPRING 2026

## Inside

- 1 Michelle's message
- 2 Celebrating 20 Years of Grand Groups
- 3 Leaders, Teachers, Healers
  - 5 From Misdiagnosis to Miracles
- 7 Honoring Legacy Through Planned Giving
  - 8 Garden of Calm
- 10 Community Highlights



## SAINT MARY'S FOUNDATION

A Member of Trinity Health

*In this issue of Gift of Health, we celebrate the many ways Saint Mary's Foundation is making a difference at Trinity Health Grand Rapids and in our community.*

For Donors of  
**Saint Mary's Foundation**

**Taylor's Story:  
One Miraculous  
Journey**

Page 5

# SAINT MARY'S FOUNDATION

A Member of Trinity Health

## Spring Brings New Energy— and So Much to Celebrate

Spring is one of my favorite seasons because it reminds us that renewal is always possible. As the days grow brighter, so does the momentum across Saint Mary's Foundation and it's all thanks to you.

This year is already shaping up to be an exciting one. In this issue of *Gift of Health*, you'll meet Taylor Hyma, whose powerful journey of healing reminds us what compassionate, innovative care can truly accomplish when philanthropy and medicine come together. Stories like Taylor's are the heart of our Mission and the reason your support matters so deeply.

We're also feeling the joy of connection. Vine & Vinyl is returning, bringing music, storytelling and community together in a way that celebrates resilience and hope. We're welcoming a new Up Next cohort filled with passionate, emerging leaders, and we're thankful for the donors who have recently and thoughtfully planned the legacies they want to leave behind.

A moment I'm especially looking forward to is Trinity Health Day of Giving on June 18, 2026. On this special, inaugural day, our colleagues and community will rally around our shared Mission of caring, with a focused effort to support Trinity Health Grand Rapids. We are deeply grateful for the partnership of LMCU, whose support will help make this day a powerful expression of generosity, unity and impact.

As you turn these pages, I hope you feel the gratitude, hope and excitement that I feel every day. Thank you for being part of this remarkable community and for helping care grow—this spring and always.



Sincerest regards,

*Michelle Rabideau*

**Michelle Rabideau, CFRE, MPA**  
President, Saint Mary's Foundation



## Trinity Health

### Do you know the meaning of the Trinity Health logo?

The **cross** reflects our Catholic identity, heritage and Mission.

**Purple** is a symbol of leadership, wisdom and creativity.

**Green** represents growth, renewal and environmental stewardship.

The **wings of doves** that form the cross are symbols of love, peace and caring. Three purple doves reflect the Holy Trinity. The green dove is a symbol of our openness to new partners and new ideas.

**Can you find the hidden purple dove in this issue of *Gift of Health*?**



*Celebrating at one of the first official Grand Girlfriends' events in 2007: Michelle Rabideau, Lisa Wurst, Micki Benz and Barb Herr.*



## Celebrating 20 Years of Grand Groups

This year, Saint Mary's Foundation proudly celebrates the 20th anniversary of Grand Groups—two decades of generosity, friendship and impact in support of our healing Mission. What began with the formation of Grand Girlfriends™ now includes Grand Guys™.

Grand Girlfriends™ was founded by visionary women whose passion for community and commitment to philanthropy laid the foundation that continues to thrive today. Together, Grand Groups members have helped advance programs and services that touch countless lives.

Over the years, Grand Groups have funded hands-on projects that directly improve patient

care—from developmental toys for infants in the Maternal Infant Health Program and comfort packs for Breast Center patients, to distraction toys for children in the Emergency Department.

They have strengthened care delivery through investments in cardiac ultrasound technology, pressure-injury prevention equipment, and nursing education tools—contributing to more than \$310,000 collectively to Trinity Health Grand Rapids programs since inception.

*As we honor this milestone, we extend our deepest gratitude to all past and present members who have made these 20 years possible.*

**Learn more about Grand Groups and how to get involved at:**

[www.trinityhealthmichigan.org/foundation-and-giving/saint-marys-foundation/get-involved/grand-groups](http://www.trinityhealthmichigan.org/foundation-and-giving/saint-marys-foundation/get-involved/grand-groups)



# Leaders, Teachers, Healers



Get to know Carolyn E. Leja, DNP, MBA, RN, CNM, Chief Nursing Officer, Trinity Health Grand Rapids

Trinity Health Grand Rapids is pleased to welcome Carolyn Leja as our new chief nursing officer. With more than two decades of progressive nursing and clinical leadership experience and a continued commitment to hands-on patient care Carolyn brings a rare blend of strategic vision, academic rigor and deep respect for the calling of nursing.

Her career has spanned executive leadership, advanced clinical practice and academic teaching, all grounded in a passion for compassionate, high-quality care and the development of exceptional nursing teams.

## What excites you most about leading nursing at Trinity Health Grand Rapids and what is your vision for the future?

“What excites me most is the opportunity to partner with nurses who are deeply committed to excellence and Mission,” Carolyn shares. “Trinity Health Grand Rapids has a strong foundation of clinical quality, faith-based values and community trust. My vision is to build on that foundation by creating an environment where nurses feel empowered, supported and inspired to practice at the highest level.”

Carolyn envisions a future where nursing at Trinity Health Grand Rapids continues to lead through innovation, evidence-based practice and compassionate presence, while also prioritizing workforce sustainability and professional growth.

“When nurses are supported through education, technology and leadership development they are better able to provide the kind of healing care our patients and families deserve,” she says. “That is how we strengthen outcomes, patient experience and long-term impact.”

## What makes the culture of nursing at Trinity Health Grand Rapids so special?

“The heart of this organization is unmistakable,” Carolyn notes. “Our nurses bring skill, resilience and humanity into every patient interaction. What stands out to me is their deep sense of purpose and teamwork.”

She describes Trinity Health Grand Rapids nurses as relationship-centered caregivers, professionals who understand that healing happens not only through clinical expertise, but through presence, dignity and trust.

“There is a strong culture of collaboration here,” she adds. “Nurses are respected voices at the table, and they care deeply about one another. That sense of shared responsibility and compassion is what makes our nursing teams truly exceptional.”



Carolyn Leja meeting with physicians and nurses at the Birth Center. From left to right: Rachel Weiss, RN; Dr. Jessica Gibbie; Sue Bankhead, RN, administrative director of Maternal-Child Services; Carolyn Leja; Joni Hallberg, surgical technician; Dicksie Tremlin, RN; Jessica Holbrook, RN; and Nicole Andriamanga, RN.

## How does Saint Mary’s Foundation elevate nursing excellence?

Carolyn sees philanthropy as a vital partner in advancing nursing innovation and patient care.

“Philanthropic support allows us to go beyond what is possible through traditional funding,” she explains. “It helps us invest in advanced education, specialty training, new care models and tools that enhance the patient experience and our nurses’ well being,” Carolyn says.

**“When donors invest in nursing, they are investing directly in patients. This generosity empowers nurses to lead, innovate and deliver extraordinary care at some of life’s most vulnerable moments.”**

## A leader grounded in practice and purpose

Carolyn most recently served as program director, Nursing Career Center, Corewell Health West, and previously as chief nursing officer for Corewell Health West – Big Rapids and Reed City Hospitals, where she oversaw nursing and clinical operations across multiple service lines and campuses. She holds a Doctor of Nursing Practice and Executive MBA from Johns Hopkins University, is a Johnson & Johnson Nurse Leader Fellow through Duke University, and earned both her BSN and MSN (Midwifery) from the University of Michigan. She is also a Certified Nurse Midwife.

*We welcome Carolyn Leja as she partners with our nurses, physicians, donors and community members to advance compassionate, high quality care at Trinity Health Grand Rapids.*



## From Misdiagnosis to Miracles

The first sign something was wrong came on Thanksgiving Day 2022.

"I was sitting on the couch, and the next thing I knew I was in the hospital," Taylor said.

She was unresponsive and experiencing seizures. Her family rushed her to an emergency department at another health system, where an MRI showed a spot on her brain that was attributed to a head injury. Taylor had not experienced any head trauma, and her family felt their concerns were dismissed after being told the issue would resolve in a year or two.

Seeking answers, **Taylor's parents contacted Trinity Health Hauenstein Neurosciences in Grand Rapids.**

### Finding the right care

During Christmas week 2022, Taylor again became unresponsive and was vomiting. She was taken to the Trinity Health Grand Rapids Emergency Department and discharged on three anti-seizure medications. The family hoped to see Hussam Shaker, MD, a board-certified neurologist and fellowship-trained epileptologist. Dr. Shaker made time for a virtual visit in January 2023.

Taylor's symptoms worsened: racing heart, vomiting, memory and mood changes, heat intolerance and clusters of seizures without recovery in between.

Taylor's mom, Micki Hyma, remembers the first in-person visit in April 2023.

"When Dr. Shaker said, 'If she were my daughter,' we knew he cared. We never felt dismissed at Trinity Health."

Taylor was admitted to the epilepsy monitoring unit in June 2023 so her seizures could be studied in detail. Trinity Health Grand Rapids Epilepsy Center is a Level 4 epilepsy center, the highest designation, offering advanced care for complex and drug-resistant epilepsy.

### Disease progression

Over time, Dr. Shaker adjusted Taylor's medications, seven in total, but her seizures continued to worsen.

"I was sleeping on the couch all the time. I had headaches, hot flashes, vomiting and light sensitivity. I had to live in the dark," Taylor said.

Medication side effects and inactivity caused her weight to increase from 114 to 189 pounds. After years of treatment, she was considered drug resistant, with only a four to eight percent chance of seizure control through medication alone.

"She had no quality of life," Dr. Shaker said. "We had to do something."



"I woke up and felt amazing. The care was incredible."

– Taylor Hyma, patient

### SEEG and diagnosis

Taylor underwent stereo-electroencephalography (SEEG), a minimally invasive procedure that places electrodes deep within the brain to precisely identify where seizures begin. The procedure was guided by the ROSA surgical robot, technology made possible 100% through donor support to Saint Mary's Foundation.

The SEEG procedure was performed collaboratively by Dr. Shaker and Trinity Health Medical Group neurosurgeon Jürgen Lüders, MD.

In March 2024, fifteen electrodes were placed on the left side of Taylor's brain. Following the procedure, additional discussion revealed Taylor had struggled with reading and headaches since childhood. Dr. Shaker concluded she had likely been experiencing seizures her entire life, though they did not present in typical ways.

Her diagnosis: location-related focal epilepsy with complex partial seizures.

### Surgical decision

Three seizure sites were identified. Taylor had several options: laser ablation (30–50% chance of seizure freedom), a responsive neurostimulation device, or brain surgery. Surgery offered the highest chance at 60 to 70%.

Despite the risks, Taylor chose the most aggressive option.

"It was terrifying," Micki said. "But we trusted Dr. Lüders."

"If you can make a young patient seizure free, the long-term outcome is better," Dr. Lüders said.

### Surgery and recovery

In July 2024, Dr. Lüders performed a left resection of the amygdala, hippocampus and temporal regions using advanced navigation technology for extreme precision and safety. Taylor was discharged after one night.

"I woke up and felt amazing," Taylor said. "The care was incredible."

### Life after surgery

Taylor's life has dramatically improved.

"I am blessed and very happy," she said.

She can now drive, shop independently and enjoy daily life again. Dr. Shaker noticed the transformation immediately.

"She was a completely different person," he said. "Taylor has been seizure free for nearly a year and a half."

She remains on reduced anti-seizure medication as a precaution. Post-surgery, she experienced several months of headaches and ongoing speech and memory challenges, for which she received therapy at Mary Free Bed.

"Her brain is young and has neuroplasticity," Dr. Shaker said. "There is reason for hope."

### Looking forward

Taylor is considering a future in health care, inspired by her experience, or starting a dog-grooming business. Her advice to others living with epilepsy; be patient, accept change, recognize true support systems, and hold on to hope.

Today, Taylor is looking forward to spring vacation with her family — and a future she once feared she might never have.



## Honoring Legacy Through Planned Giving

Planned gifts allow donors to create a lasting legacy—supporting the care, programs and Mission they believe in while making a meaningful impact for generations to come. We are grateful to share that three donors have recently confirmed planned gift commitments to Saint Mary’s Foundation, allowing us to recognize and celebrate their generosity today.

These commitments include:

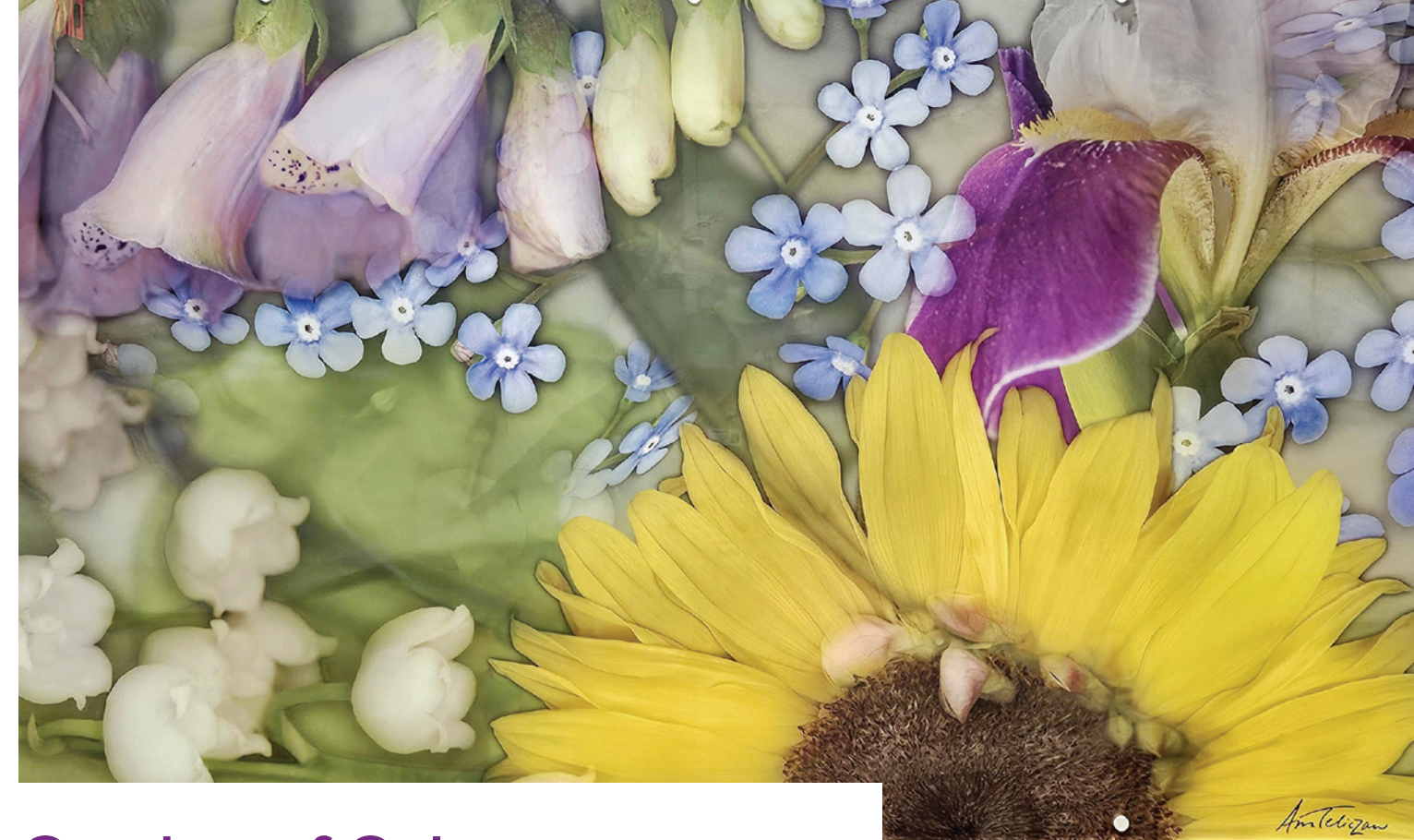
- A current Trinity Health colleague who has named Saint Mary’s Foundation as a beneficiary of a retirement account in the amount of \$250,000, ensuring continued support for the program they have served for more than 20 years.
- A grateful patient has designated \$100,000 in their estate plan to honor the exceptional, lifesaving care they received.
- A longtime supporter has included a \$20,000 estate gift in their plans, reflecting their enduring commitment to our Mission of caring at Trinity Health.

Together, these future gifts reflect the strength of our philanthropic community and a shared belief that thoughtful investment today helps shape a healthier future for all.



### Interested in exploring how you can leave a legacy that starts today?

We’d be honored to talk with you. Contact **Cathy Mersman** at 616-685-1484 or [cathy.skene@trinity-health.org](mailto:cathy.skene@trinity-health.org).



## Garden of Calm:

### Art That Heals at Trinity Health Grand Rapids

A new and stunning work of art on the second floor at Trinity Health Grand Rapids brings color, calm and connection. *Secret Garden 102*, a large-scale botanical piece by artist Ann Teliczan, celebrates 60 years of Saint Mary’s Foundation and reflects the commitment to caring for the whole person.

Teliczan’s artwork, inspired by the restorative power of nature, transforms clinical environments into places of warmth and welcome. Lush florals and vibrant color invite all who view it to pause, breathe and experience a moment of peace amid the demands of health care.

Teliczan is known for designing pieces that support healing and human connection, offering visual comfort during moments of stress, uncertainty and recovery.

This artwork was made possible by donors to our Art Fund because they believe that healing extends beyond medical care. Through continuous support, our donors help ensure that Trinity Health Grand Rapids remains a place where art, nature and exceptional medical care work together to support all who come to us for care.



“This piece is designed to offer a sense of calm and connection—providing moments of peace, color and renewal for patients, visitors, and staff.”

– Ann Teliczan



## Strengthening Employee Health Through Lifestyle & Culinary Medicine

With grant support from Saint Mary's Foundation, the Trinity Health Advanced Lifestyle and Culinary Medicine program conducted a research study focused on caregiver well-being. The study, "Dietitian-Led Lifestyle and Culinary Medicine Program in a Health Care System: Implementation and Outcomes," was authored by Trinity Health registered dietitian nutritionists Abigail McCleery, MPH, RDN, DipACLM; Emily Haller, MS, RDN, DipACLM; Clisty Kinlin, MS, RDN, CDCES, DipACLM; Kelly Wilson, RDN, DipACLM; and Lisa McDowell, MS, RDN, CSSD, DipACLM, in collaboration with clinicians and academic partners. Published in the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine* (2026), the research offers a comprehensive evaluation of the Trinity Health Lifestyle Medicine program's effectiveness.

The innovative program emphasizes whole-person care by investing directly in the health of Trinity Health colleagues. In 2024, **registered dietitian nutritionists led a 12-week virtual Lifestyle and Culinary Medicine program** that combined evidence-based education, culinary skill-building, fitness coaching, and

individualized nutrition counseling. **Fifty employees participated in weekly classes** and one-on-one consultations focused on the six pillars of Lifestyle Medicine. Thanks to Saint Mary's Foundation, the program was offered at no cost, removing financial barriers for colleagues across a wide range of roles.

Results showed meaningful improvements. Participants experienced significant reductions in weight, BMI, waist circumference and blood pressure, along with healthier behaviors. All participants reported gaining new knowledge and skills and had already made or were preparing to make positive lifestyle changes. While some laboratory measures did not shift over the study period, the findings demonstrate a strong foundation for long-term health and reflect Trinity Health's commitment to caring for those who care for others.



## Because of you: Nearly \$700,000 supporting exceptional care in FY26

Saint Mary's Foundation is proud to have awarded \$696,994 in fiscal year 2026 annual grants, supporting projects that strengthen care across Trinity Health Grand Rapids. These investments are already creating meaningful impact for patients, families and care teams.

### Comfort and coping resources for patients:

New toys, sensory tools, art supplies and iPad entertainment options are helping ease anxiety and bring comfort to pediatric patients. Nearly three hundred children have already benefited from these resources.



**New Stryker bassinets:** Six new bassinets for the Mother Baby Unit are supporting safer and more comfortable care for newborns while giving families a better experience during their first days together.

**Warm blankets in cardiac testing:** A new medical-grade blanket warmer in the Wege Cardiac Testing Center is improving the patient experience during stress tests and echocardiograms, offering warmth and comfort during moments that can feel stressful.

*These projects reflect the generosity of our donors and the dedication of our colleagues, and they highlight the meaningful ways philanthropy supports exceptional care throughout our hospital.*

## Bringing Leaders together through CEO Connect

Saint Mary's Foundation was honored to host CEO Connect at the Trinity Health Lacks Cancer Center, welcoming West Michigan CEOs and senior leaders for an engaging conversation about the future of health care.

Hosted by President Matt Biersack, MD, the gathering **explored local and national health care trends, how Trinity Health is navigating a rapidly evolving landscape, and what these changes mean for the communities we serve.** Thoughtful dialogue and shared insights underscored the power of collaboration and the vital role philanthropy plays in advancing innovative, compassionate care for all.



## \$562,000 grant ensures comprehensive HIV care for more than 1,100 patients

Ryan White Grant Awarded: Established in 1988 with a grant from the State of Michigan to treat HIV/AIDS, **Trinity Health's McAuley Clinic** has been sustained for decades through a mixture of federal and state funding, including this FY26 Notice of Award for HRSA Ryan White Part C funding. The McAuley Clinic provides comprehensive primary HIV medical care and essential support services to low-income, uninsured, and underserved individuals living with HIV.

**The program offers a full continuum of care, including medical and psychosocial case management, care coordination, preventive and pharmaceutical care, transportation assistance, and referrals to community resources.** Today, the McAuley Clinic serves more than 1,100 patients annually and is recognized as one of the nation's highest-achieving HIV treatment centers and the largest clinic of its kind on Michigan's west side, delivering excellent outcomes through a dedicated interdisciplinary team.

## Celebrating a Milestone in Compassionate Prenatal Care

**Trinity Health Medical Group – Clinica Santa Maria's Centering Pregnancy program** has earned full accreditation, recognizing the team's excellence in delivering high-quality, patient-centered prenatal care.

Centering Pregnancy is an **evidence-based model that brings patients together for shared prenatal visits that combine education, support and clinical care.** This group-based approach builds connection and confidence and has been shown to improve outcomes for parents and babies.

Accreditation confirms that Clinica Santa Maria meets all nine nationally recognized Centering Essential Elements, including interactive sessions, consistent group membership and a welcoming environment that fosters trust and belonging.

**With grant funding from the Centering Healthcare Institute, Clinica Santa Maria and its partners launched Centering Pregnancy programs** supported by staff training, dedicated group care spaces, technology upgrades, medical supplies and patient incentives.

Clinica Santa Maria began its first groups in 2024, helping pave the way for programs in Muskegon and Cherry Street in 2025.



Centering Pregnancy participants and Clinica Santa Maria staff.

**FUN FACT:** Clínica Santa María began in 1990 in an old fire station on Hall Street, serving about 200 patients a month. Today, at its César Chávez Avenue location, it serves more than 1,800 patients every month.

## Reach Out and Read Building Bright Futures Through Books

With generous funding from Saint Mary's Foundation, the *Reach Out and Read* program helps Trinity Health Medical Group providers in the Grand Rapids area integrate literacy into routine pediatric care. During well-child visits, children receive age-appropriate books and parents are encouraged to read aloud, supporting early brain development, school readiness and lifelong learning.

We're proud to share that Lee Heeringa, MD, of Trinity Health Medical Group – Primary Care, Clinica Santa Maria, was recently featured in a video highlighting the impact of *Reach Out and Read*. The video shows how this nationally recognized program is making a meaningful difference for children and families in West Michigan—one book at a time.



*This year, Saint Mary's Foundation fully funded Reach Out and Read with an investment of \$107,786, supporting families at eight Trinity Health Medical Group locations across our region.*



### Why Reading Together Matters: Trinity Health Feature

Scan the QR code to watch the video and see the power of reading in action.

## Up Next!

We're thrilled to welcome an incredible group of emerging leaders into this year's Up Next program. Their energy, curiosity and commitment to growing as changemakers are inspirational! This group is truly "up next" and we can't wait to see how they shape our community in the months ahead.

For more information on Up Next, contact Ashley Owen at [ashley.owen@trinity-health.org](mailto:ashley.owen@trinity-health.org).



2026 Up Next cohort: Haylee Skank, Tammy Myers, Matt LeBlanc, Tierra Willis, Kiran Patel, Mel Trombley, Alec Goorhouse, Sebastian Eardley, Mike Ready and Megan Gillespie Ready. (Not pictured: Abby Hyde)

## Become a Corporate Sponsor and Make a Lasting Impact

Corporate sponsorship with Saint Mary's Foundation offers a meaningful way to invest in the health of our community while aligning with a trusted, mission driven health system.

Through customized partnership opportunities, ranging from event sponsorships and employee engagement to programmatic support, our corporate partners help advance compassionate care, innovation and access to healing for patients. In return, sponsors receive visible recognition, community engagement opportunities, and the joy of knowing their organization is making a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve. **Together, we can build healthier communities and a stronger future for all.**

**Did you know?** Many employers match charitable gifts. Check with your employer to double your impact!

Saint Mary's Foundation is dedicated to building relationships that inspire financial support from the community to advance the Mission of Trinity Health Grand Rapids.

### Interested in becoming a volunteer?

Laura Conners | [connerla@trinity-health.org](mailto:connerla@trinity-health.org) | 616-685-6084

### Interested in planned gift opportunities?

Cathy Mersman | [cathy.skene@trinity-health.org](mailto:cathy.skene@trinity-health.org) | 616-685-1484

### Interested in becoming a member of our Grand Groups program?

Kelly Obenauer | [kelly.obenauer@trinity-health.org](mailto:kelly.obenauer@trinity-health.org) | 616-685-1427

### Interested in your company becoming more involved?

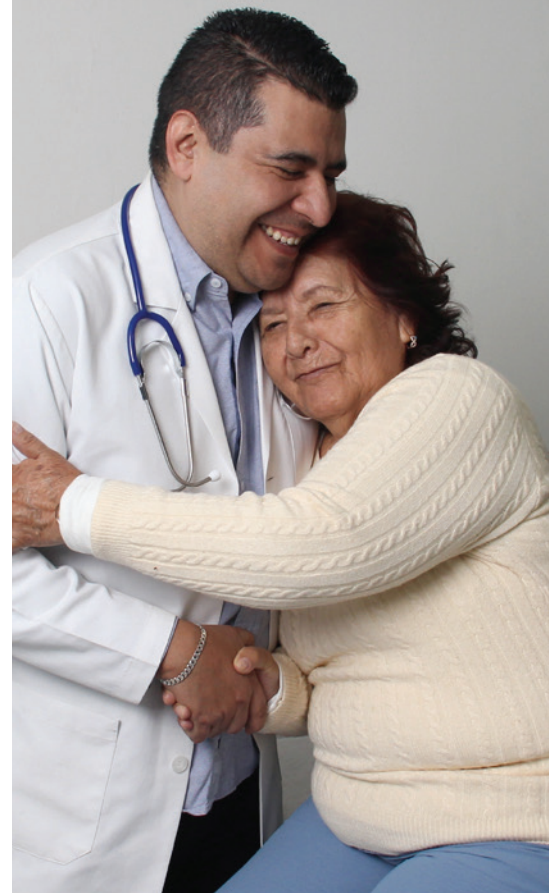
Ashley Owen | [ashley.owen@trinity-health.org](mailto:ashley.owen@trinity-health.org) | 616-685-1426



Scan to  
Donate



Scan to  
Volunteer



## Share Your Gratitude

The Share Your Gratitude program is available throughout the year.

If you wish, you may make a gift (optional) in honor of any medical staff member, nurse, colleague or department.



## Guiding our Mission Forward

Trinity Health Grand Rapids and Saint Mary's Foundation are grateful to have the support and engagement of the Saint Mary's Foundation board of trustees:

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*If you do not wish to receive information from Saint Mary's Foundation in the future, please call 616-685-1892.*

## Trinity Health Mission

We, Trinity Health, serve together in the spirit of the Gospel as a compassionate and transforming healing presence within our communities.

## Our Core Values

### Reverence

We honor the sacredness and dignity of every person.

### Commitment to Those Experiencing Poverty

We stand with and serve those who are experiencing poverty, especially those most vulnerable.

### Safety

We embrace a culture that prevents harm and nurtures a healing, safe environment for all.

### Justice

We foster right relationships to promote the common good, including sustainability of Earth.

### Stewardship

We honor our heritage and hold ourselves accountable for the human, financial and natural resources entrusted to our care.

### Integrity

We are faithful to who we say we are.

# Vine AND Vinyl

**SAVE THE DATE | THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026**

The Big Room – SILVA, Grand Rapids

Vine & Vinyl is returning in 2026! This signature event showcases the powerful stories of healing, hope and human connection at Trinity Health. This musical evening brings together handpicked vinyl sets from a local DJ, curated wines and craft beverages, and artfully prepared bites, all woven with meaningful storytelling from patients and caregivers. Past events have featured heartwarming stories from patients and physicians from our Lacks Cancer Center, Kidney Transplant program, NICU, Hauenstein Neurosciences Center and more.

Designed to spark conversation and celebrate resilience, Vine & Vinyl invites longtime supporters and first-time guests to celebrate stories that bring us together. Individual tickets are \$150 per person, with sponsorship opportunities available for those looking to amplify impact and support compassionate care.

**Scan to purchase tickets or to sponsor.** For additional event details, contact Ashley Owen, Corporate Relations & Community Engagement Officer, at 616-685-1426 or [ashley.owen@trinity-health.org](mailto:ashley.owen@trinity-health.org).



**Mark your calendar for our inaugural  
Giving Day on June 18, 2026**

A special moment to uplift patients, families  
and caregivers at Trinity Health Grand Rapids.  
More details coming soon!

**ONE Team. ONE Mission.**  
LOCAL IMPACT.

**ONE DAY  
of GIVING**

**June 18, 2026**

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