



**NORTH SHORE  
HEALTH CARE  
FOUNDATION**

# NAVIGATOR

North Shore Health Care Foundation News

DECEMBER 2022 | VOL. 8

*Happy Holidays!*

*Cheers to an amazing year...  
and now beginning our 30th year!*



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## OUR MISSION

*The Foundation proactively identifies opportunities to expand equitable health care and healthy living in Cook County, and champions solutions through funding, education, and advocacy.*

## SINCERE THANKS TO OUR DEDICATED BOARD

Inger Andress, President  
Jerry Lilja, Past President  
Patty Laney, Secretary  
Barb Bernardy-Rose, Director  
Mike Boomer, Director  
Anna Carriad-Barrett, Director  
Coralyn Kochsinska, Director

### Retired earlier this year:

Pat Campanaro, Grace Bushard,  
Hillary Freeman

## WITH CHALLENGES COMES HOPE...AND SOLUTIONS

*By: Valerie Marasco Eliassen, Executive Director*

As we near the end of the year and settle into another winter in our rural, rugged community, it is a time to reflect on what 2022 brought us. It was another incredibly busy year at the Foundation, navigating the ever-changing pandemic environment, and attempting to 'do more' in Cook County, as our strategic plan calls for.

Despite a challenging environment in the health of communities, it is fair to say that in many respects, we did and are preparing to DO MORE, in Cook County as we approach our 30th year in 2023.

### WHY THE HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION EXISTS

Challenges, hope and solutions are why the North Shore Health Care Foundation (NSHCF) exists. Many folks confuse the NSHCF with North Shore Health Hospital, but we are a completely separate nonprofit. Did you know that the Foundation was established in 1993, by a group of committed residents dedicated to improving the health and wellness of the Cook County community?

The concept for the Health Care Foundation started as the Clinic Development Committee. The original six-member board assumed a leadership role supporting projects that have had a significant impact on the health of our rural community. The commitment to provide leadership in sustaining and improving the health of individuals and communities continues today as a core value.

The NSHCF has now awarded over \$1.16 million in grants since 1995, and has developed critical programs which address gaps in health services such as Care Partners of Cook County and the Oral Health Task Force, which have benefitted thousands locally. We are now incubating the Restorative Justice Program which is bringing a new perspective to the criminal justice system and contributes to community health.



Working towards our vision of a healthy community for all in Cook County, in so many ways

### INTENTIONAL TRANSFORMATION WITH VALUES

We showed up in a big way this year, thanks to your contributions and keeping our values at the forefront. 2022 was another intentionally transformational year. We worked to attract new grants and new board members to grow and diversify our human and financial resources, and continue a transition to better prepare the NSHCF to tackle more critical community health issues. We proudly welcomed four new members who bring a wealth of experience and perspective to our organization and are still recruiting to represent all parts of the county.

Sadly, we also had several board members retire who've played an instrumental role in growing our nonprofit over the recent years. We moved offices and found our permanent home in the Cascade Cornerstone Building in Grand Marais.

### MEETING GOALS

We met our goal of attracting grants thanks to the Lloyd K Johnson Foundation, the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, the Cook County Community Fund, Arrowhead Electric Cooperative Roundup, the St. Paul & MN Foundation Business Improvement Fund, and Cook County Public Health & Human Services grants.

These grants helped us improve our accounting and management systems, add staff, begin an important strategic plan update, increase partnerships, **dig into critical issues such as the healthcare workforce shortage**, and award more funds than ever to deserving programs.

In 2022, NSHCF was able to award \$64,300 in grants to organizations and programs helping to address our key priorities and work toward our vision of a healthy community for all in Cook County.

....Continued page 2



# CHAMPIONING SOLUTIONS THROUGH FUNDING, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY - 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

The Foundation's impact in the community is far reaching and has an immense ripple effect, touching nearly every demographic through our support. Recipients of NSHCF grants in 2022, include:

- \$6,000 - PPHS - Mental Health First Aid Training for 30 individuals, 15 who work directly with youth for youth mental health first aid
- \$1,300 - Sawtooth Mountain Clinic - Early Childhood Connections - Parenting/Caregiver Book Clubs
- \$11,300 - Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior: Elderly Services Program
- \$6,000 - North Point Youth Center - Youth activities, food security and hygiene program
- \$5,000 - The Hub (Cook County Council on Aging) - Food Program support
- \$1,000 - North Shore Collaborative - Learning Opportunities Through Stories Program
- \$3,700 - MN Children's Press - A Children's Ojibwe Alphabet Book: Youth and Elders Co-create a Primer on Language and Culture.
- \$10,000 - Care Partners of Cook County - Senior services and palliative care programs
- \$10,000 - Cook County Higher Education - Healthcare education delivery
- \$10,000 - Tofte Fire Rescue - Lucas 3.1 Automatic CPR Machine improving survival rates and covering a gap in the west end of the County, as well as

**PLUS** - \$10,000 (2021 funding for program starting in Jan 2022) to launch the Medical Assistant Training program for on-the-job accredited training for six health care professionals at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic.

In addition to these grants and our day-to-day operations in 2022, the Foundation:

- Helped launch Aging Well Resources Cook County as part of the Cook County Aging Coalition.
- Continued leadership in the Oral Health Task Force extending care to seniors aged 65 and over as well as dental care for those ages birth to 26, along with pregnant moms.

- Continued incubation and leadership for the Cook County MN Restorative Justice Program which will now be taking Truancy under its umbrella, working in collaboration with the County Attorney's Office and Cook County ISD 166.
- The RJ program also held weekly "Snack N Chat" every Wednesday at Cook County HS for students to learn restorative practices and healthy conflict resolution.
- Continued administration of the COVID-19 Medical Response Fund created by NSHCF in 2020 as a community matching campaign, to give our local health agencies the funds and tools they needed to respond swiftly to the pandemic.
- Hosted a volunteer appreciation event to recognize the many individuals who gave countless hours during the pandemic in a variety of roles, from vaccination events to grocery stores. These selfless people helped see us through the last few years.
- In early December, **the Foundation was able to announce a three-year partnership with Cook County ISD 166 Schools to have a licensed mental health therapist based in our schools starting in the 2023 school year - filling a huge gap!**
- NSHCF also recently became the local point-of-contact and champion for the use of the "Got Your Back" app. Got Your Back, powered by the Jacob's SWAG Foundation, is a new digital platform for suicide awareness, prevention, and education. There are tools custom built for the user to help cope with anxiety and depression, and the ability for the user to tell their squad they are not ok in the click of a button.
- NSHCF is also participating as a partner on the Rural Communities Opioid Response-Implementation grant, led by Dr. Laura Palombi, Associate Professor UMD and the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, on the Treatment & Recovery Subcommittee, and much more as
- A member of the joint Cook County Health Care Planning Committee and other collaborative committees and outreach done through the NSHCF.

## Strategic Priorities to Help Address Vital Community Challenges

This year marked the completion of our first ever strategic plan. The good news is that we have implemented 90% of that plan and achieved numerous accomplishments above and beyond what was in the plan. That is a big feat for a small rural nonprofit. We are continuing that momentum to mindfully and strategically move forward making positive change locally.

In mid-November, the Foundation embarked on the update of our strategic plan to focus our work for the next five years, and beyond. As we kicked off that process, the Board renewed our priority focus areas which continue to include:

- Children's mental health and substance misuse,
- Senior services and aging well in Cook County, and
- Travel and lodging solutions for accessing out-of-town medical care.

We also added a very important one to our slate that will take precedence for the immediate future - **solutions for the health care workforce shortage and protecting our fundamental health care services.**

This includes our ambulance service and the Care Center at North Shore Health Hospital.

Without these vital health services, everyone who lives and visits our communities is at risk.

*Solutions for the critical health care workforce shortage and protecting our fundamental health care services will take precedence for the immediate future.*

The NSHCF has convened partners and will be stepping up in a big way to invest in solutions for advanced health care training programs right here in Cook County - stay tuned for more details on that in the new year.

2023 will mark the Foundation's 30th anniversary. Three decades of slow, steady growth and being a light for health and emergency services in Cook County. We are proud to continue this mission and do more than ever in the coming year.

## SPOTLIGHT ON 2023



Championing Health Solutions in Cook County for 30 Years, Investing In Our Future

*If the future of health services in Cook County is important to you, consider a year-end gift to the Foundation to help us do more. Your gift can leave a lasting legacy of health in this special place we all love.*

See details on how to become a Friend of the Foundation or donate on page 4



# GRANT RECIPIENTS MAKING VITAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY

Since 2020, the Foundation has awarded \$172,287 in grants to organizations and initiatives which contribute to healthy living, address gaps in health care and improve equitable access to health in rural Cook County. Following are reports on the work of just a few of the programs the Foundation has awarded:

## Learning Opportunities Through Stories Program - LOTS

Learning Opportunities Through Stories had another successful summer. 374 books were distributed in Tofte, Grand Marais and Grand Portage. Overall, LOTS distributed 1,209 books in Lake and Cook Counties. We are very proud of that!

Grand Marais saw 24 children from 17 families; Tofte saw 22 children from 14 families and Grand Portage saw eight children from four families at their sessions. These numbers do not include older siblings that attended, all of whom received free age-appropriate books. There are some families that still show up to LOTS even though their children are a little older (ages six to eight). They enjoy listening to the stories and getting more age-appropriate books. Books for the three locations totaled \$1,722.35.

The GM LOTS program was a successful event this year according to session leader Autumn. Families were very happy to have an opportunity for their child to listen to stories, play with other children and be able to socialize with other parents. Families reported that their child would request the LOTS book for their bedtime readings. We had many toddlers this year, a couple babies under 1 and a few older siblings that were able to choose from the upper-level LOTS books.

"The Foundation's grant helped purchase books for the Tofte, Grand Marais and Grand Portage sessions. Due to your generosity, we were able to get books into the hands of children in hope that they will learn to love reading and be better prepared for school. Thank you!" Trisha Scamehorn, LOTS Coordinator.

## Comments from Cook County Participants Applaud LOTS:

- I like the selection of books this year. Most, if not all, books related to real-world things I was able to continue talking about with my child after we read.
- Great program! I learned the joy of reading.
- We loved it! I love seeing kids read more confidently. Thank you so much!
- My kids love books-thank you!



## Medical Assistant Training

The Health Care Foundation supported the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC) to pilot a training certification program that has helped address a critical shortage of health care staffing. The Medical Assistant Training Program provides a mechanism for ongoing workforce development to fill a need for Medical Assistants (MAs) locally.

The Foundation provided a \$10,000 grant to help SMC launch the program and train up to six MAs in 2022. Medical Assistants and/or LPNs are required to continue to provide vital health care services to patients in Cook County. Without these important staff to room patients, take vitals and update patient records, we cannot have more practitioners and doctors.

"There was an unprecedented shortage of Licensed Practical Nurses and a complete lack of certified Medical Assistants in our service area," said Erin Watson, HR Director & Chief Operating Officer - Sawtooth Mountain Clinic. "Without these critical healthcare professionals, we cannot ensure access to the high-quality healthcare residents and visitors deserve and are accustomed to."

Through dialogue with the Minnesota Association of Community Health Centers, they began exploring piloting a licensed MA Training/Apprenticeship program for Minnesota Community Health Centers - the first of its kind for Minnesota community health centers.

With the Foundation on board as a funder and supporter, the program was launched here in Cook County in January, and will lead to MA certification and enhanced opportunities for participants - a pathway to continued education, and perhaps most importantly, the stabilization and guaranteed continuation of essential healthcare services for all residents and visitors of our community.

The grant helped offset tuition and exam fee costs, and ensured the program launched in January of this year.

The program has been a great success.



## Equal Access to Healthy Food Helps Create Healthier Generation

Access to healthy food and proper nutrition is fundamental to children's physical, mental and emotional health. According to recent research, school meals utilizing fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, organic/grass-fed meats and dairy products is the most effective tool to use in combating obesity and promoting wellness in children. Every child with access to nutritionally balanced, environmentally conscious meals helps create healthier generations through good nutrition.

Great Expectations School's (GES) Great Lunch Program was developed to ensure the public charter school's students could get a variety of fresh whole foods daily, and to teach the K-8 graders the importance of healthy sustainable nutrition.

In 2020, the Health Care Foundation funded two grants for \$5,000 each to ensure that all students, regardless of ability to pay, had the same access to the Great Lunch Program.

The grants funded the meals for the 2020-21 school year for students eligible for the "free or reduced lunch program" and paid for a software and scanning system which ensures children who qualify are not singled out. This provides all students and their families with a guarantee of their rights to privacy within the school meal system.

The second grant covered the addition of breakfast five days a week, and helped pay for lunches for the 2021 school year as the school saw significant enrollment increases.

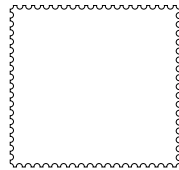
Just over 62% of students at the school qualify for the free or reduced meal program, but 100% of GES students are receiving fresh healthy meals as a result of the Foundation's contributions. **140 kids were served organic healthy breakfasts and lunch daily, regardless of ability to pay.**



## AUTOMATIC CPR INCREASES SURVIVAL RATES, FILLS CRITICAL WEST END GAP

911 receives many medical calls each year to locations in the west-end including the Temperance River, Bluefin Bay and area resorts and campgrounds. Cook County's emergency services units collectively supported using the \$10,000 emergency services block grant in 2022 to add a Lucas 3.1 Automatic CPR machine to Tofte Fire Rescue's ambulance.

The life-saving equipment is critical due to the geographic distance to North Shore Health Hospital. Continued manual CPR is exceptionally difficult and often does not come with great survival rates. The equipment is compatible with other EMS and hospital units, making ambulance transfer and emergency room arrival smoother, as well as increasing survival rates for victims.

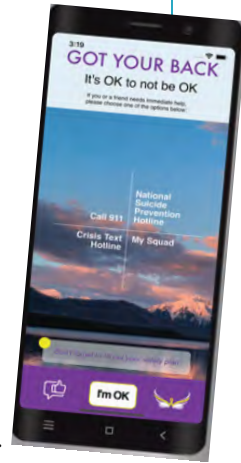


## APP HELPS YOUTH COPE WITH ANXIETY & DEPRESSION

The Got Your Back App powered by Jacob's SWAG is a new digital platform for suicide awareness, prevention, and education. There are tools custom built for the user to help cope with anxiety and depression. Included features are:

- My Squad support group made up of your friends and family
- Immediate messaging tools for the people in your squad making them aware that you are NOT OKAY
- One-touch access to crisis centers and hotlines
- Mindfulness and calming exercises to help guide the user through moments of anxiety
- Nationwide support services locator
- An in-app safety plan for the user to share with their My Squad personal support group
- Daily Mood Tracker - To keep a record of how you're feeling, why you're feeling that way and when the feeling started
- Positive Affirmations - These push notifications are a dose of daily encouragement to remind you that even when things are difficult, you have the power to overcome.

Jacob's SWAG Foundation Inc. was established in memory of son, brother and friend, Jacob Ellefson. Jacob passed away on June 7, 2012, by taking his own life. A merging of grief, remembrance, respect, and a love of community resulted in the formation of Jacob's SWAG (Support With Awareness and Giving) to tell the story of Jacob and his family in an effort to break the stigma of suicide and to talk about mental health supports. Jacob's SWAG strives to support the emotional needs of children by providing support to schools and community youth programs with a primary focus on suicide prevention/awareness, bullying, mental health and helping students make good life choices. Jacob's SWAG works to ensure that all children are surrounded by school and community supports that will prevent any family from enduring the pain of loss by suicide.



## BE A PARTNER IN THE FUTURE OF LOCAL HEALTH

Donations and 'Friends of the Foundation' membership purchases help with critical operating funds and help the Foundation develop solutions to address key community health issues.

**Give the gift of a Foundation Friendship** to your loved ones or renew your annual friendship for 2023 - an investment in a healthy community for all in Cook County. If gifting a Friendship, please indicate your preference and complete the form below. Suggested levels include:

- \$1,000 - North Star
- \$500 - Guiding Light
- \$250 - Navigator
- \$100 - Wayfinder
- \$50 - Beacon
- Other donation amount: \_\_\_\_\_
- Legacy endowment donation: \_\_\_\_\_

We hope we can count on your support to help us be the light for health in Cook County. Donations are tax-deductible and can easily be made online through credit card or PayPal, or by cash or check, mailed to:

**North Shore Health Care Foundation**  
P.O. Box 454  
Grand Marais, MN 55604

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address 2: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Check Enclosed:

**If purchasing as a gift:**

Recipient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipient's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipient's Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Memorial/Honorarium dedication: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Donations can be made online at  
[www.NorthShoreHealthCareFoundation.org](http://www.NorthShoreHealthCareFoundation.org)