



# PHILANTHROPY HIGHLIGHTS 2024



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THE **University of Vermont** MEDICAL CENTER  
FOUNDATION

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Together, we have the power to create lasting improvements in health care. We have the power to continue to build a system that serves the vast and rapidly changing needs of Vermonters and northern New Yorkers while maintaining quality, access and our academic mission. Our academic mission drives clinical innovation, breakthroughs in research and the education of tomorrow's health care workforce. It is why we are able to recruit and retain the very best.

We faced myriad challenges in 2024, as a hospital, as an organization deeply rooted in the communities we serve and as a member of a health network. We were not alone. Countless grateful patients and their loved ones, local businesses and community members shared their appreciation for our care and for our exceptional staff through verbal thanks, emails and letters, and by making charitable gifts. Each expression of gratitude fueled us to do what we do best. Each gift has had a significant impact on our patients' lives.

Your acts of kindness and generosity continue to generate a ripple effect of positive change. As a donor to The University of Vermont (UVM) Medical Center, you join a group of compassionate and engaged individuals with a common goal: accessible, affordable, sustainable, high-quality health care that enables individuals and families in our region to live their best lives.

THANK YOU.



Stephen Leffler, MD, President and Chief Operating Officer, UVM Medical Center



Ginger Lubkowitz, Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer, UVM Health Network



On the Cover:  
As an academic medical center, we broaden humanity's understanding of disease, we grow brilliant minds and we deliver care with compassionate hearts.



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Patients like Vivienne are the reason Big Change Roundup for Kids is such a beloved fundraiser. A well-known local business and longtime Big Change donor shares more on page 10.



Give in Their Honor, Impact Lives in Their Name

# Donors thank cancer caregivers through our Health Care Hero Program

UVM Medical Center caregivers and staff deliver expert, compassionate care for the whole patient—body, mind and spirit. For patients, this dedication can make a lasting impression and change the trajectory of their health care journey. Many are so moved that they look for tangible ways to express their thanks and give back.

Founded in 2017, the **Health Care Hero Program** provides an avenue for grateful patients, families, friends—anyone—to recognize exceptional care when making a donation. Whether honoring an individual, a team or an entire unit, these gifts demonstrate appreciation for care that went above and beyond as well as an



To learn more about relieving cancer’s toll on patients, contact Lindsay Longe, [Lindsay.Longe@uvmhealth.org](mailto:Lindsay.Longe@uvmhealth.org), 802-598-3422 (mobile)



understanding of the impact of philanthropy on our patients, our people, our work and our collective future.

Health Care Heroes have represented nearly every department in our hospital. This year, we are delighted to feature a few of the 2024 honorees who support patients who have cancer. Read on to learn what this honor means to them. ■



“I am grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others, and being honored as a Health Care Hero is a humbling and motivating acknowledgment of the impact and influence we can have in our community. It is a validation of the effort, empathy and commitment I strive to bring to my role each day, and that I have the privilege of witnessing in the work of my colleagues.”

—**Rebecca Reynolds**, lead exercise trainer, Rehab Therapies Community Exercise Programs, UVM Medical Center



“I cannot fully describe how much I appreciate being recognized as a Health Care Hero. I strive to deliver the best possible care to my patients, and I am humbled to learn they expressed their gratitude by donating on my behalf. I am thankful to make a difference in my patients’ lives and want to express my heartfelt appreciation for their support, which will help us continue our mission.”

—**Diego Adrianzen Herrera, MD**, Hematology and Oncology, UVM Cancer Center; Early Career Green and Gold Professor of Medicine and assistant professor of medicine, Division of Hematology and Oncology, UVM Robert Larner, MD College of Medicine



“Every time I meet a patient, I want them to feel more informed and in control of their situation. Getting to know them a bit as a person before we talk about their disease goes a long way. I am grateful that some of my patients have chosen to use Health Care Heroes to acknowledge that I did make a connection that was meaningful to them.”

—**James Wallace, MD**, Radiation Oncology, UVM Medical Center; associate professor of oncology, Larner College of Medicine



“I am always so deeply moved and grateful when a patient makes a donation in my honor. It is a testament to our entire team and the kind of care we are proud to provide our cancer patients.”

—**Michelle Sowden, DO**, program director, Surgical Oncology, UVM Medical Center; Green and Gold Professor of Surgical Oncology and associate professor, Division of Surgical Oncology, Larner College of Medicine





Alison Gates Brown '78, MPH, BSN

*Dream Big*

# UVM nursing alum inspires next generation

**A**lison Gates Brown '78, MPH, BSN, remembers her mother encouraging her and her three sisters to be independent and self-sufficient, and to make a difference in service to others. Her father—a pharmacologist—turned cleaning a fish on the shores of Lake Champlain into anatomy lessons, fostering her love of science. These early influences led her to a nursing education at UVM. From there, she launched a 45-year-plus career at the forefront of health care, including serving as president of the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC).

Now, she's giving back to the alma mater that helped her get her start. Brown and her husband, Ken Kolodner, ScD, have established a scholarship to assist students in the UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences Direct Entry to Master of Science in Nursing Program. Their support comes at a critical time: To help address nationwide nursing workforce shortages, UVM is finding innovative ways to train tomorrow's nurses. The program provides a path for talented people with a non-nursing major to pursue a nursing career and removes potential barriers to entry by addressing some of the challenges students face when seeking a master's degree.



Alison Brown with surgical team members

For Brown, who was the keynote speaker for the 2024 Department of Nursing White Coat Ceremony, motivation comes in part from a desire to open opportunities for others to experience UVM as she did. Some of her earliest mentors as a nursing student left a lasting impression. They helped her dream big.

"Janet Ruth Sawyer, PhD, associate professor of nursing, was an inspiration to me," she said. "In my senior year, she was especially influential, helping me to imagine the possibilities for where a career in health care might take me, building on a foundation of nursing."

Brown took those possibilities and ran with them. After seven years of clinical practice, she pursued a master's degree in public health, driven by a desire to improve health for entire communities. Throughout her 31 years in hospital leadership, including six as president of UMMC's Midtown Campus, her passion for this work never wavered.

At the 2024 White Coat Ceremony, she asked students to consider the spectrum of opportunities that a nursing career offers—while never forgetting that caring for others is at the core of their chosen profession.

"There are so many places where you will find nurses doing interesting things in a variety of roles and organizations," Brown told the crowd in Ira Allen Chapel. "As you take this big, huge, beautiful step, know that you are also taking on the profound responsibility of people placing their trust in your hands. This is how you will be the nurse, and the leader, the world needs." ■

“Philanthropic support continues to demonstrate how deeply beloved our college is and its importance in the national health care landscape. Amid challenging workforce shortages, charitable gifts are helping to remove financial barriers for our learners, evolve how we conduct medical education, augment academic and clinical excellence among our faculty and remind us of the power of one individual to improve the lives of countless others.”



—Noma Anderson, PhD, dean, UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences



To explore opportunities to help build our nursing workforce, contact Regina McCarthy Farrell, [Regina.Farrell@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Regina.Farrell@med.uvm.edu), 802-777-1970 (mobile)



# Generous gifts bring a group exercise program to patients with Parkinson's

Parkinson's disease is a neurologic movement disorder causing changes in motor control and in non-motor symptoms, such as balance and gait, depression and cognition—symptoms that often pose barriers to care. “Parkinson's is a neurodegenerative condition, essentially a progressive brain disorder. Anything we can do to preserve brain function is the goal,” said James T. Boyd, MD, director of UVM Medical Center's Frederick C. Binter Center for Parkinson's Disease & Movement Disorders and UVM Larner College of Medicine's Robert W. Hamill, MD, Green and Gold Professor in Neurological Sciences.

Living with Parkinson's is an individual journey—no two people are affected exactly the same way. Research shows that exercise improves symptoms, fitness and neuroprotection (the ability of a treatment to preserve the neurons in the brain and slow cell degeneration). Group exercise can increase benefits, as it helps bring individuals out of isolation and into community.

In 2017, an anonymous donor made a substantial gift to support the establishment of **PushBack at Parkinson's Disease™**, a group exercise program for people with Parkinson's that utilizes a team approach to create a supportive and motivating environment. PushBack sessions focus on strength, agility and flexibility as well as emotional and psychological aspects of the disease.

In 2020, the founding donors reinvested in PushBack to accelerate expansion of the program (in-person and online), and in 2024, they established a PushBack at Parkinson's Disease™ Endowment to ensure the program's existence in perpetuity. Annual disbursements from the endowment will help cover staffing, equipment, space rental and scholarships.

Today, more than 60 people are enrolled in PushBack, and with charitable gifts from grateful patients, family members and community members, it continues to grow. Without philanthropy, this program would not exist. ■

UVM Medical Center's Frederick C. Binter Center for Parkinson's Disease & Movement Disorders focuses on clinical services, education programs and clinical research related to movement disorders. The center has earned the Huntington's Disease Society of America Center of Excellence designation.



To explore opportunities to support movement-disorder-related clinical care, education and research, contact Shelby McGarry, [Shelby.McGarry@uvmhealth.org](mailto:Shelby.McGarry@uvmhealth.org), 802-999-8688 (mobile)



“The PushBack Program gives me a sense of empowerment over my Parkinson's. I've met a wonderful community of like-minded individuals who support each other as we travel our individual journeys with Parkinson's. I now donate regularly to the Binter Center to ensure PushBack is available to all who need it, regardless of their circumstances.”

— John Eisenmann, PushBack participant and donor

Members of PushBack at Parkinson's Disease™ at the CrossFit Burlington location





## Support for Caregivers

# UVM Medical Center Auxiliary fills vital community need

Caring for a loved one with dementia can be a stressful and isolating experience. Thanks to grant funding from **UVM Medical Center Auxiliary**, several successful programs from UVM Medical Center's Dementia Family Caregiver Center (DFCC) can offer support and guidance to more caregivers navigating the many challenges associated with this diagnosis.

A Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program matches experienced caregivers with caregivers new to the role. The goal is to build relationships so that individuals can lean on and learn from each other. "I didn't realize what I was doing was caregiving. I thought I was just problem-solving," said Allegra Miller, a retired educator and principal who codeveloped the Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program with DFCC after years of caring for her husband during his battle with Parkinson's and Lewy body dementia. "Realizing, 'oh, I am a caregiver'—that was the biggest thing for me. It validated what I was going through. Today, being a mentor allows me to share my knowledge and continue to work through my grief."

After a well-received pilot program brought six caregivers together with mentors, the newest grant from UVM Medical Center Auxiliary allowed the Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program to run a second time in 2024. Plans for expanding the model across the state are in process.

The grant also provides funding for a program educating caregivers about the behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia, helping them manage emotions and develop coping strategies. The VT CARERS program (Coaching, Advocacy, Respite, Education, Relationship and Simulation) features an eight-week offering for a group of six caregivers facilitated by trained mental health professionals. Using patient simulation and coaching, the caregivers explore problem-solving skills, communication tools and self-care strategies. The program utilizes a train-the-trainer model; to date, four trainings have occurred annually, certifying 16 mental health professionals in Vermont to lead these therapeutic groups.

"Many of us in the UVM Medical Center Auxiliary have been caregivers for loved ones without the benefit of outside support," said Auxiliary President Karen Robinson. "We were delighted to contribute to the mentoring and CARERS programs to help ensure that other caregivers have access to these vital programs and feel valued and empowered in their role." ■

Founded in 1920, **UVM Medical Center Auxiliary** is the hospital's largest outright organizational donor. For more than a century, it has supported the mission of UVM Medical Center through charitable gifts and the provision of services for patients, families and staff. Proceeds from member dues and South Burlington's Replays Resale Shop continue to fund high-need and emergent projects.



(Left to right) UVM Medical Center Auxiliary Board of Directors Dana Shirlock, Virginia "Ginny" Greenblott, Carol Georges, Dianne Guild, Nancy Roff, Olivia "Livy" Hitchcock, Jeanne Pizii, Karen Robinson, Ellen MacLellan



To learn more about how philanthropy can support our region's aging population, contact Lauren Mauter, [Lauren.Mauter@uvmhealth.org](mailto:Lauren.Mauter@uvmhealth.org), 802-656-3725





*Filling Up, Giving Back*

## Maplefields customers, employees and vendors turn a quick stop into a moment of generosity

**M**aplefields, a fourth-generation Vermont business and the state's largest independent gas station chain, is more than a convenient stop for fuel and a cup of coffee. It's a place that's making a difference in young people's lives.

No matter which Maplefields you visit throughout northern New England and upstate New York, you'll find welcoming staff, hot and cold beverages, clean restrooms and an array of snacks and essentials. You'll also find people who care about giving back to their community—a central value that Maplefields has been living (and encouraging) for over three decades.

One example of Maplefields' commitment to the community is its longtime charitable support of UVM Children's Hospital, our region's sole children's hospital and hub for expert pediatric clinical care, research and education. Through the Children's Hospital's signature annual fundraiser, **98.9 WOKO's Big Change Roundup for Kids**, Maplefields' customers, employees and vendors donated nearly one-third of the total funds raised during the 2024 event. Maplefields' and associated contributors' \$113,973 gift was their largest ever and the largest single donation of any donor in Big Change Roundup history.

This extraordinary feat brought Maplefields' 13-year Big Change Roundup giving total to just over \$1 million.

Maplefields' 2024 contribution included customer donations (made primarily through a point-of-sale register campaign), matching gifts from the company and contributions from Maplefields' vendors. Several stores also hosted employee-led fundraising activities such as bake sales, barn dances, raffles and more.

"Maplefields' gift reflects the generosity, kindness and loyalty of our amazing employees, customers and vendors who, like us, believe in giving back to the community," said Maplefields Operations Manager Jack Vallee. "The fundraising is fun... we get a bit of healthy competition going between sites. We're really one big family making a gift to help other families. What we love about the Big Change Roundup is that all of the fundraising has a direct impact in the communities in which we live and work."

Every donation to the Big Change Roundup stays local and helps the nonprofit Children's Hospital pay for medical equipment, mental health services, food and housing insecurity screening, charitable care and more. ■



We remember Lori Ostrout (pictured above), Maplefields Jeffersonville store manager and longtime top-ranking fundraiser who died in 2024. Ostrout put her heart into Big Change Roundup and took great joy in raising funds for UVM Children's Hospital patients and families.

**“**As a mom who has a kid who goes to the hospital, I could not ask for better people to take care of my son. One of the nurses I see—Sarah—is awesome. My experience with UVM Children's Hospital has been amazing.”

—**Barb King**, Assistant Manager, Maplefields Plainfield



To invest in programs that support our region's youth at critical times in their lives, contact Shelby McGarry, [Shelby.McGarry@uvmhealth.org](mailto:Shelby.McGarry@uvmhealth.org), 802-999-8688 (mobile)





Michael O'Reilly G'89, MD'90

*Chop Wood, Carry Water*

# Perseverance takes a UVM graduate from rural poverty to Silicon Valley

had a blue-collar kind of upbringing in a white-collar neighborhood,” said **Michael O'Reilly G'89, MD'90**, of his childhood in Wayne, New Jersey. His father, a machinist, suffered (and survived) a heart attack at the age of 38, but that wasn't what inspired young O'Reilly to pursue premed studies at Northeastern University. “I had friends who worked in hospitals and would tell me stories,” said O'Reilly. “It sounded really cool.”

O'Reilly worked his way through college—at Northeastern and later University of Massachusetts, Boston—as a scrub nurse, managing equipment during surgery. “I got pretty good at it and got to participate in open heart surgeries and other big procedures. I had the best job of all my college

friends,” he said. After graduating from UMass in 1974 with a BA in biology, he applied to medical school at UVM, but a clear-cut path was not O'Reilly's destiny. “After the first four times I got rejected, I was devastated. I joined a consulting firm that had a project in northern Vermont, but the company went bankrupt.”

After five rejections, O'Reilly found himself at 30 with a girlfriend and a baby living on welfare in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. He returned to the work that had sustained him—scrub nurse, this time at Medical Center Hospital of Vermont (now UVM Medical Center). Then the U.S. hockey team beat the Russians in the 1980 Olympics. “I thought, wow, if that can happen, I can go to medical school.”

True... but not yet.

Every rejection spurred O'Reilly forward. While earning an MS in cell biology at UVM, O'Reilly pitched his research to pharmaceutical companies. “Because of my business experience, I knew how to ask for money. By the time I finally started medical school at UVM, I had my own lab and was the only medical student with their own office and a pager.”

After residency, the University of Michigan snatched Dr. O'Reilly up and throughout the next 30 years, Dr. O'Reilly would teach, lecture, publish, secure patents, earn awards and meet U.S. presidents. His belief in technology's potential to improve human health would propel him into senior medical advisory roles at such pioneers as GE Healthcare, Masimo Corporation and Apple. Dr. O'Reilly was Apple's first physician employee and provided input on the Apple Watch and Apple Health features. Reflecting on a career full of innovations, Dr. O'Reilly says he's proudest of his role in the development of Apple's ResearchKit and Health features.

In 2025, O'Reilly will retire from Apple “I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for my time in Vermont... even though it was rocky,” says O'Reilly. “My wife, who died of cancer six years ago, used to say that the secret to my success is ‘chop wood, carry water.’ Chop wood. Carry water. Just be persistent.”

Dr. O'Reilly's gift establishing a Green and Gold Professorship in Anesthesiology at UVM will ensure its holder has funds to explore questions like the ones that have inspired Dr. O'Reilly: What are the most important health problems to solve? How do we connect the right people to solve them? How can technology help? “It's a privilege to give back and make an impact on someone who's coming up behind you.”

William “Gabe” Tharp, MD'14, PhD'13, the inaugural holder of Dr. O'Reilly's professorship, knows his charge: Chop wood. Carry water. ■

**Endowed faculty positions** are the lifeblood of academia and recognize both exceptional achievement and the potential for future accomplishment. In medicine, they are awarded to scientists and clinicians who demonstrate extraordinary scholarship in advancing human health and provide institutions with a valuable resource for attracting and retaining top talent.



William “Gabe” Tharp, MD'14, PhD'13, is the inaugural holder of the Michael O'Reilly Green and Gold Professorship in Anesthesiology



Michael O'Reilly with fiancée Linda Polley, MD



To help propel excellence in academic medicine and encourage scholarship, contact Mark Morrison, [Mark.Morrison@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Mark.Morrison@med.uvm.edu), 540-525-9914 (mobile)





Renovations made possible thanks to the generosity of these donors

◀ The Vincent Family

“Our Henry entered the world at only 2 pounds, 4.7 ounces, and spent 10 weeks in the NICU. The team took amazing care of our boy, who is now a thriving 8-year-old. Our charitable gifts enable us to continue to say thank you.”

—Kristen and Jared Vincent



*Baby Steps*

# Gifts fund much-needed NICU renovations

Every day our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) team members do everything medically possible to help premature and critically ill infants grow and heal. Their family-focused care is exceptional. Their clinical expertise is world renowned. But the 29-bed facility in which they serve our region’s most vulnerable patients is dated and cramped.

The team’s ability to provide top-notch care in an obsolete physical environment is a testament to their skill and dedication, which was recognized by a 2023 Press Ganey Human Experience Guardian of Excellence Award® that put UVM Children’s Hospital in the top 5% for patient experience nationwide. A new NICU is a priority for UVM Medical Center, but financial and space constraints make construction impossible in the near term.

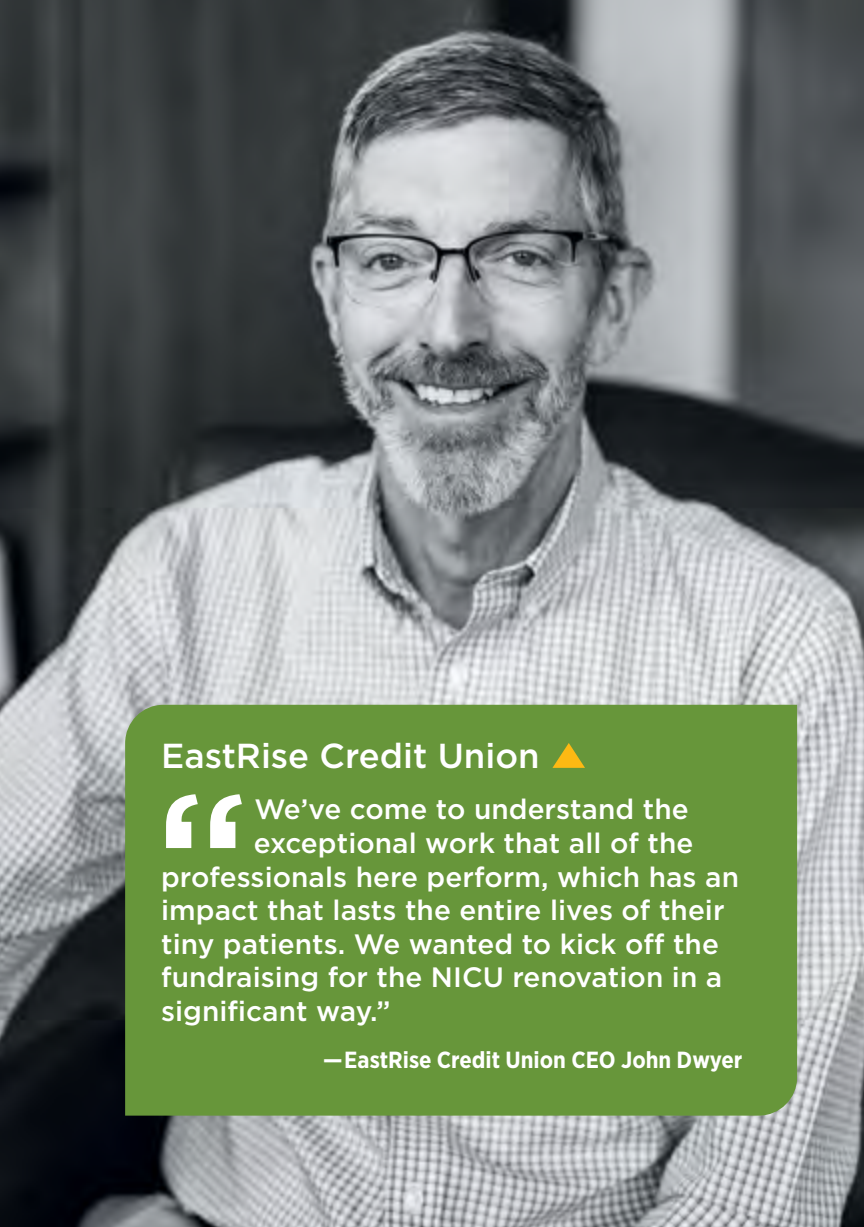
Thanks to a \$1 million gift in 2018 from **EastRise Credit Union** (formerly New England Federal Credit Union) plus generous gifts from the **Vincent Family Foundation** and **Bridget and Valdemar Garibay**, a series of renovations designed to create a more supportive environment for NICU patients and families has begun. Core elements include the creation of two private rooms, a new and more welcoming NICU entrance, heating and cooling system upgrades and

a new clinical care team station. To achieve these important improvements, the NICU support spaces were reconfigured, leading to a redesigned family room, dedicated equipment and supply rooms and an upgraded nurse call system, plus private offices for social workers and nurse managers. The final phases of these renovations will conclude in the spring of 2025.

“Having a welcoming entrance where you can see a friendly face right away will help decrease some of the stress parents feel when entering the unit,” said NICU Nurse Manager Natalie Clark, BSN, RNC-NIC. “Currently, we only have one private room, often requiring our staff to rotate patients in and out based on who has the greatest need for this space. Three private rooms will allow our space to better support families during these extremely vulnerable moments.” ■



To learn more about ways to invest in local children’s health needs, contact Shelby McGarry, [Shelby.McGarry@uvmhealth.org](mailto:Shelby.McGarry@uvmhealth.org), 802-999-8688 (mobile)



EastRise Credit Union ▲

“We’ve come to understand the exceptional work that all of the professionals here perform, which has an impact that lasts the entire lives of their tiny patients. We wanted to kick off the fundraising for the NICU renovation in a significant way.”

—EastRise Credit Union CEO John Dwyer



Bridget and Valdemar Garibay ▲

For years, Bridget and Valdemar Garibay have infused the philanthropic spirit into their company, Med Associates Inc., and inspired their employees to join them in fundraising for UVM Children’s Hospital. Whether in bake sales, giving trees, raffles, corporate sponsorship of events or gifts to emerging areas of need, the Garibays and their employees have built a culture of giving back while strengthening the programs, clinical environments and people on whom youth throughout our region rely for compassionate, local, family-friendly care.

In 2024, when they learned of the heightened need for renovations in the NICU, Bridget and Valdemar made a significant personal gift to help ensure that the necessary enhancements could proceed.





## Generations of Giving

# Farrington Construction builds more than you might know

We are fortunate to live in a place where many local businesses care about the health of our community and invest philanthropically in the academic medical center that sustains us. One such champion is **Farrington Construction**: well known for its bricks-and-mortar contributions to the built landscape of the Burlington area, but lesser known for its elevation of Vermonters' and northern New Yorkers' lives through charitable gifts to UVM Medical Center.

Recognition is simply not what motivates Dave Farrington, Jr., owner of the Vermont-based Farrington Construction company. "Dave's love of humanity is infectious," said Ginger Lubkowitz, UVM Health Network chief development officer. "It permeates his professional work, his family life and the extraordinary ways he gives back to our community."

Farrington was born in Burlington and attended Catholic schools here before graduating from UVM and going to work at the company his father founded in 1977. For decades, Farrington Construction has come through for UVM Medical Center on new builds, renovations and emergency projects while concurrently making charitable contributions to help the hospital address priority needs. Whether it involves "no charge" construction of vital staff space at the height of

COVID, a lead charitable gift to endow the chair of pediatrics or service on the UVM Medical Center Foundation Board of Directors, Farrington gives his talent, time and resources.

Farrington's family joins in his generosity. Behind each contribution are his children, Jack and Paige; his wife, Jen, and her children Kira and Cameron; his parents, Dave, Sr. and Judy; and three new grandchildren—all born at UVM Medical Center.

"Our family business has now proudly engaged the third generation," said Farrington, "and we've had many encounters as patients over the years, luckily all with great outcomes. UVM Medical Center has for me become much more than a place to go and get repaired. It's part of our community—part of what keeps my family, our employees and their families, our friends and neighbors—well. We live here. We work here. We are delighted to support the hospital that takes care of us all." ■

### Farrington Family Impact:

- 20 years as lead sponsor of UVM Children's Hospital's Annual Golf Classic
- Major donor to all UVM Medical Center capital campaigns since 2001
- Total giving of nearly \$1 million since first gift in 1993



(Above) Four generations of Farringtons

(Opposite, top) Dave with son Jack Farrington

(Far left) Dave with wife Jen Farrington

(Left) Dave Farrington, Jen Farrington and her daughter Kira Mincar, Anel Peco



To explore giving opportunities in emergent areas of need, contact Manon O'Connor, [Manon.Oconnor@uvmhealth.org](mailto:Manon.Oconnor@uvmhealth.org), 802-734-0711 (mobile)



*Train. Recruit. Flourish.*

# Workforce development initiatives and donor support connect talent and desire with opportunity

In response to persistent national workforce shortages, UVM Health Network’s **Center for Workforce Development** continues to pioneer innovative programs that train local community members and members of its own workforce for in-demand health care positions. This includes in-house training programs and external partnerships with colleges, both here in Vermont and nationally.

Several programs, supported in part by philanthropy, enable current employees to earn wages and benefits while pursuing advanced studies to further their career—often with full tuition support or limited out-of-pocket costs. This approach provides much-needed flexibility for nontraditional learners, effectively removing the barriers individuals often face when trying to balance life, work and continuing education.

In 2025, the center plans to harmonize and scale its efforts across Vermont and northern New York, with the goal of reaching as many individuals as possible. A focus will be on preparing more frontline employees for advanced education programs, often by assisting with prerequisite courses at community colleges.

The center also plans to diversify its Pathway Program to address growing needs and a wider range of health care roles. Partnerships in the community, including those with schools, colleges and community-based organizations will expand, and a special focus will be placed on harnessing the talents of historically marginalized communities, refugees/immigrants/asylees, youth and individuals with disabilities. This approach will support a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities served by our health system.

“When you take a step back and look at the health care field, you see high barriers to entry,” said Jerry Baake, UVM Health Network director of workforce development. “The work requires degrees, licensure and certification—all of which are costly and time consuming. We know that careers in health care are rewarding and can be family-sustaining, and we want to do everything possible to connect talent and desire with opportunity. Gifts from our community are helping us turn that vision into reality.” ■



To learn more about opening career pathways for talented community members, contact Krystyna Davenport Brown, [Krystyna.DavenportBrown@uvmhealth.org](mailto:Krystyna.DavenportBrown@uvmhealth.org), 802-656-4306



## Voice from the frontline

“ I have a passion for helping patients and their families. I am from China and was an RN there for almost ten years. After I moved to the U.S., I couldn’t use my medical background, but I told myself ‘I will be a nurse in the U.S. someday.’ Lots of obstacles came down on me. The biggest were my language and my financial situation. I was struggling, thinking I had to quit my medical assistant job

to go to nursing school full time. (I LOVE my job and orthopedics, it is my family.) One day, I was reading news from the hospital and found the Pathway Program. I don’t have words to describe how excited I was. The program has solved my problems, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to pursue my nursing dream.”

— **Xiaoyan Zeng**, medical assistant II, UVM Medical Center Orthopedics and Rehabilitation, and participant in the philanthropy-supported LPN Pathway Program



Remembering Glen Wright

# A champion for the health of Vermonters passes away at 74

A passionate advocate, an engaged leader, a champion for the health of Vermonters: **Glen Wright** will be remembered as all of these and more. He died on December 15, 2023, at 74 years old, leaving behind an incredible legacy of service that strengthened the fabric of his community. A longtime board member for UVM Medical Center Foundation, he served from its inception in 2006 until his passing, taking on the role of chair for a term. In the early 1980s, he and his wife, Rosemarie, began donating to the hospital, including bringing the Children’s Miracle Network to UVM Children’s Hospital, generously providing a lead gift to name the **Glen and Rosemarie Wright Mother Baby Unit**, and establishing the **Glen Wright Cardiology Endowment**.

Wright also helped further the economic prosperity of his beloved home state. He served as an advisor to four Vermont governors and as a board member for myriad local nonprofits. This service has been acknowledged through prestigious awards, including the C. Harry Behney Lifetime Economic Development Achievement Award and the Robert A. Skiff Community Improvement Award. Wright will be deeply missed by UVM Medical Center and the foundation he helped shape. He leaves behind his wife; three children, Matthew Wright, Jeramie Wright, and Jill Wright Houck; four grandchildren; and many devoted friends and extended family members. ■



UVM MEDICAL CENTER, INCLUDING UVM CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL AND UVM CANCER CENTER, IS A NONPROFIT HOSPITAL **THAT RELIES ON PRIVATE PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT TO ACHIEVE ITS MISSION.**

2024 Philanthropy Highlights

- Annie Seyler, UVM Medical Center Foundation, *Editor and Principal Writer*
- Ann Howard, UVM Larner College of Medicine, *Designer*
- Erin Post, *Contributing Writer*

2024 Foundation Board Members

- |                          |                        |                         |
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| Paul Danielson, DMD      | Stephen Leffler, MD*** |                         |
| Jay Desautels**          | Tom Little             |                         |

\*Completed term, June 2024    \*\*Completed term, December 2024    \*\*\*Ex officio





UVM Medical Center, together with UVM's Larner College of Medicine and College of Nursing and Health Sciences, is our region's premier academic medical center. One important reason our caregivers, scientists, educators and learners can change so many lives: philanthropic support from our community. Your charitable gifts help us push the boundaries of clinical care, research and training—coming ever closer to treatments and cures for the health conditions that affect thousands of people throughout Vermont and northern New York, and millions more around the globe. Our collaborative work relies on close partnerships, vision, shared passion and a vast, dedicated community of donors.

**Thank You.**

University of Vermont Medical Center Foundation  
St. Joseph's Hall, 5th Floor  
111 Colchester Avenue  
Burlington, VT 05401  
802-656-2887  
[development@uvmhealth.org](mailto:development@uvmhealth.org)



[UVMHealth.org/MedCenterFoundation](https://UVMHealth.org/MedCenterFoundation)

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