How Aurora’s treatment programs helped Amy rebuild her life

You can help fight the opioid crisis by joining the Renew, Restore, Rebuild campaign
Message from Cristy

Dear friends,

There are so many ways to support Aurora Health Care Foundation and so many important reasons why. You’ll read about many of them in this issue. But I want to focus on a growing crisis in our communities and how your support can help us fight it.

Drug overdose deaths in the United States skyrocketed 21 percent in 2016 from the previous year, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Too many of us know someone who is battling with addiction and families who are in the grips of it.

For me, it’s a dear girlfriend who recently took in her niece, a teenager whose parents were addicts and her father died of an overdose. It has been devastating to see how this has affected the child’s life and the heartache it has caused. But I am so grateful for the incredible resources we have in Aurora Behavioral Health Services’ substance abuse and recovery programs. These programs have provided counseling for my friend and her niece as they try to heal and rebuild their lives. I have such huge admiration for my girlfriend, who basically changed her life in 24 hours to care for her niece. I am grateful to her but I worry about all those people who are suffering that do not have family members that can step in and save a life, like she did.

That’s why Aurora Health Care is committed to helping fight the opioid epidemic. Through your gifts to the Renew, Restore, Rebuild campaign and others, you can enhance those efforts even further. You’ll read more in this issue how these programs, like those offered at the Dewey Center and Culver Alumni House, have helped people like Amy not only stay sober, but restore their lives to something they never even thought possible.

As we approach the holiday season, I’ll keep these families in my thoughts and prayers. And I remain so thankful for donors like you who are not only helping to improve their lives, but you’re changing our communities for the better.

Thank you,

Cristy Garcia-Thomas
Chief Experience Officer, Aurora Health Care, and President, Aurora Health Care Foundation

Over $1M raised by generous donors to the 2017 Aurora Gala!

A record-breaking crowd came to celebrate research and advancements led by Aurora Health Care at the 2017 Aurora Gala presented by Synaptive Medical on September 23. More than 900 guests danced to surprise entertainment, The Commodores, while raising over $1 million to support Aurora Health Care’s research efforts and programs. A special thank you to our gala co-chairs (L-R), Vivian and Tim Sullivan and Marianne and Sheldon Lubar.
How Aurora’s addiction treatment programs helped Amy rebuild her life

Amy Book was 17 years old and hoping to go to college on a dance scholarship. Two weeks before tryouts she tore her rotator cuff and needed shoulder surgery. Forget tryouts. Forget dance. Forget my future. At least that’s how Amy felt. She didn’t go to college and didn’t have a backup plan.

“I was put on painkillers after the surgery and when they stopped giving them to me, I realized I was sick. And I was hanging around the wrong people,” Amy explained.

She started finding drugs in other ways and it eventually escalated to heroin. She used regularly for five years and tried to get sober a few times, including a 32-day stint at the Dewey Center on the Aurora Behavioral Health Services campus in Wauwatosa. But nothing really stuck. Then on her birthday, February 18 of 2016, her dad arrived to her home to take her out to dinner and found her unconscious body on the floor. She had overdosed.

“That got me back to the program. I wouldn’t say it was rock bottom because I’ve had so many of them. I just decided to stop digging my own grave,” Amy shared.

And so with the help of the treatment program and lessons learned at the Dewey Center, Amy has now been sober for a year and a half. She talks to people at the Dewey Center nearly every day and considers them like family. She also attends regular meetings at Lighthouse on Dewey, and has a steady job at Starbucks where she’s now a manager. She has renewed her relationships with family and loved ones and is slowly restoring her faith in her future. She has rebuilt her life and is incredibly grateful for the services Aurora has provided to help make that possible.

“We need more places like Dewey. The kids and even adults that come through here, they need to be set up for success and sometimes a place like this is the only place that can give it to them.”

The Renew, Restore, Rebuild campaign is a $1.5 million fundraising effort to support the construction of a new consolidated Dewey Center, including a Serenity Garden, and it has already helped to expand the Culver Alumni House, a homelike transitional living facility. To make a gift or learn more about the campaign, contact Judi Strout at Judi.Strout@aurora.org.
“We’re living in constant fear he’s dead”: A mom’s story of addiction and how you can help

Sarah’s son, Joe, started drinking alcohol and smoking pot when he was just 14. He’s now 27. A few years ago Sarah and her husband found needles Joe had used to inject heroin. He is currently living on their sofa. He doesn’t have a job, but he does have a child who he is no longer allowed to see.

“We tried kicking him out, but then we’re living in constant fear that he’s dead,” Sarah explained. “I’ve chased away drug dealers, gone to pick him up at four in the morning in the worst neighborhoods. This has been my life.”

When someone in the family suffers from addiction, the entire family suffers from addiction. Sarah has spent thousands of dollars trying to get help for Joe, with various treatment programs. He is currently taking suboxone to try and stay off of heroin, and he is going to counseling. He’s doing better but still has mountains to climb.

“You can’t focus, you don’t know where your child is,” Sarah explained. She’s a caregiver at Aurora West Allis Medical Center. “I try to not let it bother me at work, but sometimes you get calls that he’s in jail or things like that. I don’t want to tell people why I’m so upset, but it’s really hard to hide.”

“Parents too often feel like they aren’t doing enough,” explained Pete Carlson, vice president of Aurora Behavioral Health Services. “There are more people dying from overdoses now than car accidents, and they need support.”

That’s why we’re raising funds to enable a current Aurora Family Nurse Practitioner at Aurora West Allis Medical Center to complete a Psychiatric Nursing Certificate program, and to create the first support group in the area specifically designed for those who have lost a loved one from an overdose.

“I’ve talked to parents who are doctors, police officers and other caregivers going through this. I know a lot of people who would go to a support group,” Sarah said. “I feel so terrible for people who have lost their children already. I’m trying my damnedest to save mine.”

Thank you to supporters of the Evening of Promise event and other donors, who have raised more than $82,000 toward this effort. But it’s not too late to give! Contact Adam Martin at Adam.Martin@aurora.org to make a gift or learn more.

*Names were changed to protect their privacy

Thanks to all those who “remembered”

Nearly 200 participants celebrated the memories of their loved ones and raised funds for Aurora Zilber Family Hospice and Home Hospice Care at the 3rd annual Walk to Remember.

The walk was held on Saturday, October 7 at Wauwatosa’s Hart Park. The attendees, along with friends and family members who donated to their walk teams, raised more than $20,000 for the cause.

The Doucette family (pictured) walked in memory of their family patriarch, Jim. Jim passed away at Aurora Zilber Family Hospice in November of 2016. His daughter held her wedding ceremony at the facility so her father could be a part of it. The Doucette family is incredibly grateful for the compassionate care that was offered to them by Aurora Zilber caregivers during such a difficult time.

We are truly grateful for families like the Doucettes who are giving back and showing that same compassion for others. Thank you all for “remembering.”

The Doucette family walked to remember their loved one, Jim.
Aurora Family Service is focused exclusively on family wellness and stability. It helps promote self-sufficiency through every stage of life, integrating physical health, mental health, social services, family and marriage therapy, and a variety of financial wellness programs too. Because of generous support from the United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County and donors like you, here is some of what Aurora Family Service did in 2016:

**Healthy mom, healthy babies**

“I had been in pain for almost a month and didn’t know what was wrong with me,” Tiffany shared. That was two years ago. Tiffany was using the emergency department at Aurora Sinai Medical Center as her primary source of care. She was eventually introduced to Vincent Withers, a Family Support Specialist of Aurora Family Service, who put together a tailored Health Care Management plan with her. Vincent helped Tiffany review her health insurance options and identify care providers that could meet her needs.

Tiffany soon learned the severe pain was caused by pancreatitis, and her heavy drinking was only making the pain worse. She also learned she was pregnant. Tiffany soon took the courageous next steps to go through rehab and get sober. She is now the mother of 2-year-old Tyra and baby Tameka, and she has been sober for two years.

“These people saved my life. And now I got my girls and I’m in the right mind. It’s a great feeling,” Tiffany said with a smile.

If your organization hosts a United Way campaign, you can choose Aurora Family Service for your donation!

**Thank you, United Way**

*United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County has been a proud partner of Aurora Family Service since 1909. Over the years, we have worked together to strengthen families from their earliest days, through prenatal care and home visitation programs, to later in life, by helping seniors with limited income to maintain their independence. In 2017-18, we are proud to support five Aurora Family Service programs representing all three of our core pillars: Health, Education and Financial Stability.*

Nicole Angresano  
Vice President, Community Impact  
United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County

If you would like to support Aurora Family Service, contact Cynthia Hosale at Cynthia.Hosale@aurora.org.
Expanding our commitment to survivors of assault, system-wide

Sexual assault statistics* are nothing short of shocking:
• One in four girls and one in six boys are abused as minors.
• One in five women and one in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college.
• One in five women and one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives.

But Aurora Health Care is doing more to address the need for abuse response services in our communities than ever before. There are now nine locations with forensic nurses, many of which are expanding their services and adding staff.

"The forensic nursing program is so important because it’s the beginning of a process that gives survivors choices and connects them with resources," explained Deanna Grundl, forensic nurse supervisor at Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center, Aurora Medical Center in Manitowoc County and Aurora Medical Center in Washington County.

Aurora Sheboygan added five new nurses to its program in 2017. It’s also expanding its services to include all victims of crime, such as domestic violence and child abuse. There are six new forensic nurses at Aurora Washington County, which now sees survivors 24 hours a day.

Donors are helping Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh to renovate its forensic nursing room to better care for survivors.

“When patients come in, they’re in crisis from what’s happened to them,” said Brenda Doolittle, the forensic nurse supervisor at Aurora Oshkosh. “They need a place that’s comfortable and private, along with a trauma-informed approach to care.”

Other locations are expanding community outreach.

“This year, we were able to educate more than 25,000 people at Country Thunder with our video on the jumbotron screens,” said Rebecca Rodriguez, forensic nurse supervisor at Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha.

And at Aurora Sinai Medical Center in Milwaukee, the new Aurora Healing and Advocacy Services just launched in September. It will provide acute medical care, crisis counseling and advocacy, long-term therapy and healing programs.

This is just a snapshot of how donors like you are helping survivors of sexual assault heal. Donor dollars are being used to help enhance programming and services all over our footprint. To learn more about how you can support the forensic nursing program system-wide, please contact Cynthia Hosale at Cynthia.Hosale@aurora.org.

*2015 statistics from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center

(L-R) Forensic nurses Lynn Herge and Ranee’ Wright at a community outreach event in Oshkosh

Aurora now has forensic nurses available at nine locations

Make a year-end donation online to a fund featured in this issue, or any fund of your choosing, by going to give.aurora.org/donate.
A major milestone in Aurora Health Care’s abuse response programming was achieved in September with the opening of Aurora Healing and Advocacy Services at Aurora Sinai Medical Center in Milwaukee. It’s the first full-service program in Milwaukee for survivors of sexual and physical violence.

Aurora Healing and Advocacy Services provides trauma-informed care, from immediate crisis intervention through lifelong counseling. Immediate services can include forensic exams and assistance reporting a crime; advocates are available to offer support through the legal system; and counseling is offered through several Aurora Healing Center locations.

Part of the new space includes a bathroom and shower area that was designed to make survivors feel as welcomed as possible. Donors helped provide enhancements to the room that make it a comforting, private space. Each year, Boston Store donates hundreds of casual clothing items for survivors to wear after the clothes they arrive in are collected as evidence of rape or assault. Shampoo and toiletries have been donated by other supporters for survivors who need to take a shower for the first time after the trauma of their assault and forensic exam.

Laura Kollatz, manager of the Aurora Healing Center at Sinai, shared the story of a teenaged girl who was provided care in the space. “One of our nurses gave her the bag of shower items and she just began to cry. The nurse asked why she was crying and she said ‘Because no one has ever given me a gift before.’”

Your gifts have helped make this possible and are providing comfort for women, men and children during an incredibly traumatic time. To learn what else you can do to support this effort, contact Cynthia Hosale at Cynthia.Hosale@aurora.org.

The new Aurora Healing Center at Sinai offers a comforting bathroom and shower area that was enhanced with donor dollars.
The information presented in this magazine is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your own physician. Contact your physician if you believe you have a health problem. If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call Aurora Health Care Foundation at 877-460-8730. ©2015 Aurora Health Care Foundation.

**Inspire**
aurora.org/foundationblog

Calendar of events

**Thursday**
**November 9**
**Tradition of Caring**
The Grain Exchange, Milwaukee
Go to give.aurora.org/caring

**Wednesday**
**December 6**
**Tree of Angels**
Aurora Zilber Family Hospice, Wauwatosa
Go to give.aurora.org/toa

**Saturday**
**February 3**
**Crystal Ball**
Veterans Terrace at Echo Park, Burlington
Go to give.aurora.org/crystalball

**Wednesday, December 6**
4 p.m. and 6 p.m.
Aurora Zilber Family Hospice
1155 N. Honey Creek Pkwy.
Wauwatosa, WI

Join us for a very special Tree of Angels event to honor your loved ones and support Aurora Zilber Family Hospice and Home Hospice Care. Order your angel ornament and then choose one of the programs to attend. To learn more or purchase your angel, go to give.aurora.org/toa.

**Save the date for the 2018 Aurora Gala!**
**Saturday, September 8, 2018**
We hope to see you there!

**Our 2017 Aurora Gala was a fun, interactive experience!**
See more photos and videos at give.aurora.org/gala.