

For 30 years, Doris Henning has been devoting many hours each week to volunteering at Mercyhealth Hospital and Trauma Center.

TRUE DEDICATION

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE
BACKBONE OF MERCYHEALTH

For the more than 600 people who volunteer at Mercyhealth Hospital and Trauma Center in Janesville, giving their time is more than just something they do — it's their calling. Whether they help patients and visitors find their way around the hospital, deliver Meals on Wheels, assist staff with filing papers, or knit items for babies in the Mercyhealth Birthing Center, they find tremendous satisfaction in giving back. The following are just a few of the many dedicated volunteers who are vital to Mercyhealth.



Doris gives fellow gift shop volunteer Wanda Walhovd a hug.



Dick Larson, right, helps Wiley Kissinger of Janesville learn about Mercyhealth Safe Connect, his newly installed medical alert system.



Doris works closely with Jill Ayres, Manager of Volunteer Services at Mercyhealth Hospital and Trauma Center.

"IT KEEPS ME YOUNG"

Doris Henning's involvement with Mercyhealth dates back to the 1960s, when the mother of three young children helped dish out ice cream for patients and visitors in the hospital's old building. She took a job at a trucking company as an office worker and bookkeeper,

and didn't return to volunteer work until 1988, when she quit her job to spend more time with her out-of-state children and grandchildren. "I'd already decided I didn't like keeping house and making puzzles," says Doris, now 82. "So I decided to join the volunteer group at Mercyhealth. The gift shop

bookkeeper was retiring, and when the volunteer coordinators learned I had that background, I just fell right into it."

Over the years, Doris has taken on many roles for the Mercyhealth Association of Volunteers, including serving as co-chairwoman of the Holiday

Market — the organization's annual fundraiser — for 10 years. She was on the association's board of directors for six years, and she has continued to help keep books for the gift shop on and off. Because Doris understands how to operate the cash register and credit card machine, she has become invaluable. When Mercyhealth opened a gift shop at Mercyhealth Hospital and Medical Center—Walworth, she traveled to the facility in Lake Geneva to help establish the bookkeeping system for the shop. She has become the go-to woman — whenever someone needs help, they just call Doris.

In recent years, she has found her niche helping volunteer staff with computer

work. "The gals in the office are all one big family," she says. "I've gotten to know so many great people from volunteering. When my children are in town and we go to the mall, invariably we'll run into someone I know and they'll ask, 'Do you know everyone in town?'"

Though she has cut back on her hours, Doris has no plans to step away from volunteering any time soon. "I'll stay around as long as they find work for me to do," she says. "It keeps me young."

A TRUSTED FRIEND

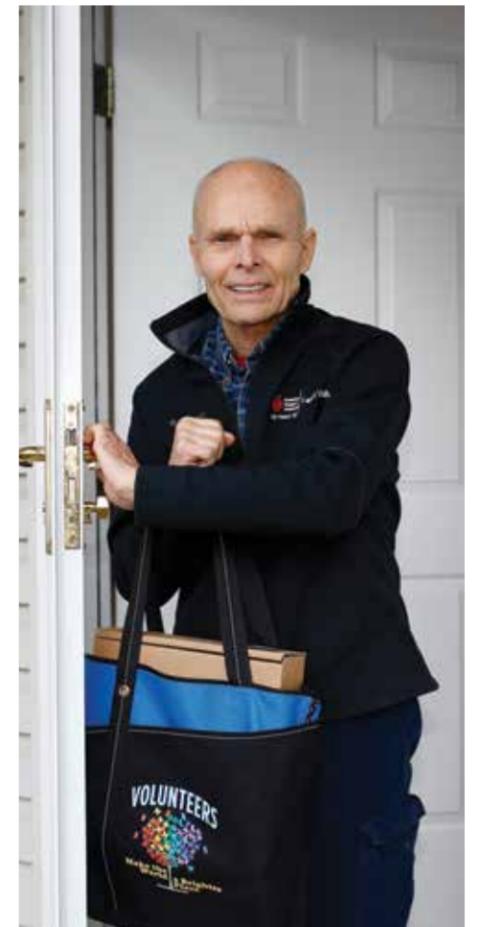
When Dick Larson was forced to retire in 2010 after the car hauling company he worked for closed down, his doctor told him his life would be shortened if he

didn't find something worthwhile to do. He approached Mercyhealth and learned the health care system was looking for a volunteer for its medical alert program, now called Mercyhealth Safe Connect. Dick, now 72, thought the position would be a good fit, and soon he was spending several hours every day working in patients' homes. "The beauty of this job is that I name the times I want to work," says Dick. "I make appointments with patients for a time that's convenient for them and for me."

Not only does Dick install the system for first-time customers, but he also returns periodically to perform regular maintenance and trouble-shoot problems. He quickly develops a



Dick Larson has become a trusted presence in homes across Rock County as he installs Mercyhealth Safe Connect.



relationship with them. “Everyone’s got a story to tell,” he says. “Many of these people live alone, and they’re happy to talk to someone. In most cases their life history is much more interesting than mine, so I’m happy to listen.”

Now that Dick’s wife Vickie is also retired, she often takes messages for him and helps him navigate to patient homes. Recently, Dick returned to the

house of an elderly man for whom he had installed the system three years prior. The man told him that one day he was taking a shower and fell, breaking several ribs. He couldn’t get up, but he could reach the button to call for help. “He told me, ‘You saved my life,’” says Dick. “I was overjoyed to hear that. Every day, I think about how I’ve made someone else’s day better.”

VOLUNTEERISM STARTS EARLY

Sarah Kubiak hasn’t yet graduated high school, but she’s already made volunteering an important part of her life. The Craig High School senior first became connected with Mercyhealth when her Science National Honor Society adviser sent out an email about the organization’s need for teen volunteers. Sarah hopes to pursue a



In November 2017, Mercyhealth Hospital and Trauma Center honored many of its more than 600 volunteers during a luncheon at the Janesville Country Club.

career in medicine, so she thought this would be a good opportunity to see the field up close and personal.

Over the past year and a half, Sarah has worked with patients in Mercyhealth Hospital and Trauma Center who need extra attention at lunch, assisted with the volunteers’ Holiday Market

fundraiser, and helped bring patients to their appointments throughout the hospital. Recently, she was selected by the hospital’s human resources department for a job shadowing internship in the recovery room. “All the people I have met are really nice,” she says. “I like helping people a lot, and I think that is what has kept me here.”

Mercyhealth always needs more volunteers, especially in its gift shop, thrift shop, sewing group, Meals on Wheels, and to serve as escorts for patients. Additionally, there are many opportunities for volunteers to work from the comfort of their own homes, such as knitting items for babies. To learn more, call (608) 756-6713.

Teen volunteer Sarah Kubiak helps transport patients around Mercyhealth Hospital and Trauma Center.