



Foundation celebrates 15 years in June

(May 2004) The old adage that time is money couldn't be more true when it comes to the Lincoln Hospital Foundation.

Not only has the Foundation been raising money for patient care needs and special projects at Lincoln Hospital for 15 years, but the time people have dedicated to this fund-raising organization has paid big dividends with high quality medical care.

"The Foundation has a very humble beginning," says Director Linda Wagner, who never tires of telling the story of a generous gift and a forward thinking doctor.

"In 1987, Bob and Juanita Johnson of Reardan had given a gift of 53 shares of Boeing stock to the hospital in honor of Dr. Paul McLain. Dr. McLain wanted to use the stock to start a foundation to raise funds for needed equipment, upgrades and building projects. In 1989, I was asked if I'd be the director of this newly forming foundation," says Wagner, noting she was more than a little clueless into what running a non-profit fund-raising entity entailed despite an office administration degree from WSU. "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, Wagner 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 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 Wagner 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 Wagner 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 for 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."

Wagner 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." The newest project funded by the Sharing Hearts Luncheon, a Comfort Room for those coming to the end of their lives, is under construction currently.

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."