

2025 Volunteer Impact Report



Volunteering at Children's Wisconsin: So Many Ways to Make an Impact

Every day, we are inspired by the passion, generosity and unwavering dedication of our extraordinary volunteers. Their presence is a gift to everyone at Children's Wisconsin — within the walls of our hospitals in Milwaukee and Neenah, throughout the community, and beyond. We are deeply grateful for the countless ways they embrace our mission and inspire us with their commitment to helping kids and families thrive.

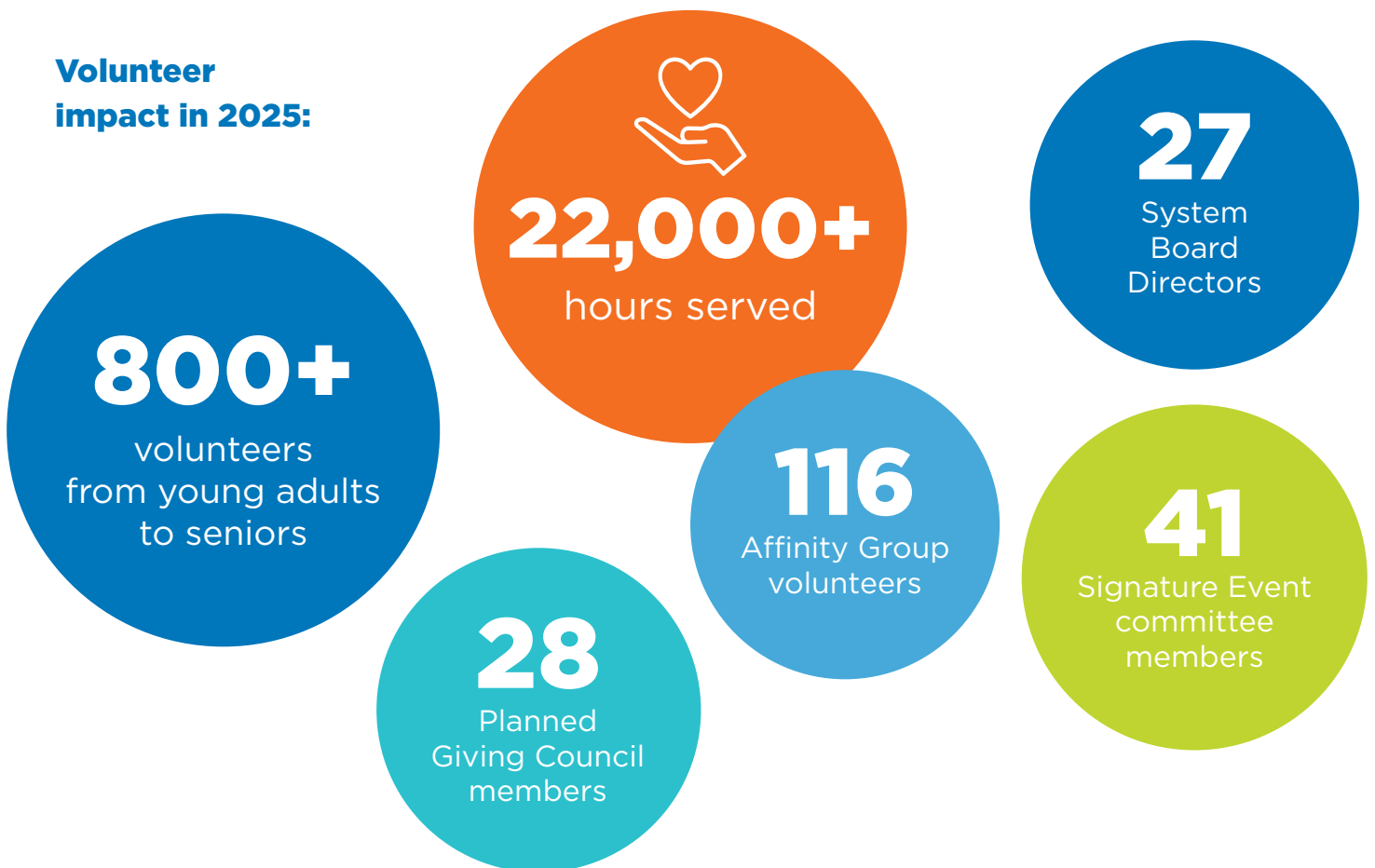
The pages that follow offer just a glimpse into the immeasurable impact our volunteers made last year. Without a doubt, they are an essential part of our One Team. On behalf of everyone at Children's Wisconsin, and the kids and families we are privileged to serve, thank you!

Building a Culture of Philanthropy and Mission-Driven Leadership

Over 120 community leaders — Children's Wisconsin System Board Directors, Children's Wisconsin Foundation Board Directors, and Engagement and Philanthropy Affinity Groups — are our champions of philanthropy. With their passion, voice and influence, they bring awareness to our mission and inspire others to support the organization as philanthropists, volunteers and advocates.

Last year, our incredible volunteers rolled up their sleeves to activate on our behalf and inspire support for kids and families.

Volunteer impact in 2025:



Inspiring Leadership

Brighter Than Ever: A Five-Year Journey Fueled by Our Volunteer Leaders

In 2020, we launched **Brighter Than Ever**, a comprehensive engagement and philanthropy campaign to galvanize our benefactors, volunteers and advocates on behalf of those we serve. We are thrilled to share that, last year, we exceeded our ambitious \$300 million goal, raising more than \$308 million to continue to do what's right for kids.

The Children's Wisconsin System and Foundation Board Directors and Affinity Group volunteers were instrumental to the campaign's success. They stood firm and chose to proceed, even as the pandemic began and the world suddenly shifted. Their decision was fueled by an unshakable belief that Brighter Than Ever would be essential to advancing children's health in Wisconsin and far beyond, and served as a bold vote of confidence in the Foundation and our supporters. Their forward-thinking leadership, energy and commitment set the standard for us all.

Foundation Board Directors

Our Foundation Board Directors are valued partners, generously giving of their time and talents to provide their intellectual capital, sage advice and ability to innovate. In particular, they oversee our operations to guarantee the success of the Children's Wisconsin Foundation.

In 2025, we were honored that Stacey Walthers-Naffah stepped into her role as Board Chair and Mark Theine into his role as Board Vice Chair, enthusiastically supporting our engagement and philanthropy work.



Mark Blutstein, Ben Mansalis, Meg Dean, Greg Renz, Stacey Walthers-Naffah, Renee Boldt and Mark Theine joined Children's Wisconsin President and CEO, Gil Peri, at Miracle Marathon.

Mark Blutstein extended gratitude on behalf of Children's during his visit to Ace Hardware, a local Children's Miracle Network partner.



Foundation Board Directors Dave and Edie Werner, Michael Sheppard, Raquel Filmanowicz and Lindsay Schweikert during a tour of the Milwaukee Hospital.

39

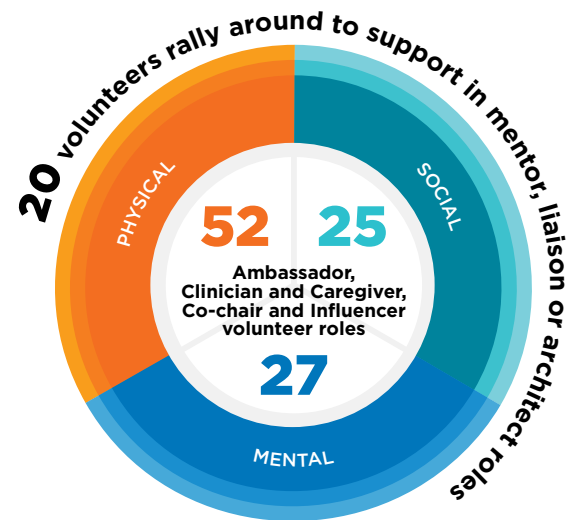
Foundation Board Directors

500+

years of service

Affinity Groups

Our Affinity Groups were created in 2020 to propel Brighter Than Ever. This innovative initiative is built upon three pillars — physical, social and mental health — offering a variety of roles to volunteers with focused and meaningful engagement opportunities. The Affinity Groups have allowed us to forge a strong community of volunteers who are helping build awareness, promote volunteerism and inspire philanthropic generosity to advance our mission. Their passion and dedication were instrumental to the success of Brighter Than Ever.



Chad Noel (Glow Beyond Co-Chair and Foundation Board Director) and Rosy Contreras at the Holiday Light Parade.



Sien Talb (Glow Beyond Ambassador) and daughter Sophia helped families decorate Halloween donuts during Pumpkins on the Plaza.



Paul Sweeney (Glow Beyond Influencer) and his family volunteered at Hollywood Movie Night.

Planned Giving Council

Members of the Planned Giving Council volunteer their time and professional expertise to grow awareness of Children’s Wisconsin among local estate planners and tax and financial advisors. Additionally, every year, council members contribute to the endowed fund they established over 20 years ago. Last year, they invested the annual earnings to support the Children’s Wisconsin Nourishing Partners Program, helping address food insecurity for the families who come through our doors.



Members of the Planned Giving Council at their fall meeting.

Planned Giving Council members were also instrumental in conceiving and implementing **Brighter Forever**, an innovative planned giving challenge with a \$1 million matching opportunity to inspire others to build their charitable legacy at Children's Wisconsin. We are grateful to the incredibly generous matching donors who made this opportunity possible.

26

Brighter Forever
donors pledged

\$11.2M

in total new
commitments.

Among those who have participated in Brighter Forever are families with young children who see the benefit of planning for their loved ones earlier in life while making an impact now on the causes they hold dear. They bring a new perspective and energy to our philanthropic community — families like Ashley and Troy Vandermause, who chose to include Children's Wisconsin in their will to honor Aiden, their firstborn. Shortly after birth, Aiden stopped breathing and was rushed to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Children's Wisconsin Fox Valley Hospital. Sadly, he passed away just a few days later. Ashley and Troy went on to have three more children and are grateful that Children's Wisconsin is only a few minutes away from them. Ashley volunteers her time at the Children's Wisconsin Foundation, helping build awareness, promote volunteerism and inspire philanthropic generosity to advance our mission.



“With our planned gift, we want to support the Children's Wisconsin Fox Valley Hospital so that when the next family needs it, they can have amazing care close to home and the extra support they deserve.” — Ashley and Troy Vandermause

“Children's Wisconsin has always been there for my family and my siblings' families — general pediatric care, multiple emergency room visits leading in one instance to days of inpatient care, and, most importantly, treatment for leukemia. I will always be grateful to Children's Wisconsin, and it breaks my heart to know that other families may not have access to wonderful care. Although donating my time and resources to Children's Wisconsin could be phrased as giving back, I prefer to think about it as doing my small part to provide more to others.” — Joan D. Klimpel, Godfrey & Kahn, S.C., Planned Giving Council Co-Chair.

Young Volunteers

Jack: 2025 Local Children's Miracle Network Champion

Jack Kelly is a natural leader and strives to do the right thing every day. These are the qualities of a true CMN Champion. Jack was selected as the 2025 local Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Champion, and he has embraced his role. He travels to local businesses that partner with CMN and shares his medical journey to extend gratitude, help raise awareness, and inspire critical philanthropic support for programs and services that help kids cope with illness, injury and trauma during a hospital stay or at home. He also loves to speak at fundraising events organized by the Children's Wisconsin Foundation.



Jack was diagnosed with transposition of the great arteries — a rare, life-threatening congenital heart defect — soon after he was born. He had lifesaving open-heart surgery in the Herma Heart Institute at Children's Wisconsin at just two days old, going home after just 10 days. This is a testament to the state-of-the-art care he received. We are grateful for Jack's advocacy on behalf of kids across the country navigating challenging medical journeys.



Claire and her mom, Linda Price-Topp, at Kickoff For The Kids.

Claire: A Personal Mission to Give Back to Children's Wisconsin

Claire's journey at Children's Wisconsin started at birth. She was born with a congenital heart defect that required open-heart surgery and, as a baby, she was also diagnosed with Jacobsen syndrome, a genetic disorder that affects her in many ways. She continues to receive inpatient and outpatient care at Children's Wisconsin.

For Claire, Children's Wisconsin feels like home, which is why she loves to volunteer, showing up with a big smile and ready to support kids and families. Claire volunteers her time throughout Children's Wisconsin, as a member of the Teen Advisory Council, in the Gift Shop, at special events like Tee-Up Fore Kids, and with the Children's Wisconsin Foundation. Her most recent volunteer role is helping visitors navigate the Milwaukee Hospital campus, which makes her happy and incredibly proud.



Check out some of our amazing Foundation volunteers.



Rallying the Community

Year after year, our volunteers bring their enthusiasm and a genuine passion for the Children's Wisconsin mission to tackle tasks, big and small, in support of our fundraising and stewardship events.

27th Annual WKLH Miracle Marathon: Celebrating a Longstanding Partnership

Last May, grateful families, care providers and volunteers shared their courageous stories and connection to our mission, broadcast live from the Children's Wisconsin Milwaukee Hospital lobby during the 27th annual WKLH Miracle Marathon presented by Mars Family Foundation. Their stories highlighted the power of compassionate care and underscored the vital role Children's Wisconsin plays in the community, inspiring more than \$1 million in support.

Longtime host Dorene Michaels was joined for the first time by Dave Coombs. Together, they engaged storytellers and listeners with their full hearts. We look forward to partnering with our friends at WKLH for years to come.



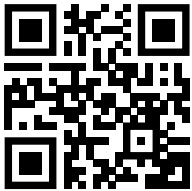
Dave Coombs and Dorene Michaels

81
volunteers

34
grateful families
independently raised
\$30,000+

46
storytellers
shared their
stories of hope
and healing

\$1M+
raised



Listen to the stories
shared at Miracle Marathon.



Gil Peri's first Miracle Marathon since joining Children's Wisconsin in 2024.



Sean Mars of Mars Family Foundation, presenting sponsor since 2023, with Koko Valny, who told her story during the event, and Joshua Steinberg, MD, her allergist/immunologist at Children's Wisconsin.



More than 33 Landmark Credit Union volunteers made over 500 thank-you calls to donors.

Inaugural Rally Round for Children's Wisconsin: One-of-a-Kind-Fun for a One-of-a-Kind Cause

What an incredible turnout for our inaugural Rally Round for Children's Wisconsin! On September 13, Children's introduced the evolution of AI's Run & Walk, continuing the legacy of this 45-year event, while providing new opportunities for all ages and abilities to gather and rally at the Milwaukee Mile at Wisconsin State Fair Park. Grateful families and friends, care providers, volunteers, and sponsors proved that the spirit of our community shines brightly — what an exciting way to launch this next chapter with so much passion and new energy.

Save the date for the 2026 Rally Round event on September 19!

173
teams

\$650K+
dollars raised

420
volunteers

**Nearly
7,000**
participants

23
sponsors

Moments spent rallying for kids and families:
**Every single
1**



Making Event Fundraising a Success

Signature Events

It takes many volunteers to execute an event. From planning to implementation, our Signature Event committee members, grateful families and volunteers are always up to the challenge, ensuring attendees are inspired by the Children's Wisconsin mission.

In 2025, 41 Signature Event committee members helped raise over \$2.8 million.

Children's Wisconsin Signature Events Led by Volunteers:

- Children's Wisconsin Open
- Gather for Good
- Tee-Up Fore Kids
- The Sugar Plum Luncheon



Children's Wisconsin Open



Gather for Good



Tee-Up Fore Kids



The Sugar Plum Luncheon

Community Events

More Than a Lemonade Stand: A Passion for Giving Back

In spring 2024, Ava's younger sister, Ella, was diagnosed with stage 4 lymphoma and admitted for treatment to the MACC Fund Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders. Inspired by her sister's courage and the care and compassion the family received at Children's Wisconsin and Ronald McDonald House, Ava organized a lemonade stand at school that summer to raise funds for these two organizations. When Ava shared her idea with friends, the event quickly grew to offer baked goods, crafts, face painting and henna decorations. In 2024, Ava and her friends raised an incredible \$14,000 in two days — more than they thought possible. Last year, the young philanthropists raised over \$20,000, allowing them to support Children's Wisconsin, the Ronald McDonald House and two kids from their hometown of Green Bay going through cancer treatment. The family is happy to report that Ella is now cancer-free!



Dairy Cares Garden Party: 15 Years of Generosity

In 2010, a group of friends — primarily from the dairy and agriculture sectors — decided it was time for the Wisconsin dairy industry to raise funds to help others. They formed Dairy Cares of Wisconsin to support Children's Wisconsin with funds directed to help cure childhood diseases and help kids and parents cope with the pain, stress and worry caused by a serious diagnosis.

The Dairy Cares Garden Party celebrated its 15th anniversary last July. A volunteer event committee, led by Foundation Board Director Jim Ostrom, brought the event's cumulative giving to \$3.6 million.



The Dairy Cares Garden Party event committee celebrated its impact.



Mae, a prize cow, was on display, attracting the attention of many.

\$500K
raised in 2025

400+
guests



Louie's Last Regatta: Sailing for Kids Since 1999

In September, Louie's Last Regatta celebrated 27 years of being one of the Midwest's largest fundraising regattas, raising over \$1.6 million for Children's Wisconsin. Thanks to an active and energetic volunteer committee, Louie's raised more than \$90,000 in 2025.

300+
attendees

\$90K
raised

45
boats
raced





The Green Bay Packers' annual Tailgate Tour

The Green Bay Packers' annual Tailgate Tour made a stop at the Children's Wisconsin Milwaukee Hospital in April. Our young patients had an exciting time with then-President and CEO Mark Murphy, as well as players Tucker Kraft and Lukas Van Ness, and Packers alumni. Children's Wisconsin was also selected as a host to conclude the tour in Green Bay a few days later with a fundraiser, featuring conversations with players and alumni and a Draft Show, where players escorted patients to the stage and honored them for their bravery. Thank you to our volunteers and dedicated committee members who made this event happen.



Portia Young, Children's Wisconsin Foundation Board Director and grateful parent.



Nichole Lecher, Brighter Than Ever campaign and Affinity Group architect and Packers' Tailgate committee volunteer.



Foundation Board Director Michael Sheppard emceed the event.

Forging Connections

Our Team Members' Impact in the Community Through Volunteerism

Each year Children's Wisconsin invites our own team members to connect with diverse communities through volunteering. In 2025, 145 team members dedicated over 470 hours at events like Mexican Fiesta, Pride Fest, Hmong New Year and Milwaukee's Juneteenth Celebration.



Gil Peri and members of Children's Pride at Pride Fest.



Members of our Hispanic and Latinx Alliance at Mexican Fiesta.



Engaging with families at Milwaukee's Juneteenth Celebration.

Supporting Patient Care

Pet Therapy: Meet the Burbacks

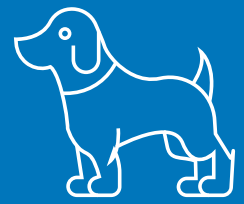
The Burbacks are powerful advocates for Children’s Wisconsin. Their daughter, Mikayla, receives care from more than a dozen specialists, whom her family lovingly call “Team Mikayla.”

The family also receives support from Mikayla’s service dog, Caprice, and their other dog, Junie, a certified pet therapy dog. Junie visits with patients at the Children’s Wisconsin Milwaukee Hospital twice a month with mom, Missy.

Additionally, each year, the Burbacks host a golf outing to raise funds for the Neurosciences Unit through the Mikayla Burback Neurosciences Fund. The event has raised more than \$174,000 since it began in 2019. We are grateful to the Burbacks for their unwavering generosity!



Caprice, Missy, Mikayla, Jared, Avry and Junie.



26

dog therapy teams at Children’s Wisconsin

875+

hours of comforting pet therapy visits in 2025

5,000+ visits

Carol’s Commitment: Ensuring Kids in the NICU Are Never Alone

Carol Rehorst’s journey with Children’s Wisconsin started in 1998 with the birth of her granddaughter, Bella, who filled the family with joy, even in the face of a life-altering spinal muscular atrophy diagnosis. Carol spent countless days with Bella in the NICU, making sure she was never alone.

Sadly, Bella passed away at 4 years old. In the years that followed, her parents welcomed two boys. The youngest was diagnosed with Down syndrome and, at 18 months, with leukemia. Carol was there again for her grandson every step of the way, from chemotherapy treatments to his full recovery.

In 2013, Carol began volunteering in the NICU, and from day one she knew she had found her place. As she likes to say: “I love cuddling these sweet, precious babies, and I know Bella is looking down at me and saying, ‘Keep singing those songs. I remember them.’”

At 85 years young, she’s our most senior hospital volunteer. Her passion for helping kids and vibrant personality make her a beloved member of the Children’s Wisconsin community.



13

years volunteering and nearly 1,400 hours of service

2x
grateful grandparent

Grief Services: Becoming a Lifeline for Others

Mary Beth Jezo-Sywulka and her husband began volunteering for Grief Services last year, turning the profound loss of their sons Oliver and Avery, who passed away in 2008 and 2022, into a source of hope for others. Along with other endeavors, Mary Beth courageously served as the guest speaker for the 2025 Memorial Program, where she shared her journey to inspire families to embrace life after loss. She also became a trained facilitator for Grief Haven, a national program offered through Children's Wisconsin. We are humbled by her strength in the face of pain and the way she has made compassion her life's work.



“Volunteering at Children’s Wisconsin gives me a unique opportunity to honor Oliver, Avery and their big brother Elliot’s spirits of kindness, love and compassion.”

Other Ways for Grateful Families to Give Back

Our Grateful Families are families who have received compassionate care at Children's Wisconsin and are committed to ensuring other families going through similar journeys receive the support they need when their child is in the hospital or recovering at home. Children's Wisconsin offers a variety of opportunities for families to directly support and encourage others. We truly appreciate their priceless contributions. Grateful Families also give valuable feedback through advisory councils, focus and discussion groups, special projects, and other initiatives to inform the decisions that impact care for kids and families.



Grateful Moms, Melissa Lamers and Michelle McCardle, serving meals to inpatient families during “Dinner on the House.”

Fifth Magnet Designation

In 2025, Children's Wisconsin earned the highly coveted Magnet Recognition Program® status for the fifth consecutive time from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). Magnet designation, the highest international distinction that a health care organization can receive, is granted every four years to organizations that demonstrate sustained excellence in nursing care. Children's Wisconsin now joins the ranks of an elite group of health systems across the globe. Fewer than 3% of health systems worldwide have received Magnet designation, with just 80 organizations — less than .5% — achieving this honor five times.

Our deepest thanks to the Grateful Families and dedicated volunteers whose powerful, personal stories of care at Children's Wisconsin were instrumental in earning our prestigious fifth Magnet designation: Laurie Bertram, Meg Dean, Sue Ela, Ryan Freund, Lori Grant, Marguerite Hammes, Patrick Hammes, Don Heeg, Lenny Kass, Dave Luczak, Michelle McCardle, Meg and Garrett Pasternack, John Reichert, Peter Ruud, Sal San Filippo and Paula Schmidt.



Corporate Engagement

Robyn's Nest

As a vital resource center at Children's Wisconsin, Robyn's Nest is there to ensure that children entering foster care have a fresh start with new clothes, baby gear or school supplies, and provides the basic necessities that help families under our care feel whole again during a difficult time or after a sudden loss.

Powered by volunteers and the community's generosity, Robyn's Nest steps in to provide essential resources to families year-round, at no cost — and always driven by the belief that every child and family deserves a chance at being healthy, happy and safe.



Volunteers from Vrakas CPAs + Advisors and Hayat Pharmacy help unload a semi-truck filled with toys from the 19th Annual Holiday Toy Drive, hosted by 105.7 The Fan.



Healthpeak WE CARE Week of Service

Last March, Milwaukee-based members from Healthpeak, a national real estate investment trust, generously funded and assembled 500 self-care and coping kits to be distributed to kids and families cared for by Children's Wisconsin. Several team members also played BINGO with kids in the Child Life Center and offered prizes for the winners.

Special thanks to Mark Theine, Vice Chair of the Foundation Board of Directors and Senior Vice President of Outpatient Medical at Healthpeak, who encouraged the organization to select Children's Wisconsin as their local charity for their WE CARE Week of Service.

Purposeful Projects

Barri Drury and the Brighter Than Ever Tour Program

Barri Drury's integral and unwavering support of Children's Wisconsin began in 1978 with the inaugural Al's Run & Walk. She has played a critical role in various committees and began a remarkable tenure on the Children's Wisconsin Foundation Board in 2014, concluding in December 2025.

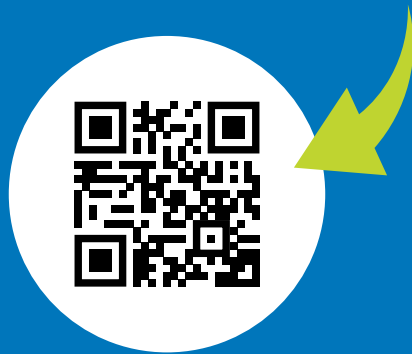
Throughout her volunteer leadership, Barri has provided thought partnership and championed research. She has been a critical factor in the creation of the Children's Research Institute, sustainable research programs and Med School 101, an immersive and experiential program demonstrating the impact of philanthropy on the Children's Wisconsin mission. As a Spark Forward co-chair and volunteer architect, Barri had a significant campaign leadership role, including the development of the Brighter Than Ever Engagement and Philanthropy Tour Program. Through this program, the community now can be led on a journey through Children's Wisconsin showcasing the miracles that happen every day. We could not be more grateful for Barri's leadership, volunteerism and generosity.



Barri and husband Dave have been instrumental in advancing the statewide reach of Children's Wisconsin. They supported this map, which demonstrates the impact we have beyond the walls of the Milwaukee Hospital, bringing our full story to life.

Thank
YOU!

Please continue to check volunteer.childrenswi.org
for other ways to engage in our mission.



Children's
Wisconsin

Brighter Than Ever

Together, we can create healthier, brighter futures for kids,
families and communities.

Thank you!