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THE IMPACT REPORT

Fall 2022

Brian Demchak Hope Challenge Breaks Records



Hope Challenge participants complete the challenge their way

While other organizations are going back to in person events, St. Margaret Foundation continued its Brian Demchak Hope Challenge presented by PNC this May in the virtual 'Your Way!' format it debuted at the start of the pandemic. The results were record breaking to help patients in crisis.

Hope Challenge participants had the opportunity to run, bike, walk,

swim or play any sport they chose from May 15th to the 21st. Participants' posts on social media and the Foundation's Facebook page showed swim parties, dog walking, steep hill walks, pickleball games, Peloton exercise, hiking, disc golf and much more. Everyone received a Challenge t-shirt, finishers medal and wind spinner in honor or memory of a loved one that was placed in the hospital's garden. *(Continued on page 2)*

Grant Spotlight: Recliner Chairs for Patients' Families

St. Margaret Foundation recognizes the importance of comfort and independence for patients and families. The Foundation previously provided a grant to the hospital for 30 sleep chairs for families - this year, due to the positive impact access to these chairs has had on patients and families, the Foundation provided a grant for an additional 20 chairs. Patients and families can request a chair for use during their stay, allowing families to be more involved in their loved ones' care and spend the night. To some, this may seem like a small issue. However, care is made up of small components that work together to create a supportive, healing environment. Insurance and Medicare do not pay for these considerations. We are honored to be a part of that environment.



Asia Dobbins, Administrative Coordinator for Environmental Services and Transport

The Auxiliary of St. Margaret Foundation Donates \$1,000 to Replenish Patient Clothing Closet

Imagine being admitted to the hospital to receive emergency, life-saving treatment, waking up in crisis and without the clothes you were wearing. Clothing can often be soiled or destroyed during the emergency process. This spring, the Auxiliary of St. Margaret Foundation donated \$1,000 to the Rod Rutkowski Bed Fund to replenish the stock of sweatshirts and sweatpants for people who

come to the hospital so that they may have appropriate clothes to return home in.



School of Nursing Staff and Faculty Fundraise for the Annual Stethoscope Ceremony

The UPMC St. Margaret School of Nursing Staff and Faculty have designated Wednesdays as themed dress down days. The dress down cost is \$2 and the money earned is donated to St. Margaret Foundation to support the annual stethoscope ceremony.



St. Margaret School of Nursing staff showing off their pink outfits.

On Wednesday, March 30th the theme was pink. Why pink? One of the School of Nursing instructors, Melissa Hepler, has courageously battled breast cancer for 5 years. The week before this dress down day, Melissa was told that she remains in remission and will only need to follow-up annually—turning dress down day into a celebration!

Mary Lee Gannon
 Mary Lee Gannon, President





St. Margaret Foundation Debuts The Mindful Break

Recently, St. Margaret Foundation offered a six session 'Mindful Break' virtual meditation and mindfulness course over two-and-a-half weeks. There were 407 registrants - including 90 employees, 28 donors, and 247 patients. Most participants were looking for a way to deal with anxiety, grief, and stress.

We are very pleased to report 97% of respondents feel the Mindful Break was a positive addition to the culture at St. Margaret and 97% feel it helps them better manage relationships. St. Margaret Foundation is honored to offer programs for the wellbeing and happiness of our donors, patients, employees and friends.

We will offer this program again in the future. As a result of the feedback from this survey we will also be offering mindfulness and meditation programs monthly in our e-newsletters. Sign up for our e-newsletters at www.stmargaretfoundation.org.

Friends of Sue Murray, longtime nurse in St. Margaret's operating room, organize fundraiser in her memory.

Friends and fellow alumni of the St. Margaret School of Nursing raised over \$2,000 to support the next generation of dedicated nursing professionals through the School of Nursing Student Fund.



Former SMH nurse **Sue Murray**

DID YOU KNOW?

You may designate St. Margaret Foundation in your will or estate plans and be recognized as a member of The Legacy Society. St. Margaret Foundation recently received a generous bequest from Doris Pohelia, a wonderfully kindhearted donor who passed away in 2021. If you're interested in learning more about The Legacy Society, please contact Mary Lee Gannon, President, at gannonm@upmc.edu or 412-784-4277.



The late **Doris Pohelia**

(Hope Challenge continued from cover)

The event had a record 270 registrants, 41 fundraising pages, and 25 sponsors, raising a record total of \$138,672.

New this year were two in-person Hope Challenges: 1) RIDC O'Hara Wellness Walk on May 17th and 2) the UPMC St. Margaret Lunchtime Wellness Walk on May 18th. All participants received a Hope Challenge Finisher's Medal with their t-shirt. Participants who raised over \$100 received a SMF cooler backpack.

Check out a video recapping the RIDC O'Hara Wellness Walk:

<https://www.stmargaretfoundation.org/challenge>



Save the date!
2023 Hope
Challenge:
May 14-20

Thank you, Hope Challenge Sponsors!

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How You're Helping Patients—A Rod Rutkowski Bed Fund Story

This spring, a 68 year old patient with cancer was admitted to the hospital with memory loss and anxiety about his pet cat. He kept trying to leave his hospital room in search of his cat, making him a safety risk who required extra attention from the staff on the floor. To ease his stress, his nurse requested a synthetic therapy pet, a new initiative funded by a grant to the Rod Rutkowski Bed Fund from St. Margaret Foundation. The small cat came with a collar and a little bed and, once turned on, the cat breathed slowly.

The patient was overcome with joy. His nurse checked on him during rounds, and the cat was laying in his bed beside him. Over the course of his stay, he called the cat different names. This cat eased the patient's anxiety and kept him from trying to leave his room. Once he became more coherent, his brother visited with pictures of the patient's real cat who died several years prior. He had this cat for many years, and it was clear his pet meant a lot to him.

His nurse shared this story with the Foundation, expressing how helpful it was to have the option to provide these life-like pets to our patients. Patients often are confused after being admitted, and many search for their pets as a source of comfort. Not only did this pet ease the patient's anxiety, it helped lighten the workload of the nurses. Before he was given the pet cat he was constantly trying to get up out of bed. Because he was a fall risk, the nurses were frequently running into his room— sometimes multiple times within an hour. The patient was much more relaxed and stopped trying to get up which allowed his nurse to focus on her other patients and gave her comfort that his safety was no longer at risk.

Thanks to the support of our generous donors, we are able to provide synthetic dogs, cats, and even fish for our patients who are scared and lonely.



Synthetic therapy dog 'sleeping' in the arms of Foundation manager **Brigid Pettit**.

St. Margaret Employee Campaign Set a New Record

Employee Campaign Stats:

- * Total Raised: \$154,328.40
- * Total # of Donors: 503
- * Total # of New Donors: 98 (19%)
- * Increased Donations: 92
- * Giving an Hour a Month: 97
- * Giving Two Hours a Month: 68

Every year the employees of UPMC St. Margaret tackle challenge after challenge—a pandemic, staffing shortages, global concerns. And every year we are in awe of their generosity and dedication to the Employee Campaign, regardless of what's going on in their lives and the world. This year, they broke every record St. Margaret Foundation ever had for the Employee Campaign, raising over \$154,000 to support patients and employees in crisis. We are grateful for these heroes and we're proud to work alongside them every day.

"I support the Foundation because it's not only for our patients, it's for our employees as well. They have outreach in our hometown—I live in Sharpsburg and they helped our families when we had flooding issues. They also support the New Kensington Family Health Center, and they help our patients right here on campus."

— **Liz Skowronski, Supervisor, Patient Access**

