



Linda Wagner keeps Foundation moving forward



They say home is where the heart is. For Linda Wagner, home includes Lincoln Hospital and Long Term Care.

"It's just always been here," says Linda, Director of the Lincoln Hospital Foundation. "I was 11 years-old when it was built and it's been a part of my family since the beginning."

Linda's parents, Roger and Lillian Lyle, moved to Davenport when Linda was just nine days old.

"When I went to school the only sport for girls was tennis, so I need counseling for being athletically deprived," she jokes of her DHS days. "Actually, music was a big part of my life. That's what I did in high school — accompany choirs and soloists on the piano."

Her blood was Gorilla Red until she married her high school sweetheart, John Wagner Junior — a Harrington boy — after both of them graduated from WSU.

"I got a degree in Office Administration and graduated Cum Laude. I was going to become a teacher, but after doing my student teaching at North Central in Spokane I decided against it."

Instead, she and John, who has a degree in Business Administration, decided to come back to Lincoln County and work on the Wagner family farm.

"It was a great time," says Linda of 1975. "Farming was very profitable and lots of people our age were moving home to work the family farms and have kids." Linda worked various office jobs and threw herself into farm and community activities, so she was ready when the call from Dr. Paul McLain came in 1989.

Bob and Juanita Johnson of Reardan had given a gift of 53 shares of Boeing stock to the hospital in honor of Dr. McLain. Dr. McLain wanted to use the stock to start a foundation to raise funds for needed equipment, upgrades and building projects.

"He asked me if I'd be the director of this newly forming foundation," says Linda, noting she was more than a little clueless into what running a non-profit fund-raising entity entailed. "I had no idea what he was talking about, but I took my resume to Tom Martin and it all just jelled."

As a full-time mom, Linda found the job just right as she could work from home with her phone as her major piece of office equipment. She got on the ball finding other hospital supporters who would volunteer their time as trustees and committee members.

"Our first official Lincoln Hospital Foundation meeting was June 22, 1989," she recalls with a smile. "We had liquidated the stock which had amounted to about \$4,000."

With the hard work and vision of Tom Martin and the Foundation trustees, that sum, just 15 years later, is now a \$418,000 endowment fund.

"The Foundation is not about me," says Linda of her role. "It's about those people who care enough to serve on the board and those who care enough to plan and attend fund-raisers. It's about those who donate money in memory or honor of a loved one. It's about our community. They care about Lincoln Hospital and the quality care it provides."

And Linda says the support was obvious from the beginning.

"It took a while to gain the community's trust that we were going to spend this money wisely. I think we did that with our very first project."

The Helipad was not only a visible sign of the Foundation at work, but it was a very important part of patient services. "It was a critical need. It was such a big deal, the hospital and the community and we were able to complete it in 1990 -- just one year after forming the Foundation."

Since then, the Foundation, with the support of generous donors, has purchased much needed equipment and headed up many projects.

"One of my favorite projects, and the least expensive, is the blanket warmer. It is one of the most appreciated pieces of equipment and one that touches every patient and resident."

Linda is also fond of the Family Room, completed just last spring with funds from the annual Sharing Hearts Benefit Luncheon.

"It's already made such a difference. I've heard so many stories of people using that room for privacy while they wait for a family member in surgery or while they stand vigil during the end of a loved one's life. It's so wonderful to know it's there and that it's making a difference in people's lives."

From televisions in patient rooms, to the heating and cooling system, the Foundation has been there. "You may not see the heart monitor or the operating room table. You may not see the security system, but that doesn't make it any less important to patient care." That's what the Foundation is for. Filling in the gaps that wouldn't be filled otherwise.

"I especially thank all our trustees over the years and the generous supporters of Lincoln Hospital who recognize the need for top quality local healthcare. Our success is, literally, those people who care enough to support the Foundation and Lincoln Hospital."