

Leading with Purpose

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital
Westerly Hospital

Year in Review | 2021

Yale
NewHaven
Health

Dear friends and colleagues,

Never has the expression “what a difference a year makes” been so true. Last year at this time we were in the midst of caring for a high number of COVID-19 inpatients at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital and Westerly Hospital. Today, although COVID is still very present, we are thankful to be in a much better place.

At the height of the pandemic we were faced with the difficult reality that patients were hesitant to schedule routine care or elective surgeries and were not seeking emergency care. In 2021, our patient volume came back in a major way.

While we were prepared to care for the increased number of patients, it created a challenge for our system, our staff and our physician partners. Because some patients postponed their care, they are now coming to us with a higher severity of illness that requires higher levels of care, resulting in longer hospital stays and wait times in our emergency departments. Due to the influx of patients, we have been equally challenged with hospital bed capacity. Addressing this challenge has been the focus of a multidisciplinary team effort and we are seeing the benefits of their great work and process improvement.

This past year also brought hope to our staff and their families as we rolled out the COVID-19 vaccine. I can still remember the day the vials were delivered to our facilities and proudly paraded to the Pharmacy accompanied by enthusiastic applause. Seeing the smiles, fist pumps, high fives and other jubilant reactions from staff and patients has been very rewarding.

Protecting ourselves, our families and the communities we serve is at the core of our mission. It has been remarkable to witness the teamwork, camaraderie and commitment to one common purpose: to provide the greatest of care to each other and our patients as we make strides to move beyond the pandemic.

While this past year has had unique challenges, we have had the good fortune to be guided by an exceptional team of leaders across our individual hospitals and our health system. It was a bittersweet day this year when Marna Borgstrom, chief executive officer of Yale New Haven Health, announced her planned retirement for the spring of 2022. Marna has been stalwart during her entire career that spanned 43 years, but the last two years have been truly remarkable. Her leadership has set an example for us all, and for that I'm forever grateful.

As we look back on 2021, it's time we look forward with great optimism for what the future holds. Our future is bright, and I'm thankful for the support of our dedicated staff, colleagues and community.



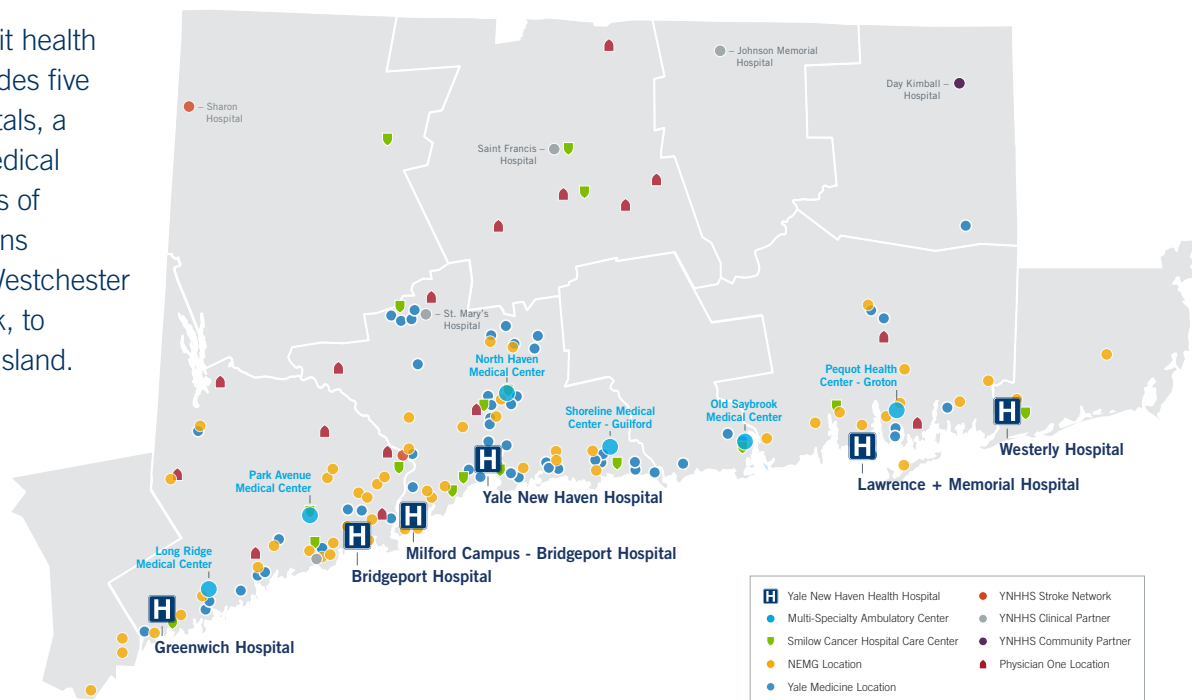
Patrick L. Green, FACHE

President and CEO, L+M Healthcare

Executive Vice President, Yale New Haven Health

This is Yale New Haven Health

We are a nonprofit health system that includes five acute-care hospitals, a multispecialty medical group and dozens of outpatient locations stretching from Westchester County, New York, to Westerly, Rhode Island.



2021 Yale New Haven Health System Profile

	BH	GH	L+M	WH	YNHH	NEMG	HSC	Total YNHHS
Total Licensed Beds ¹	501	206	308	125	1,541	n/a	n/a	2,681
Inpatient Discharges	29,708	20,070	16,225	4,580	82,475	n/a	n/a	153,058
Outpatient Encounters	574,443	372,643	352,857	128,408	2.2M	1.6M	n/a	5.2M (Inclusive of COVID lab volume)
Total Assets ²	\$0.86B	\$0.95B	\$0.52B	\$0.12B	\$5.36B	\$0.10B	\$2.53B	\$9.05B
Net Revenue ³	\$0.80B	\$0.51B	\$0.45B	\$0.12B	\$3.80B	\$0.53B	\$0.79B	\$5.88B
Medical Staff ⁴	1,889	1,018	736	317	5,454	1,365	n/a	7,511
Employees ⁵	3,334	1,863	2,328	724	15,442	2,301	3,494	29,486
Locations ⁶	57	32	11	6	104	153	n/a	363

Key: BH - Bridgeport Hospital / GH - Greenwich Hospital / L+M - Lawrence + Memorial Hospital / WH - Westerly Hospital / YNHH - Yale New Haven Hospital / NEMG - Northeast Medical Group / HSC - Health Services Corporation / YNHHS - Yale New Haven Health System

¹ Licensed bed number includes bassinets.

² Total assets include eliminations.

³ HSC Net Revenue does not include eliminations; total will not equal sum of the delivery networks.

⁴ Includes Residents and Fellows; MD Hospitalists included in NEMG column; includes non-physician Affiliated/Allied Health (advanced care practitioners).

Total YNHHS column reflects unique number of individuals, not a cumulative total.

⁵ Employees represent counts and not FTEs. Lawrence + Memorial includes VNASCT employees.

⁶ Total locations does not equal sum of the delivery networks due to more than one delivery network offering services at certain locations.

Financial Performance

Total Assets



\$520 million

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

\$120 million

Westerly Hospital

Net Revenue

\$450 million

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

\$120 million

Westerly Hospital



Across the Delivery Network

Employees

Individual Medical Staff

2,328

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

736

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

724

Westerly Hospital

317

Westerly Hospital

Patient Care

Inpatient Visits



16,225

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

4,580

Westerly Hospital

Outpatient Encounters

352,857

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

128,408

Westerly Hospital

Emergency Department Visits

52,282

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

14,233

Westerly Hospital

Vaccination: Message in a bottle

It is fitting that the publishers of the *Oxford English Dictionary* named “vax” as the 2021 word of the year. No topic has been more broadly discussed than the COVID-19 vaccines, which promised to move the world beyond the pandemic that impacted every aspect of our lives in 2020 and into 2021.



Cardiologist Roshanak Bagheri, MD, was among the first to be vaccinated at L+M.



Staff from Westerly Hospital supported a community vaccination clinic at the local senior center.



Infectious disease specialist Martin Ucanda, MD, rolled up his sleeve for the vaccine.



All Pharmacy hands were on deck as the vaccine vials arrived at Westerly Hospital.



Sharon Teel, senior manager of Corporate Business Services, Wendy Hundt, registration site lead, and Emely Flores, lead financial counselor, provided boots-on-the-ground support at the mass vaccination site at Mitchell College.



Bishop B.K. Watts encouraged members of the congregation of Shiloh Baptist Church in New London to be vaccinated at a pop-up clinic.



Pharmacists prepared thousands of COVID vaccines across the delivery network, including the Westerly Senior Center.



The Visiting Nurse Association of Southeastern Connecticut vaccinated homebound patients throughout southeastern Connecticut.

As part of Yale New Haven Health, Lawrence + Memorial Hospital and Westerly Hospital were at the forefront of delivering the coveted doses to both its employees and the communities we serve in southeastern Connecticut and southern Rhode Island. From the moment the vials were delivered to the Pharmacy to injection into bared arms, vaccines were hot topics at the family dinner table and on the national and local news.

Shaping the logistics of how to get the vaccine into as many people as possible in a short period of time was a challenge undertaken with enthusiasm. From on-site clinics for staff to mass vaccination clinics at colleges and casinos, to small pop-up events at places of worship, senior citizen centers and housing authorities, inoculations took place from the early hours of the morning until late at night, seven days a week.

As eligibility for the vaccine expanded beyond healthcare workers and other frontline workers, the public responded with enthusiasm. At the peak in April, almost 140,000 vaccines were delivered across YNHHS. A single day high of 9,400 doses was set on April 11, 2021.

Across Yale New Haven Health System, thousands of employees stepped up to staff these clinics. They provided the voice of reassurance as families brought their elderly relatives to roll up their sleeves and receive the gift they hoped would restore their world. They swapped stories with baby boomers hoping to put the days of waving at their parents through windows behind them. They applauded the bravery of teenagers eager to return to their curtailed social lives.

The newly vaccinated shared their stories with fellow shoppers in the grocery checkout line. They offered tips on how to find an appointment. People compared reactions between dose 1 and dose 2 of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines and the single dose Johnson & Johnson/Janssen. Staff shared their experiences with their colleagues. More and more stepped forward to be vaccinated in safeguarding their health and the health of others, accepting the message of hope secreted in each bottle of vaccine.

The voice of each caregiver and family member providing reassurance and guidance was far more powerful than any marketing campaign. Every dose was given with a single incentive: protection from the deadly virus. No other lures were needed.

As COVID-19 vaccination becomes part of the fabric of our lives then perhaps “endemic” will be next year’s word of the year.

COVID-19 by the Numbers

COVID-19 patients admitted

827

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

323

Westerly Hospital



COVID-19 patients discharged

759

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

291

Westerly Hospital



COVID-19 tests

76,424

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

25,066

Westerly Hospital



Telehealth visits

4,040

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

1,743

Westerly Hospital



COVID-19 vaccinations

6,177

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital

1,474

Westerly Hospital



Highlights of the year

While vaccination and protection against COVID-19 was the focus of much activity outside our hospital walls, there were also advances and initiatives taking place to expand clinical service lines and improve access to care throughout our delivery network. Every service line at L+M and Westerly is critical to our success. Thoughtful and strategic investments were made in the past year – and continue to be made – to grow programs such as Digestive Health, Heart and Vascular, Orthopedics and Urology, among others. The future is bright.

Clinical Innovation

L+M Hospital offers patients minimally invasive bariatric procedures, including sleeve gastrectomy and revision surgery, and advanced colorectal surgery. Surgeons at L+M perform both open and advanced laparoscopic procedures to treat a wide variety of conditions. The latest laparoscopic surgical procedures are now available for all types of colorectal conditions, including removal of tumors.

A new imaging agent designed specifically to detect certain types of recurrent or metastatic breast cancer was introduced at L+M. Patients at Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center at Waterford now have access to cutting edge precision medicine to treat breast cancer. This new imaging agent is significantly more specific than others and is an additional valuable tool for our radiologists. The positron emission tomography (PET) nuclear medicine imaging agent detects estrogen receptor positive lesions to help determine treatment protocols for patients with recurrent or metastatic breast cancer. If the scan identifies disease, our Oncology team can develop a more personalized treatment plan, that can significantly impact outcomes for our patients.



A new imaging agent designed specifically to detect certain types of recurrent or metastatic breast cancer was introduced at L+M Crossroads Imaging Center.

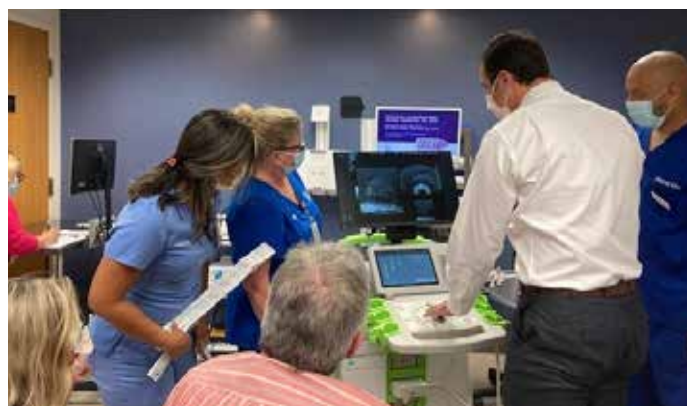


Westerly Hospital welcomed the arrival of a da Vinci Surgical System, providing patients access to minimally invasive surgeries.

The acquisition of the da Vinci Xi Surgical System at Westerly expands the hospital's operating room capabilities, with applications that can deliver significant benefits to patients. Surgeons now offer patients a minimally invasive alternative to traditional open surgeries. Surgeons are using the device to treat conditions such as urologic cancers. The technology can also be used for hysterectomies and many general surgical procedures, such as thyroid cancer removal, colorectal procedures and hernia repair.

The Urology department at Westerly Hospital now uses a state-of-the-art micro-ultrasound device to visualize more precisely prostate tumors in patients undergoing prostate-specific antigen screening and prostate biopsies. The technology allows for real-time, high-resolution imaging that guides the surgeon during the biopsy and produces images that allow the urologist to better distinguish cancerous tissue from normal tissue, which can enhance the quality of the biopsy. Westerly Hospital is the first hospital in New England to use the ExactVu.

The growth of the Urology program in Westerly prompted the opening of a urology practice in Warwick, Rhode Island, Yale New Haven Health's deepest foray into the Ocean State. The office is staffed by providers from Northeast Medical Group who are affiliated with Westerly Hospital. The team provides advanced minimally invasive procedures at Westerly Hospital.



Urology services were expanded across the delivery network and Westerly Hospital became the owner of a micro-ultrasound device.

Highlights of the year

Integrated, Patient-focused Care

The Emergency Department providers at L+M set a goal to decrease the time it takes for a heart attack patient to get a vital electrocardiograph (EKG). Thanks to a patient-centered initiative designed to put an urgency on EKGs, some patients presenting at the ED are getting the tests within the first minute of their arrival. The multidisciplinary team learned that existing guidelines on when to order an EKG did not include some of the more subtle signs of heart attack, potentially delaying an order. Similarly, heart attacks can happen to young people, too, so a guideline that recommended EKGs for patients 40 years or older was eliminated. The L+M times are now crushing the “door to EKG” national standard of 10 minutes.



The Emergency Department providers at L+M set a goal to decrease the time it takes for a heart attack patient to get a vital electrocardiograph (EKG).



Employees at L+M celebrated a milestone in the ongoing Emergency Department construction project. Thousands signed their names to a steel beam that was raised to the top of the building frame in a topping-off ceremony.

Quality and Safety

Clinical units across the delivery network achieved patient care milestones to reduce hospital-acquired infections. L+M and Westerly each celebrated more than a full year without a single catheter acquired urinary tract infection (CAUTI). In addition, L+M dramatically reduced the number of colon surgical site infections thanks to a team initiative.

A collaboration between the Operating Room and Sterile Processing teams at Lawrence + Memorial resulted in a reduction in the number of surgical instruments wheeled into the operating room. Many instruments on the tray were not used in surgery but still had to be sterilized after an operation. The initiative identified and removed 668 instruments from surgical trays. Safety is also enhanced by more organized surgical trays. Eliminating unnecessary instruments helps reduce surgical errors.



The OR and Sterile Processing teams worked on a project to reduce the number of surgical instruments wheeled into the OR – reducing inventory and saving money.





Under bright sunny skies, participants cut the ribbon to open the Uncasville Medical Center at Mohegan Sun, in partnership with the Mohegan Tribe.

Improving Access to Care

Construction of the Lawrence + Memorial Hospital Emergency Department (ED) Expansion Project became visible outside the hospital walls as the framing began in earnest. While work continues on a critical power upgrade, the exterior framework of the project has taken shape on Faire Harbour Place. The project will result in a dedicated ED entrance and provide private treatment rooms for patients.

Dedicated behavioral health emergency services space – with an increase from six to eight rooms – is also part of the project. An expanded waiting room will also be in place, and staff and physician work areas will be enhanced for work flow optimization. The ED currently sees more than 140 patients daily. The \$84 million project is scheduled to be completed in 2024.

Yale New Haven Health opened the Uncasville Medical Center at Mohegan Sun offering walk-in care for non-life-threatening issues as well as Primary Care, Endocrinology, OB-GYN, Cardiovascular programs for women and Physiatry. The 8,500-square-foot facility is staffed by Northeast Medical Group clinicians, many of them also on staff at L+M. The facility includes nine exam rooms and one procedure room. The health center is open to the public.

Building Healthy Communities

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital lives its mission to enhance the lives of the community it serves by distributing food to those most in need. The New London Food Partnership, which delivers over 10,000 pounds of food to New London families each week, is run by the Health Improvement Collaborative of Southeastern Connecticut (HIC), which includes about 30 community groups, and L+M serves on the HIC's leadership committee. With the help of other L+M employees and a cadre of volunteers, more than 200 families – or 800 to 1,000 people – are provided fresh produce and nutritious groceries on a weekly basis.

L+M's Nurturing Families, in coordination with A Sacred Place, provides care packages for babies born at L+M to women serving time at York Correctional Institution in Niantic. Each package includes vital baby supplies such as diapers, wipes, clothing, towels, pacifiers and books. There is also a scrapbook the caregiver can fill out for the mother, and a folder of information on community resources, including Nurturing Families. A state program run locally through L+M, Nurturing Families provides support to mothers or caregivers in raising healthy children.

Through the #GiveHealthy Movement Yale New Haven Health and Lawrence + Memorial Hospital collected 4,727 pounds of food equaling 3,939 meals and was donated to F.R.E.S.H. New London, a community group dedicated to building and sustaining a healthy and just food system to establish community food security in Connecticut. Westerly Hospital collected 1,579 pounds of food equaling 1,316 meals and donated locally to the "Pantry of the Lane" operated by the Joy Fellowship Church.

Highlights of the year

Culture of Excellence

Our associates exemplify our core values by providing patient-centered care, treating our patients and each other with respect and compassion, and performing their jobs with integrity. Their remarkable efforts are a testament to our culture of excellence. Despite the impact of the pandemic, we continued to honor many associates for their dedication and commitment to our common purpose.

Lawrence + Memorial and Westerly hospitals issued awards to associates throughout the year. More than 18 nurses across the delivery network were named Nightingale Award winners in 2021, a prestigious honor that recognizes professionalism and compassion. Others were singled out as DAISY Award winners, recognizing outstanding care to patients and families, with each nurse typically nominated by patients and families.

In addition to nurses, both hospitals recognized other deserving associates in other clinical and non-clinical roles through a number of awards for excellence, including 365, Sunflower, Interprofessional, PHIL, Rising Star, PEACE, Great Catch and Associate of the Month awards.

Awards and Recognition

Outpatient Pharmacy Services at Yale New Haven Health System earned URAC 4.0 re-accreditation in Specialty Pharmacy. URAC is the independent leader in promoting healthcare quality leadership, accreditation, measurement and innovation.

Yale New Haven Health recently won the American Hospital Association's 2021 Quest for Quality Prize for healthcare leadership and innovation in improving quality and advancing health in communities.

L+M Hospital, Pequot Health Center and the Visiting Nurse Association of Southeastern Connecticut were recognized for the seventh consecutive year as the "Best of the Best" by The Day newspaper.

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital was recognized by the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut as one of the best "Non-profits of the Year" for 2020. The award is given to an organization that demonstrated excellence, innovation, resiliency, adaptation and community spirit during 2020 as it helped patients with COVID-19.

Westerly Hospital was re-certified in the summer of 2021 by The Joint Commission for its Acute Stroke Ready Hospital program.



The Chamber of Commerce Eastern Connecticut honored L+M Hospital with its Nonprofit of the Year award.

A Generous Community

As the pandemic continued to affect our communities into a second year, our generous donors maintained their steadfast support of our two hospitals and the dedicated staff who care for our patients. In fact, it was an exceptional year. In 2021, over \$3.1 million was raised between Lawrence + Memorial Hospital and Westerly Hospital combined, a 40 percent increase over 2020.

The Emergency Department Renovation Project underway at L+M includes upgrades designed to improve workflow and optimize patient outcomes. L+M has been fortunate to receive gifts for this and other important initiatives from members of our community including Chelsea Groton Foundation, Dominion Energy, Neal and Jane Lassen Bobruff, Rocco and Mary Timpano, the Gardiner Family Foundation and the New London Rotary. Our annual golf outing held on the beautiful Fishers Island generated nearly \$170,000 for this important project. The incredible generosity of our most loyal benefactors ensures that we can continue to provide each and every patient with the greatest of care.

At Westerly Hospital plans are taking shape for some major facility improvements. Two extraordinary leadership pledge commitments, each for \$500,000, were made to the Westerly Hospital Foundation by the Alfred M. Roberts, Jr. Charitable Foundation and the Meredith and Whitney George Family Foundation. These landmark gifts from these generous long-time supporters will contribute significantly to the best possible experience for our patients and their families. Our annual golf outing at The Misquamicut Club generated a record \$65,000, and many contributions were received from generous individuals throughout the community, motivated by the progress they can see and the growing excitement they can feel.

September saw a lull in COVID-19 prevalence in the region, allowing us to safely gather for a limited number of outdoor events, renewing relationships with donors and friends. Outdoor receptions at the Weekapaug Inn, *Our Commitment to Growth and Development; Providing the Greatest of Care Close to Home*, and at the Westerly Yacht Club, *Latest Advances in Prostate Cancer Care*, prompted by a grateful patient and featuring Joseph Renzulli, MD, gave President and CEO Patrick Green, as well as physician leaders, the opportunity to describe the substantial investments and service line enhancements already underway, as well as active plans to further expand access to world-class healthcare services for our communities.

We are most grateful for the generous support received this past year.



A local nursing home sent care packages filled with candy for frontline workers.



The New London Rotary made a generous donation to the L+M Hospital Emergency Department expansion project.

For the Bobruffs, it's really about asking “What can I do to help?”

There is a playground in Groton, Connecticut, where kids play safely on renovated swings and slides, but you won't see any sign or plaque to let people know who helped pay for the new equipment. That's the way Jane Lassen Bobruff and Neal Bobruff prefer it.

“We never had any children, but that's OK,” Jane said. “Our community is our family.”

Softly, strategically, and with a passion for philanthropy going back generations on both sides of their family, the Bobruffs have spent decades finding big and small ways to make a difference in the lives of people across all walks of life throughout the New London region.

Their story is being told here not because the Bobruffs have always kept L+M Hospital as a pillar of their community activism and support. That part is true, of course, but that alone would be akin to erecting a sign on the playground they helped renovate.

Rather, the Bobruff's story is being shared because the Stonington couple believes deeply that the joys associated with their impactful giving might be instructive to others – a catalyst, perhaps, for others who have long wondered if they could connect in more meaningful ways to the people and institutions that make up our region, the place we call home.

“It's that opportunity – to try to inspire others – that led us to agree to share some of our story,” Jane said. “We don't ever really want to be in the limelight, yet we realize that if we share some of ourselves with others, then perhaps it can make others think about what they might be able to do.”

“It doesn't have to be big,” Jane said. “It could be as simple as baking something for a neighbor who can't leave her home, or finding an organization where you can volunteer for one hour a week. It's really about asking, ‘what can I do to help?’”

“We try to find things we can do that help or improve people's lives, particularly those people who have had less opportunity. We try to figure out what will help others and what will make our community stronger. We try to find those threads – and then strengthen those threads – because each thread weaves into the greater fabric of our community.”

Jane and Neal knew each other as early as grade school, but they can trace their romance back to the time, just after Neal finished law school, when they met unexpectedly in a Mystic hardware store. Neal was trying to fix up his condo; Jane was selling raffle tickets for the hospital.

They were soon hanging out together, and they immediately shared similar ideas about philanthropy. Soon they were fundraising together, for local schools at first, and making small donations to organizations when they were just starting out. “If you can only give \$5 to an organization, it still shows that you support that organization, and maybe you can give more the next time,” Neal said.

It was the beginning of a lifelong commitment to each other and to their earnest desires to make a difference.

Jane, a candy striper in the L+M Lobby Shop when she was just a girl, later became involved with the Auxiliary of L+M Hospital, serving as president. Similarly, Neal and Jane became members of the L+M Benefactors Society (the LAMBS), and Neal served as president. He prided himself on greeting every guest, in his trademark bow tie, whenever the LAMBS held a membership party, typically with hundreds of people in attendance.



Neal Bobruff and Jane Lassen Bobruff are longtime supporters of L+M Hospital.

“I wanted everyone not only to feel welcome, but I wanted that extra connection – for people to feel good about being there,” he said. “It was a way to say to others, it’s important that you’re here. It’s important to others that you are part of this event and this organization and this community.”

The Bobruff’s holistic connection to the community has also meant meaningful relationships with a host of other community groups. They pride themselves on attending events in person, buying local art and eating at locally owned restaurants. Aside from the hospital, they have long supported the Garde Arts Center, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Trust Fund, Shiloh Baptist Church in New London, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, the Child and Family Agency and the Norwich Health Education Center. They take special pride in supporting younger people who show promise as community activists and future philanthropists.

In all their endeavors, the Bobruffs have also strived with intention to support diversity, equity and inclusion, and in one of their more recent acts of generosity, they helped underwrite two COVID-19 vaccine clinics held in New London for underserved populations in the inner city.

“We try to find things we can do that help or improve people’s lives,” Jane said, “particularly those people who have had less opportunity. We try to figure out what will help others and what will make our community stronger. We try to find those threads – and then strengthen those threads – because each thread weaves into the greater fabric of our community.”

To those who want to do more, Jane said: “You will get more out of it than you’ll ever think. It doesn’t matter what you give or how much you give. It matters that you give from your heart, and it matters that you feel that you are impacting someone’s life. Really, at the end of the day, it’s about kindness. It’s about love.”

Maj-Britt Hellsund, longtime friend of L+M Hospital, never let cancer touch her spirit

Whenever Per Hellsund visited the Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center in Waterford, where his mother was undergoing treatments, he noticed something; the staff always had smiles for him, and stories to share about his mom, Maj-Britt Hellsund.

“They’d say to me, ‘We love your mother. She’s so sweet,’” he said. “My mother used to bring in treats and lunch for the staff. She loved knitting, and she knitted clothes for her doctor’s daughters. That’s just the way she always was. She was stoic, in a way, about her illness. It couldn’t deter her spirit.”

That sweetness and strength of character were traits that, over many decades, Maj-Britt shared with her L+M Hospital family. Not simply while undergoing care at Smilow, but during 15 years as an employee in the L+M Hospital business office, and 24 years as a volunteer in the L+M Lobby Shop.

“She touched everyone with her sweetness, her sense of humor, her intelligence and her compassion,” said Karen Neilan, a former president of the Auxiliary of L+M Hospital, of which Maj-Britt was a longtime member. “There was always a keen wit about Maj-Britt that, together with her warmth, made people happy to be in her company.”

Maj-Britt died peacefully at home in New London on Nov. 2, 2020, after her long and courageous battle with cancer. She was 89.

Today, Maj-Britt’s close ties to the hospital are forever recognized through a generous memorial gift to the hospital. “My mother always wanted to help people,” said Per, who, together with his wife, Mary, made the gift in Maj-Britt’s memory. “She loved to visit people in the hospital if they were sick, and I think that’s a big part of why she loved L+M Hospital. She liked that it was an institution that helped people.”

“My mother always wanted to help people,” said Per, who, together with his wife, Mary, made the gift in Maj-Britt’s memory. “She loved to visit people in the hospital if they were sick, and I think that’s a big part of why she loved L+M Hospital. She liked that it was an institution that helped people.”

Mary acknowledged her own love for Maj-Britt, saying: “She had more energy than the two of us put together – and that energy is part of the reason she continued to volunteer at the hospital for so long. She just really liked being with people and helping people. She was always the first to step up when people needed something, and if anyone was ever in the hospital, she always went to visit. She was big on sending cards to people, too. She would even send birthday cards to our dog, Henry. Henry got a card every year from Maj-Britt on his birthday.”

Pam Livingston, a former manager of the L+M Lobby Shop, also recalled Maj-Britt in a tribute comment she left on a memorial website. “I will always remember her with love and admiration,” Livingston said. “Our special bond was formed from the beginning. Her kindness, wit, compassion and dedication were only a few of her strong points.... She was a friend and mentor. I will deeply miss her sweetness, humor and stories of her life.”

It is also noteworthy that Maj-Britt’s determined spirit is alive and well in her son, Per, who, responding in part to his mother’s battle with cancer, has steered the bio-tech he owns in the direction of new cancer treatments. Per’s company, Cybrella, is developing a promising new cancer-fighting medication that is beginning phase-one clinical trials, and Smilow Cancer Hospital will participate in the trial, he said.

There is little doubt, Per acknowledged, that his mother would be very pleased to see her son helping patients struggling against the same disease she had – and doing it at the very hospital she so dearly loved.



Maj-Britt Hellsund (right) worked at L+M as both an employee and volunteer for many years.

Greg Ahern has always been there to help Westerly Hospital – then it helped him

When Greg Ahern tested positive for COVID-19 in February 2021, he realized that his long-held beliefs about the value of a good local hospital were playing out in a very real and personal way.

As a member and chair of the Westerly Hospital Foundation Board, Ahern had long espoused to potential donors, neighbors and friends the importance of having a world-class hospital in the heart of Westerly. He also knew, however, that many people only fully appreciate that fact when someone in their family needs care.

“Suddenly, I needed help,” Ahern recalled. “For my 13 years on the Foundation Board, I had never really needed the hospital for anything serious, but now I did.”

After contacting his doctor, Ahern was prescribed a round of monoclonal antibody treatment – an infusion of laboratory-made proteins that can help block the coronavirus from attacking human cells, thereby making it harder for the virus to reproduce and cause harm.

The cutting-edge therapy in the height of the pandemic was being offered just down the street from Ahern’s home, at Westerly Hospital. Ahern arrived at the hospital days later to receive treatment, and he realized he had transitioned, at least momentarily, from hospital advocate to patient.

“This was the day when I suddenly needed the hospital, and for a potentially lifesaving form of treatment,” Ahern said. “After being on the Foundation Board for 13 years, and also serving as chair, I was absolutely thrilled that the hospital was there when I needed it.”

Ahern received a single infusion of monoclonal antibodies. It took less than an hour from start to finish and he said the next day, amazingly, he felt like he was back to normal.

“The care I received was remarkable,” Ahern said. “I can’t thank the nurses enough for how they did it. It was very thoughtful, quiet, professional, and if the hospital had not been there, I don’t know what I would have done. I don’t know if I would have been able to go elsewhere for the treatment, so I’m very thankful.”

“The care I received was remarkable. I can’t thank the nurses enough for how they did it. It was very thoughtful, quiet, professional, and if the hospital had not been there, I don’t know what I would have done. I don’t know if I would have been able to go elsewhere for the treatment, so I’m very thankful.”

While Ahern thanks Westerly Hospital for his care, the community owes him a debt of thanks for helping ensure the hospital’s viability. Nick Stahl, executive director of the Westerly Hospital Foundation, offered a little history on Ahern and his family.

“The Foundation has benefitted from excellent board leadership over the years, and Greg follows in that tradition,” Stahl said. “And, it runs in the family as well. Greg’s parents, Joyce and Tom, were involved for decades in support of Westerly-area cultural and non-profit organizations including the hospital. For many years, one of the first steps for a local organization to take before embarking on a major fundraising drive was to touch base and enlist the guidance of Tom Ahern. Greg and Robin Springborn, Greg’s wife, have followed suit. Robin, for example, succeeded Joyce as chair of the Literacy Volunteers of Washington County. Together, Robin and Greg have quietly and effectively assisted wherever they can.”

Indeed, about a decade ago, Ahern was a key player who helped facilitate the affiliation between Westerly Hospital and L+M Healthcare – and then later helped ensure a bigger affiliation with Yale New Haven Health – that, together, has greatly enhanced Westerly Hospital’s success.

Ahern recalls taking part in lobbying efforts and countless meetings that all helped lead to new resources – like monoclonal antibodies – that have enabled key expansions and new programs for Westerly Hospital.



Westerly Hospital Foundation Board Chair Greg Ahern.

Some of those services include a new cardiac catheterization lab (which the Foundation helped fund), a new unit dedicated to the care of older patients in need of psychiatric care, and a cancer care unit affiliated with Yale New Haven Health's Smilow Cancer Hospital. The hospital, which has all private rooms, also recently upgraded all of its beds with state-of-the-art models that are enhancing both patient comfort and safety.

"Greg's involvement with Westerly Hospital helped ensure that our affiliation with Yale New Haven Health succeeded and that today we continue to thrive," said Dick Holliday, a longtime member of the Westerly Hospital Foundation Board. "People like Greg Ahern should serve as an example for others when it comes to philanthropy and personal commitment to a cause. As we move into the future, the needs of the hospital will continue to grow and change, and, as a community, we really must continue to support it."

The future appears bright, Ahern said. "Yale New Haven Health provides a level of corporate support that, together with local philanthropy, offers a win-win combination for our community," he said. "Continued local support of our Westerly Hospital will ensure that, whether it's tomorrow or 10 years from now, every family can get the best care when the time comes and they need it most."

Grant Simmons ponders what really makes a community healthy

Grant Simmons doesn't always talk about Westerly Hospital, but when he does, he likes to pose a rhetorical question: What would the town of Westerly feel like without its hospital?

Simmons, a longtime supporter of the hospital and a member of the Westerly Hospital Foundation Board of Directors, answers his own question with a two-fold response.

"The hospital, of course, is vital to the health and wellbeing of our families and friends," Simmons said. "However, it is also vital to the health and success of our town as a whole, meaning economically and even culturally."

Simmons can drill down on each part of that answer, too. "You don't have to be old or sick to know the value of a good community hospital, because it could be your child who has a fall or an injury," he said. "Sooner or later, someone in every family will need medical care, and, at that moment, you are going to want the best care as close to home as possible."

As a former member of the Westerly Economic Development Committee, Simmons sees how the pieces fit together. "The elements of a community that drive an economy are multifaceted, but one of them is of course quality jobs. Imagine taking away the 700-plus jobs we have at Westerly Hospital? How would that impact our restaurants and other small businesses? It would have a devastating impact on our community, and that's another key reason we always want our hospital to be here."

Simmons, a resident of the Watch Hill section of Westerly, is also a trustee of the Watch Hill-based Alfred M. Roberts Jr. Charitable Foundation, which has been a major supporter of Westerly Hospital. Indeed, Simmons' involvement in so many important organizations in town gives him unique insight into the community landscape.

"Our hospital hit some troubled times a decade ago, yet, an affiliation with L+M Healthcare provided a lifeline that led to the affiliation five years ago with Yale New Haven Health," Simmons said. "That affiliation is what gives us strength today, and we can build on that through community support."

"Philanthropy is always necessary, and vital, to community organizations. Nothing is guaranteed in a community without the backing of its residents. It's also important to remember that all donations to the Westerly Hospital Foundation stay local, for our hospital only."

Throughout good times and bad, Simmons noted, the power of philanthropy to impact the hospital has been significant, and that continues today. "Philanthropy is always necessary, and vital, to community organizations," he said. "Nothing is guaranteed in a community without the backing of its residents. It's also important to remember that all donations to the Westerly Hospital Foundation stay local, for our hospital only."

Simmons' family originally hailed from Greenwich, Connecticut, but today Watch Hill is his primary residence. That only adds to his passion for seeing Westerly thrive.

"Younger people with families – people who are looking to move to the area and work at places like Electric Boat – they want to move to communities that offer world-class amenities, and Westerly has that," Simmons said. "We have our gorgeous beaches, a vibrant downtown with restaurants, a beautiful library, the renowned Westerly Chorus, Wilcox Park, and access to a major highway and Amtrak. We have an outstanding community hospital, run by skilled clinicians and support staff who live locally, and this local gem is backed with the resources of a world-class healthcare system, that being Yale New Haven Health."

After summing up the many qualities that make Westerly a special place, Simmons posed one more rhetorical question, and smiled as he answered: "People ask me what I think of Westerly," he said. "That's easy. It's paradise!"



Westerly Hospital Foundation Board member Grant Simmons.

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L+M Trustee member Marie-Claire Peakman, PhD, L+M Development Committee member Lori Lindfors and Bart Sayet, Esq. her husband, enjoyed a meet and greet reception at the Weekapaug Inn.



Dan O'Shea and family enjoyed golf on Fishers Island to support L+M Hospital.



Mary Timpano, Dan Brannegan, chair of the L+M Development Committee, and Elisse Rosen, member of the Development Committee, gathered to learn more about the hospital's future plans.

We thank our many loyal and generous benefactors for their partnership in helping our healthcare team excel in patient care, clinical outcomes and safety, and in building healthy communities.

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James Mitchell, PhD, chair of the L+M Board of Trustees, Betsy Van Pelt and Isaac Kim, MD, chief of Urology, Yale School of Medicine, attended a reception to learn more about the vision for Westerly Hospital.



Neal Simon, Craig Mittleman, MD, (L+M Development Committee), Diane "Dede" DePatie Consoli, Westerly Hospital Foundation Board member, and Sherry Simon came out to support Westerly Hospital and learn more about its future plans.



Kevin Torres, MD, Stephen Greene, chair, Westerly Hospital Board of Trustees, Bob Murray and Grant Simmons, Westerly Hospital Foundation board member, gathered for a presentation about future growth plans at Westerly Hospital.

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