From 5 percent chance of living, to 100 percent rascal.

Read more about Victor and Liam on page 3.
Message from Cristy

Dear Friends,

During this time of year, we often take a moment to reflect on why we are grateful. Whether it’s the smile from a kind stranger on a challenging day to a lifesaving treatment that gives us more time with those we love – there are reasons to give thanks every day.

I’m thankful for my wonderful network of family and friends. I’m thankful to be able to give back and be a part of an organization with a mission to help people live well. Aurora Health Care and its caregivers are committed to improving lives and investing in cutting-edge technology and services. Last year, through the Aurora Partnership Campaign, caregivers collectively gave $3.5 million, which includes giving to Aurora funds that support our patients and to other local charities.

I’m inspired walking down our hallways and knowing that caregivers truly believe in helping others.

And, last but not least, I’m grateful for you.

In this issue of *Inspire*, you’ll read how your support is helping bring families together, advancing research, offering mental health services and giving hope for families who had nowhere else to turn.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to you for supporting Aurora Health Care’s programs and choosing to make a difference.

Always,

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

In 2013, 8,700 Aurora caregivers gave to local charities through the Aurora Partnership Campaign, including $1.5 million that supported Aurora funds like The Healing Center, Pink Possible, NICU registries and many more. The campaign offers more than 1,600 funds, including local United Way agencies and the United Performing Arts Fund, in addition to Aurora Funds.

Cristy and her daughter are among dozens who volunteer and assemble groceries to help 3,100 families in need have a Thanksgiving meal through the Family to Family program.

Read more about the Family to Family Thanksgiving program on page 6.
From 5 percent chance of living, to 100 percent rascal

The Aurora Women’s Pavilion at Aurora West Allis Medical Center delivered 370 babies last year who were born premature or had special needs. Those babies are cared for in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), and they deserve the best care possible. Jennifer Ward and her partner, Vickie Ortiz Vazquez, became very familiar with that specialized care when their world was turned upside down last year.

On Nov. 1, 2012, Jennifer learned she was finally pregnant – and was carrying twins! But she and Vickie didn’t have very long to adjust: on March 4, 2013, Jennifer was admitted to Aurora West Allis and put on bed rest. Just four days later, doctors had to perform an emergency C-section. Victor was born on March 8 at 4:22 a.m., and Liam just two minutes later. Both were three months and three weeks premature and had less than a 5 percent chance at survival.

“It was pretty traumatic,” Jennifer explains. “Those first two days were significant in determining whether the boys were going to come out of it alive.”

The babies were intubated and put on ventilators. Liam developed pulmonary hypertension, which made him very sick until he was able to get a tracheostomy. Both boys spent four months in the NICU at Aurora West Allis. Victor’s persistent personality became an asset, as he grew strong and was able to come home first. His little brother Liam was finally able to come home in November. Liam is currently on a ventilator at night, but is breathing on his own for most of the day. Doctors are optimistic he will eventually breathe on his own all the time.

Jennifer explains the strangeness every new parent feels, but lovingly describes their situation as “double trouble.” She says they went into parenthood “mind, body and spirit” but when things didn’t go as planned, they relied heavily on the comfort and expertise of the NICU staff.

“…”They allowed us to fall apart when we needed to fall apart, but also armored us with the reality that we are capable and competent as parents. We had coaching and training in how to learn their cues, how to feed them and even breastfeed them. They were wonderful educators for us and a real support system,” she says. Thanks to donor gifts, family coaching sessions are available to all NICU parents.

Jennifer says the boys are now growing into “rascally” little boys. Their health struggles are not over, but they have come such a long way. Liam is incredibly laid back, and Victor still wants to be the center of attention. But both are the center of Jennifer and Vickie’s universe, and they are incredibly grateful for the treatment and specialized care they received at Aurora West Allis for making it possible.

In 2013, The Women’s Pavilion at Aurora West Allis Medical Center delivered 3,600 babies.

370 of those babies were cared for in the NICU.

You can help specialized programming, like the family coaching that helped Victor and Liam’s family, by supporting our NICU baby registry at Aurora West Allis Women’s Pavilion at www.give.aurora.org/nicuregistry.

The 4th Annual Evening of Promise held on Oct. 2 raised funds for three key NICU components:

1. **Nutrition:** To establish a Breast Milk Depot so preemies can access breast milk to gain strength and weight.

2. **Environment:** More Giraffe OmniBeds, which offer babies an incubator and open-bed warmer, eliminating the need to transfer babies back and forth.

3. **Support:** NICU support groups, such as family coaching, to provide parents strategies for managing stress and caring for their new infants.

Gifts are accepted all year long for these programs at www.give.aurora.org/nicuregistry.
outpatient counseling and support groups.

Aurora is currently the only provider of inpatient care servicing Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Washington, Ozaukee and Winnebago counties, functioning as a safety net for those who have nowhere else to turn. The Center will enable us to reach more people with the specialized care they need to get better.

The goal is to open the Center by summer 2015. With the help of corporate partners like ACUITY Insurance, and people like you, we will.

Join the challenge by visiting give.aurora.org/lighttheway or contact Erik Barber at 920-451-5117.

Our commitment to free and community-based clinics

Mary Ellen Reschke of Burlington qualified for help with her medical bills through Aurora’s Breast Treatment Assistance Program.

Mary Ellen has insurance, but also a very high deductible. She was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 63. Mary Ellen qualified for assistance because of her high deductible and is already getting help with some of her bills. “You get a bill for over $2,000 and you have a heart attack. It’s like, ‘Where is this going to come from?’ So it makes a difference, they’re fighting with you.”

The financial assistance she’s received through the Breast Treatment Assistance Program means no longer worrying she’s going to lose her home because she got sick.

You can help women like Mary Ellen through the Pink Possible campaign. Make a gift at give.aurora.org/pinkpossible.

For the second year, the Aurora Walker’s Point Community Clinic received a grant from the National Football League to continue to improve breast mammogram access to underserved women. The clinic sees around 200 new patients every month, and serves over 3,700 patients a year. It sits near Milwaukee’s south side, serving predominantly uninsured, low-income families, many of whom experience language and immigration-based barriers.

Andrea Cantwell-Durand, NP is one of several providers at Walker’s Point Community Clinic, which serves over 3,700 patients a year.

- Aurora also partners with 22 free and community-based clinics in 12 different Wisconsin counties, including: Brown, Door, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Marinette, Milwaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha and Winnebago.
- For a complete listing, go to aurora.org/commbenefits.
- Make a gift in support of these programs at give.aurora.org.
Kradwell School’s impact gives students a second chance

When Lexi was a freshman in high school, she recalls starting to have a tough time at school and feeling hopeless and helpless.

“I was falling into the wrong crowd, doing the wrong things … it brought me to a low point, and I wasn’t sure I was going to make it,” Lexi recalls.

“I remember not knowing if my daughter was going to graduate. I was beginning to think there was no hope,” says Teresa, Lexi’s mother. “Kradwell changed our lives.”

The smaller student-teacher ratio allowed Lexi to get the individualized education that has helped her thrive as a student. Today, she is a senior applying to colleges and hopes to someday become a gynecologist. A more confident and positive Lexi credits Kradwell for giving her a second chance.

“It’s because of the tools and individual attention the people here at Kradwell gave me, I’ve excelled in school and I know I can achieve my dreams today,” Lexi says.

Donors and supporters raised more than $300,000 at the There is Light Gala benefitting Aurora Behavioral Health Services and its 130 year legacy of care, led by Aurora Psychiatric Hospital. Programs impacted include Kradwell School for students in fifth through twelfth grade, and the Dewey Center for substance abuse treatment.

Tony award winning actor/singer Ben Vereen shared his inspirational story of addiction and recovery to a sold-out crowd. Dr. Tony Meyer was also honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his near 40-year career at Aurora Psychiatric Hospital.

Please consider making a gift in honor of Dr. Meyer and support Aurora Behavioral Health Services. Visit give.aurora.org/light.
A Family That Gives Back

When you talk about Aurora Family Service’s Family to Family Thanksgiving program, it puts a warm smile on the faces of Patty and Paul Cadorin of Hartland. The couple was instrumental in helping launch the program in the 1990’s.

As a member of the Milwaukee Sunrise Rotary Club, Paul launched a Thanksgiving food drive on a smaller scale, serving about 30 families in its first year. But Paul says when he contacted Aurora Family Service to expand the program, “that was the key that sparked the growth of the drive into the huge program it is today.”

More than 20 years later, this expanded program feeds 3,100 families annually, and strengthens family bonds. It takes $35 to provide the fixings of a family meal for four, including turkey, sides and dessert. Patty shares there are many benefits to engaging in this program.

“Families can use this as an opportunity to teach their children and their grandchildren how to be grateful for what they have. This initiative is the perfect opportunity to volunteer as a family to help pack or help distribute meals or donate money – as a family,” explains Patty.

But the Cadorins know this event is about so much more than the food. The special ingredient is family. “Today, in our very own community, there are families in need. What better way to give thanks, but to support Family to Family Thanksgiving?”

And being a part of this event has paid off in ways the Cadorins never even imagined. This past year, Patty says her sons, Tony and J.P., gave her a birthday/Christmas gift of starting a college scholarship fund for a young girl graduating from MPS.

Patty says, “I don’t remember having a ‘giving back is important’ conversation with our two sons. But I guess our efforts in trying to help make our community a better place to live and work, has taught by example.”

A family ThanksGIVING, indeed.

Learn more about how you can support Aurora Family Service’s Family to Family Thanksgiving program. Visit aurora.org/thanksgiving.

IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT A MEAL, IT’S ABOUT FAMILY

In 2013:

711: The number of donors who donated at least $35 to feed a family of 4.

3,100: The number of meals provided.

Since the program began in 1996:

52,200: The number of families fed.

208,800: Total number of smiling faces around family tables at Thanksgiving.

Since May 2013, the following generous sponsors have supported Aurora Family Service’s Family to Family Thanksgiving program:

• BMO Harris Bank
• Generation Growth Capital Inc.
• HGA Architects and Engineers
• Humana
• Johnson Controls
• Joy Global Inc.
• Master Lock
• News/Talk 1130 WISN & Big Sports 920 AM
• Quarles & Brady, LLP
• Johnson Controls
• Joy Global Inc.
• Master Lock
• News/Talk 1130 WISN & Big Sports 920 AM
• Quarles & Brady, LLP
• Johnson Controls
• Joy Global Inc.
• Master Lock
• News/Talk 1130 WISN & Big Sports 920 AM
• Quarles & Brady, LLP

Interested in having your business sponsor Family to Family Thanksgiving? Visit aurora.org/thanksgiving or call 877-460-8730.
NCORP – Providing more options in the fight against cancer

When Virginia Mortenson of Green Bay was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007, she didn't believe it.

“I have always had dense breast tissue and I’ve had to go beyond mammograms a couple times for screenings but it never amounted to anything,” she recalls.

But this time a regular screening, a second mammogram and biopsy confirmed – Virginia faced stage 1 breast cancer.

“That was a bit of a shocker,” Virginia recalls. “It all went very quickly – I scheduled an appointment with a surgeon, she and her team were wonderful in explaining what was happening – it’s a lot to take in.”

After completing surgery and radiation, Virginia’s doctor recommended a test that examines the tumor to determine the likelihood of recurrence. “I scored right in the middle of that test,” Virginia says.

Chemotherapy has been a treatment standard for her type of breast cancer, but because she tested “in the middle” for recurrence, Virginia decided to participate in a clinical research trial.

The trial involved postmenopausal women with estrogen-positive breast cancer, which is what she had. Some women were given the traditional chemotherapy, but others were given estrogen-inhibiting medication to try and prevent the cancer from coming back. Virginia ended up getting the inhibitor drugs, and stayed on them for five years.

“I avoided chemotherapy. I don’t think it would have been any more effective than the inhibitor,” Virginia says.

Providing patients with better access to top clinical trials is a key goal of Aurora Health Care’s involvement with the National Cancer Institute Community Oncology Research Program, or NCORP. Aurora Health Care was recently awarded $3.8 million in federal funding over five years to improve cancer research and expand patient access to clinical trials in Wisconsin.

“Currently, there is a gap between when treatments or techniques are known to be successful and when they are incorporated as a standard of care,” says Thomas Saphner, MD, FACP, one of the key investigators spearheading the NCORP initiative. “A primary goal of our work on this project will be to narrow this gap.”

Virginia is living proof. The inhibitor she began taking in 2007 is now more readily available and even in a generic form. She also offered a blood sample last year that experts can analyze in case her cancer does return. Virginia, however, is optimistic.

“It’s been seven years since the breast cancer. I have no regrets,” she says. “I entered the clinical trial so in the future; women in my position would have more clear-cut data on which to make a treatment decision. Maybe chemotherapy isn't always the answer.”

Virginia Mortenson chose a clinical trial for her breast cancer treatment. It’s been seven years, and she has “no regrets.”

To learn more or support research at Aurora Health Care, visit give.aurora.org.

If you are interested in exploring your or a loved one’s eligibility to participate in an NCORP clinical trial, please contact Neha Glandt, NCORP Administrator, at 414-219-4718 or neha.glandt@aurora.org.
Lake Country Gala

Please join us for the Lake Country Gala benefitting Aurora Medical Center in Summit. This celebration will feature both a live and silent auction, gourmet dining and dancing. Proceeds from this year’s Lake Country Gala will be directed toward the purchase of 14 automated cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) devices (pictured) for local Emergency Medical Service providers.

WHEN: Nov. 15 at 6 p.m.
LOCATION: Delafield Hotel, 415 Genesee Street, Delafield, WI
Purchase tickets or learn more at give.aurora.org/lakecountrygala or call Jennifer Stephens at 262-741-2600.

Calendar of events

Sat., Nov. 15 ........ Lake Country Gala, The Delafield Hotel, Delafield. For more information, contact Michelle Weber at michelle.weber@aurora.org or visit give.aurora.org/LakeCountryGala.

Wed., Nov. 19 ........ Dinner at the Captain Frederick Pabst Mansion to benefit Aurora Family Service's Family to Family Thanksgiving program. For more information, contact Leslie Wininger at leslie.wininger@aurora.org or visit give.aurora.org/FamilytoFamily.

Tues., Dec. 9 ........ Tree of Angels at Zilber Family Hospice in Wauwatosa (snow date Thurs., Dec. 11). For more information, contact Judi Strout at judi.strout@aurora.org or call 414-615-5935.

Wed., Jan. 28 ........ Generations of Pride, St. Francis Brewery, St. Francis. For more information, contact Elaine Maly at elaine.maly@aurora.org or visit give.aurora.org/GenerationsOfPride.

Sat., Feb. 7 ........ Crystal Ball, Veterans Terrace, Burlington. For more information, contact Michelle Weber at michelle.weber@aurora.org or visit give.aurora.org/CrystalBall.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which marks the Pink Possible campaign. Last year the campaign raised $84,000 for Aurora Breast Health Funds. The funds support breast cancer education, prevention, patient experience, research and survivorship activities. Below are photos from this year’s activities.

Caregivers at Aurora St. Luke's South Shore.

FM 106′s Karen Dalessandro gets a pink hair extension from Pink Possible founder Dawn Panfil.

Members of Milwaukee Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority promote Pink Possible at the 2014 Sista Strut in Milwaukee.