

RESILIENT & STRONGER TOGETHER FOR OUR COMMUNITY



2020 - 2021
ANNUAL REPORT



The Friends of
Reading Hospital

Advancing Health. Transforming Lives.

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Pictured from left to right: Lucine Sihelnik, Diana Kleiner, Mary Ellen Batman, Toni Reece, Noel Garapola, and Sharon Keating

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- | | | | |
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

During this unprecedented time of global pandemic, we have all experienced the profound impact on our daily lives, both personally and professionally.

While 2020 impacted our ability to hold in-person events, we are grateful and appreciate the support for our first-ever, Virtual Road Run. Participants were able to choose their distance (1-mile, 5K, or half marathon) and complete it on the route of their choosing any time between October 17-31, 2020. Proceeds of the Virtual Road Run were directed toward a fundraising project in cooperation with the Reading Hospital Foundation to purchase a Reading Hospital Mobile Mammography Vehicle, which will travel to various locations throughout the community, offering more women a convenient way to receive a 3D mammogram. Check out a few of the Road Run participants in the back of this publication.

The past year has created challenges and a few obstacles; however, we are proud of our resiliency to persevere and to continue to support the mission of Reading Hospital. And, as we continue to navigate our way through the pandemic, we are eager to provide fundraising opportunities for critical programs and services that benefit our community.

Sincerely,

President, Lucine Sihelnik



OUR MISSION

The Friends of Reading Hospital is a volunteer organization committed to serving the Mission of Reading Hospital by providing quality services and programs for the Hospital and community.



The Friends of
Reading Hospital

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NICU NICVIEW CAMERA UPGRADE

Enhances Bonding Between Hospitalized Infants and Their Families

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Reading Hospital has undergone a NICView® webcam system upgrade with support from The Friends. Originally installed in 2014, the camera system needed updating and expanding to remove broken equipment, improve the quality of the footage, and enable all infants and families to benefit from the technology.

In 2021, 30 new cameras were installed crib-side so that each baby in the NICU has its own camera. The technology enhancement has been life-changing, especially amid the pandemic, as it allows parents and family members to bond with their newborns even when they cannot be with them in person.

Reading Hospital's NICU is the only neonatal unit in the region that offers parents the ability to monitor their infant throughout the day and night. Using an encrypted password for security, parents can access a live video stream of their baby 24/7. They can watch their baby in real-time, take photos, and read messages posted for them by the NICU staff.

“We are so grateful to The Friends of Reading Hospital for their generous donation so families have the opportunity to bond with their baby even when they can't physically be together,” said Nicholas Obiri, MD, Chief, Division of Neonatology. “The NICView cameras allow parents, family members, and friends to watch and learn their baby's routines making, they feel more involved and can help make for a smoother transition at home.”

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COUNCIL

Fosters an Inclusive, Welcoming Healthcare Environment for All

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) ensure that everyone — staff, patients, and volunteers — is respected and valued no matter their attributes, backgrounds, and perspectives.

Reading Hospital's 20-member Diversity and Inclusion Council is devoted to creating an environment where all people feel included and appreciated for their individuality. The Friends is helping the Council fulfill its commitment by supporting a training program that addresses implicit bias in healthcare.

The program teaches Reading Hospital leaders to:

- Be more aware of implicit bias and its effects.
- Understand how implicit bias and structural racism intersect.
- Be aware of strategies to mitigate implicit bias.

The Exeter Group, a healthcare consulting firm based in Chicago, conducts the program's inclusive and interactive training sessions. The first session was held virtually in May 2021, with more than 600 team members attending. Additional training sessions are planned for more of the Reading Hospital leadership team.



“I'm glad to have had the opportunity to be included in the Diversity and Inclusion training. The training and exercises were an eye-opening experience, very powerful and beneficial not only to my professional life but also my personal life. It showed how we need to have a better understanding with everyone we encounter,” said Tracy Adami, Manager, Time and Attendance.



HeartSAFE

Saves Lives Through Widespread Access to AEDs Including Inside Reading Hospital

Our HeartSAFE program, created over 20 years ago in cooperation with Reading Hospital, continues to help save people throughout Berks County from sudden cardiac death. Since its inception, the initiative has placed over 650 automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) in police and first responder vehicles, schools, and public places including FirstEnergy Stadium, Santander Arena, malls, colleges, and numerous non-profits.

With a less than 5 percent survival rate in individuals suffering sudden cardiac arrest, having AED technology nearby can make all the difference.

In July of 2020, one of Reading Hospital's own employees, Michelle Rose, received a second chance at life when she suffered sudden cardiac arrest while on her break in the hospital cafeteria. Initial CPR attempts failed to revive Rose, and the situation became a "Code Blue." Her fellow employees used the AED placed in the cafeteria to analyze her heart rhythm, confirming a shock was needed. In total, it took six shocks to restore her normal heart rhythm as she continued to receive CPR from her fellow employees. Fortunately, Rose survived. She is grateful for HeartSAFE and the quick action of her colleagues.

“My fellow employees’ responsiveness and fast access to an AED saved my life that day,” said Michelle Rose. “I feel immensely fortunate and am forever thankful for everyone’s help during that devastating emergency.”

WARM HAND-OFF PROGRAM

Increases Potential for Recovery from Substance Use

In 2020, Berks County saw more drug overdose deaths than ever before – 130 confirmed deaths, an increase of 126 over 2019. To save lives, it's critical to help persons struggling with addiction understand their options and receive the services they need. The Warm Hand-Off Program (WHO), created in 2015 in partnership with the Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA), facilitates connecting patients with substance addiction treatment. Pre-pandemic, it averaged 120 consultations every month.

After a patient presents to the Emergency Department due to an overdose or addiction problem and has been medically cleared by a physician or advanced practitioner, Reading Hospital's in-house WHO certified recovery specialists (CRSs) provide information and treatment options.

If the patient is open to it, and it is the appropriate next right step for the patient, WHO will arrange for the individual to receive treatment and recovery care in a facility providing the services they need. The on-site intervention before an individual leaves the hospital has a significant impact on patient follow-through in receiving appropriate care that will lead them on a path to recovery.

When a patient chooses not to pursue the treatment options offered, WHO will provide a list of outpatient service options as well as the medication NARCAN® (if appropriate) that the individual can take with them when they leave the hospital. The nasal spray is used to treat opioid overdose emergencies and can mean the difference between life and death.

According to Dr. Lahmann, Reading Hospital's Department of Emergency Chair, the program offers critical consultation to address a dire need in the community.



“If The Friends didn’t step up to help support this program, I’m not sure where it would be. It’s a valuable program and having it right in the hospital is immensely beneficial,” said Brian Lahmann, MD, Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine.



“This program would not have been possible without the financial commitment from The Friends of Reading Hospital,” said Aaron Gantz, MPA Senior Director, Economic Development at the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance.

BERKS FARM BUCKS

Improves and Sustains Public Health in Vulnerable Populations Within the Greater Reading Area

Berks Farm Bucks, introduced in 2014, is a local currency created to improve public health through food access and education. The Friends’ continued support has helped this critical program expand to meet the growing challenges of giving vulnerable populations in Greater Reading access to fresh fruits and vegetables amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, community members had more opportunities than ever before to find affordable wholesome foods locally and earn credits toward future purchases. Community locations to spend Berks Farm Bucks included farm stands, school farm stands, farmers markets, and corner stores.

This year, as part of a COVID relief initiative, any person who attended a market or community farm stand received \$4 in Berks Farm Bucks.

When buying food via a SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) ACCESS card, individuals earn \$2 Berks Farm Bucks for every \$5 spent. If paying with FMNP (Farmers Market Nutrition Program) checks, they earn \$4 in Berks Farm Bucks for every \$5 spent.

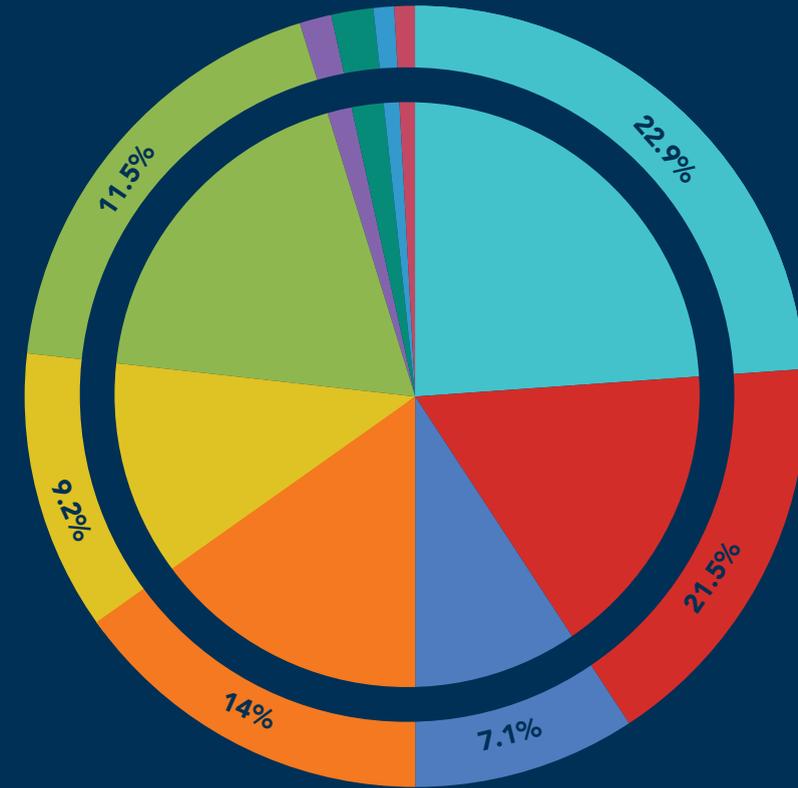
The program also motivates people to boost their healthy eating and meal preparation knowledge by giving them \$4 in Berks Farm Bucks for attending PEACH nutrition and cooking demos with the Food Trust.

As of March 30th, 2021...

- 20,917 Berks Farm Bucks (valued at \$41,834) have been distributed – a 68.2% increase from 2020)
- 17,786 Berks Farm Bucks (valued at \$37,572) have been redeemed – a 89.8% redemption rate!

Not only does the program empower at-risk populations with healthy food options, but also it supports local agriculture.

SUPPORTED PROGRAMS



Berks Farm Bucks
\$40,000.00

Warm Hand-off Program
\$37,500.00

McGlenn Cancer Institute Cold Cap Therapy
\$24,450.60

Mobile Mammography
\$20,000.00

McGlenn Cancer Institute Patient Assistance Fund
\$16,005.60

HeartSAFE
\$12,395.00

UNDER \$6,000

Reach Out and Read – Children’s Health Center

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE)

Small Stuffed Animals for Adult Patients

Center for Parenting – Group Expenses and Training

FRIENDS YOU CAN COUNT ON

We are passionate about improving the quality of healthcare in Berks County. Our members contribute their time and talents to manage community fundraising events such as:

- Road Run
- Holiday Happening
- Tower Golf Classic
- Valentine's Day Plant Sale
- Thanksgiving Pie Sale

THERE ARE MANY WAYS FOR YOU TO GET INVOLVED:

- Volunteer for one of our events
- Sponsor an event
- Participate in one of our events
- Become a Friend

JOIN US

For more information, call us at **484-628-8434** or email us at friends@towerhealth.org.

Your contribution helps to ensure programs and services will continue to be available to Reading Hospital and in our community.

Donations can be mailed to:

The Friends of Reading Hospital
P.O. Box 16052
Reading, PA 19612



VIRTUAL ROAD RUN 2020



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Reading Hospital

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Reading Hospital

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PO Box 16052
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