

In 1946, the Navy had established a base at the airport and new factories had located in this primarily summer resort town and as a result Munson Hospital "desperately needed all kinds of help," recalls *Mrs. Douglas Linder*, Munson Medical Center Auxiliary's first president.



Even with the help of its registered nursing and licensed practical nursing students, and the Red Cross Gray Ladies, the hospital's staff was over-worked.

As a Gray Lady, Linder remembers seeing patients in the lobby, patients in rooms usually used as offices and more beds in regular patient rooms than was normal.

Linder felt that her services as a Gray Lady weren't enough. She took a Red Cross nurse's training course. She also accepted an invitation sent to 20 Red Cross volunteers to form a Munson Hospital Auxiliary being organized by *Mrs. Julius Beers Sr.* and *Mrs. W. F. Wilson* at the suggestions of *Hazel Leisson*, then assistant superintendent of nurses.

"This was a town that helped everyone," she recalls. Wilson became temporary president and Linder was temporary secretary. "In trying to write and listen, I suddenly found myself writing my name as the new president."

Work began immediately on renovating the furnishings and supplying new draperies for the hospital's nurses' home. She remembers that the student nurses' quarters didn't even have a radio.

A few months after the Auxiliary was launched, Beers spearheaded the formation of the hospital's Junior Guild, and *Mrs. William Smith* was elected its first president. This group undertook as its main project the operation of the hospitality cart that was, and still is, regularly taken into patients' rooms. The two groups soon became a single unit.

The organization changed its title from Auxiliary to Guild, and a few years later changed the name back to Auxiliary.

There have been many changes that have occurred since the Auxiliary was formed here at Munson Medical Center 65+ years ago. Today the Auxiliary is known as the **MUNSON MEDICAL CENTER VOLUNTEERS** organization.

The reason for change was to accommodate the changing face of volunteerism. Today, we see many students, men, young career women and retirees joining the ranks.

In July 2001, the Auxiliary Board voted to change the name "Auxiliary" to "Volunteers". The concept of change is not just with our Auxiliary, but is happening all over the state and nation. The Michigan Association of Hospital Auxiliaries was ahead of us on this study and already several auxiliaries have merged with the volunteers.



Nothing has changed in the way we serve Munson Medical Center, only the name. What we really represent is volunteerism at its very best.

In 2014, we had 334 volunteers that contributed 43,000+ hours to the Munson Medical Center with a capacity of approximately 390+ beds. They volunteer as Patient Escorts taking discharged patients to their vehicles to go home, Ambassadors greet and do way finding for patients and visitors to the hospital and the Emergency Department volunteers assist staff in the busy emergency rooms. There are volunteers in ICU, Logistics, Cardiac Cath Lab, Munson Manor (our hospitality house), the Discharge Pharmacy, Gift Shop, Outpatient Dialysis and at our facility across town at Munson Community Health Center. We also have volunteers that do Pet Therapy and Music Therapy, help in the cardiac units, the Smith Family Breast Center, NICU Program and Navigators.

The Volunteer Board sponsors one uniform sale each year for fundraising and the remainder of the fundraising is done by the Munson Foundation.

As Volunteer Appreciation Week (April 12-18) approaches this month, we would like to thank all of our faithful volunteers for all they do throughout the year. They are truly an asset to Munson Medical Center.

