



A season of gratitude, a legacy of care:

As the year draws to a close, we're filled with gratitude for the incredible support that fuels our mission to uplift the health and well-being of our Southwest Michigan community. In this issue, we're proud to share recent milestones, exciting upcoming projects, and the lasting impact of your generosity.

Whether you're a donor, volunteer, or community partner, your support helps us build a legacy of compassionate care — one that honors every life we touch and ensures vital resources are available for generations to come. As we look ahead to a new year filled with possibility, we remain committed to continuing exceptional care, right here in Southwest Michigan.

In the past year, we've accomplished:

- \$216,240** Granted to organizations from the Community Wellness Endowment
- 56,809** Total hours of hospital volunteer services
- \$67,883** Raised for local cancer patients and cancer programming
- \$48,700** Total scholarship awards granted to team members and volunteers
- \$199,000** Raised toward the Maternal & Infant Health initiative

Give the gift of compassion

[How to Donate](#)

Your gift today helps carry compassionate care into the new year — creating a lasting legacy and helping us deliver exceptional, people-centered care right here in Southwest Michigan. Together, we're building a healthier, more hopeful future for every friend and neighbor.

Mission in Motion

Upton Foundation Supports Local Recovery Efforts

We're pleased to share that we received a \$50,000 grant from the Frederick S. Upton Foundation to expand access to addiction medicine services in Berrien County. This one-year initiative focuses on underserved communities in Niles and Benton Harbor and includes Peer Recovery Coaches, harm reduction strategies, enhanced trauma-informed care, and strengthened coordination through the Behavioral Health Consortium.

Donor Spotlight

We are proud to recognize **Hilda and Stephen Banyon** for their heartfelt commitment to our local veterans. Recently, they presented American flag blankets to veterans receiving Corewell Health's hospice and palliative care services residing in facility-assisted living, nursing homes, or the Hanson Hospice Center — a gesture that speaks volumes about gratitude and respect.

Thank you for reminding us what it means to honor those who have served. Your efforts make a meaningful difference in the lives of our veterans and inspire others to give back.

Are you interested in providing comfort and companionship to those in hospice care — including local veterans? Apply at our **VOLUNTEER PORTAL** and make a meaningful difference today!

Board Social Celebration

This fall, we hosted a special board social that brought together hospital board members from across Corewell Health South. It was a unique opportunity to gather our leadership in one space, fostering connection and collaboration. We were proud to honor the dedicated individuals who help shape health care in our region and celebrate the impact of their guidance and service. Thank you to all who joined us!



Did you know...

Corewell Health South celebrated a major milestone of hiring our first Certified Community Health Worker to service our Hartford Primary Care Rural Health Clinic

Cooking for Better Health – Diabetes and Hypertension



With Foundation funding, additional sessions of *Centered: Cooking for Better Health* are now available. This six-week program, led by a registered dietitian and chef, helps adults managing hypertension, pre-diabetes, or type 2 diabetes learn practical cooking skills and nutrition strategies for better health. Caregivers are welcome to join.

Success Story:

Barbara joined the class after an injury left her homebound and struggling with weight and a high A1C. Through hands-on learning and community support, she regained control of her health — lowering her A1C from 9.8% to 6.6%, losing 40 pounds, and improving her blood pressure. *"This class helped me turn things around — I can still enjoy food!"*

Advocating for Home-Based Care on Capitol Hill

In September, Angela LaBarca, Business Development Specialist for Corewell Health Hospice & Palliative Care Southwest Michigan, attended the 2025 National Alliance for Care at Home's inaugural Advocacy Week in Washington, D.C., thanks to a grant from the Foundation. As Michigan's sole ambassador, she met with over 275 congressional offices to advocate for expanded access to home-based care, ensuring our region's voice was heard on key policy decisions impacting our communities.

Bricks & Minifigs LEGO Donation

Thanks to a generous donation from Bricks & Minifigs, the pediatric unit received LEGO kits that brought joy, creativity, and entertainment to some of our youngest patients during their stay. These thoughtful gifts helped brighten their days and provided a welcome distraction while receiving care.

Check out Bricks & Minifigs at their storefront located at 2047 Niles Rd., St. Joseph, MI 49085!



Our Latest Projects

- Behavioral Health Facility
 - Team Member Giving Campaign
 - Niles Tree of Love
 - Community Wellness Endowment Cycle 2
 - South Haven Hospice Luminary
 - Allied Health Careers Scholarship Program
- [Application opens January 15, 2026](#)



Board Member Spotlight

We're deeply grateful to **Dana Wales** for his dedicated service on our Foundation Board since 2012 and his dynamic leadership as Chair since 2018. Dana brings a forward-thinking mindset and a gift for guiding complex decisions with clarity and purpose. His passion for improving healthcare access has helped shape the Foundation's direction and deepen its impact across our community. We're grateful for the momentum he helps create and the meaningful impact of his ongoing contributions. Thank you, Dana, for being a strong advocate for our patients, families, and the future of healthcare in Southwest Michigan.

Corewell Health Foundation Southwest Michigan Team

Melinda Gruber, PhD
Foundation President

Julie Elliott
Manager of Volunteer Services

Amy Zapal
Senior Foundation Specialist

Rachel O'Reggio, MPH, MMS
Grant Specialist

Amanda English, MA
Foundation Specialist

Demi Jensen
Gift Administrator

Dean Napp
Foundation Specialist

Susan Burkholz
Executive Assistant/Foundation Specialist

CONTACT US

Website: corewellhealth.org/foundation/southwest

Phone: 269.927.5143

Email: chfsm@corewellhealth.org

Address: 1234 Napier Ave., St. Joseph, MI 49085

 **Corewell Health**
Foundation
Southwest Michigan