

# HEADWATERS

2025 ANNUAL REPORT • COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPACT



## Stop the Bleed

Teaching lifesaving skills  
to our community

## Care bags for cancer patients

Filled with comfort and love

## Rural routes

Partnering for health and safety

## Meeting the moment

Personalized support through  
classes and screenings

## The year in review

Donor support, community benefit



# Wellness springs from community support

At Salem Health, we believe that good health begins at the headwaters — the source of wellbeing for individuals, families, and entire communities. Just as strong headwaters support the vitality of an ecosystem, a resilient health system forms the foundation for lifelong wellness.

Through thoughtful alignment of the funding and resources invested by both Salem Health and the Salem Health Foundations, we work to safeguard this vital wellspring, so it remains strong and sustainable for generations to come. This partnership ensures that care, support and opportunity continue to flow where they are needed most.

I am pleased to share our continued work across three foundational areas: supporting our patients, engaging with our community and investing in our workforce. Together, these priorities guide our mission and strengthen the overall health of the communities we serve.

As we reflect on the past year, our commitment to strengthening these headwaters remains unwavering — building a stronger, healthier tomorrow for all who call our region home.



*Cheryl Wolfe*

Cheryl Nester Wolfe, MSN, RN  
President and CEO  
Salem Health Hospitals  
and Clinics

“ Supporting our patients, engaging with our community and investing in our workforce. ”



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## CHEC brings health and safety education to communities across the region

Twenty years ago, Salem Health Foundation and

community members across Marion and Polk counties came together with a shared vision: a community-based hub dedicated to health education and empowerment. With generous donor support, the Community Health Education Center (CHEC) opened its doors in 2009 with a clear and simple purpose — to provide patients, families, community members and hospital staff with reliable, evidence-based health information in a welcoming and accessible space.

In 2023, the CHEC proudly celebrated its 15th anniversary. What began as a hopeful vision has grown into the region's trusted leader in community health education, offering resources and support both onsite at Salem Hospital and throughout the broader community.

### Programs to meet the moment

Through classes, wellness programs, a visitor center, a full-service health library and even a demonstration kitchen, the CHEC empowers friends and neighbors to understand their health conditions, make informed decisions and live healthier lives. Patients and community members can also meet one-on-one with CHEC health educators for personalized support and resources tailored to their needs.

In 2025, nearly 200 patients were referred to CHEC classes and programs by their health care providers — an important link between clinical care, ongoing

education and lifelong wellness. That same year, 4,040 people participated in CHEC-led classes, reflecting the community's growing engagement and commitment to health.

### Teamwork for screenings and prevention

CHEC also strengthened its partnerships, including its collaboration with Medical Teams International (MTI), Santiam Hospital and Clinics and other nonprofits, providing free dental and health screenings across Marion and Polk counties. Through 17 biometric screening events, more than 200 community members received vital preventive services in Salem/Keizer, the Santiam Canyon, north and east Marion County, and rural Polk County.

Partnerships continue to expand through joint efforts with Salem Health's Trauma Injury Prevention team. Together, they distributed more than 300 life jackets and 500 sports helmets at community events, reinforcing a shared commitment to injury prevention and community safety.

Looking ahead, the Community Health Education Center remains focused on building healthier, stronger communities. With hope and dedication, the CHEC continues its mission to provide equitable, accessible health education throughout the entire Marion-Polk region, ensuring that every person has the resources they need to live well — today and into the future.

## A year of community engagement

**5,678** total patrons of library resources

**313** classes



**4,040** class participants

**213** health screening participants



**135** outreach events and presentations

in Salem/Keizer, the Santiam Canyon, north Marion County, and rural Polk County

**7,389** outreach interactions



## Teaching with heart

How one nurse is changing the way students learn care

“Tell me what you know about this.”

That’s how Meghan Newstone, RN, teaches. Not with a lecture. With a question.

At Willamette Career Academy’s Health Services program in Salem, high school juniors and seniors from around the region practice suturing on silicone pads, match heart arrhythmias to “Lonely Hearts” bios and role-play hard conversations with patients. But what “Nurse Meghan,” as they call her, is really teaching is something deeper: compassion.



Meghan Newstone, RN, works with a WCA student.

In one lesson, she describes a patient with PTSD who drinks to sleep. Instead of judgment, she models curiosity.

“Tell me more about how drinking works for you,” she said.

She teaches her students to listen before they correct. To partner, instead of shame.

“We talk about shame-free learning, shame-free health care,” she said. Her students are eager for it.

“They were like, ‘We think motivational interviewing is really important, but we’re not very good at it. Can we have more opportunities to practice?’” Newstone said.

Her position has changed the program’s trajectory. This year, for the first time, Health Services outpaced Cosmetology in student interest. There are currently 140 on the waitlist – four students for every chair.

Newstone works in Salem Hospital’s intensive care unit and brings her 12 years of experience straight to her students. Many of them will stay in Oregon, job shadow at Salem Health and begin to see themselves here.

“I’m really invested in their future,” she said.

## Daily decisions, lifelong impact

“Can making one better choice today lead to a healthier tomorrow?” That’s the question posed by Mike Studer, author of “The Brain That Chooses Itself.”

At four free lectures—hosted by Salem Health and Salem Health Foundations in Salem, Dallas, Woodburn, and Stayton – Studer welcomed hundreds of participants and offered accessible, science-based education on healthy living and long-term wellbeing.

At the June 2025 events, Studer emphasized how intentional daily choices around physical activity, sleep, nutrition, social connection and mental engagement can meaningfully improve a person’s health and quality of life.

Each session equipped attendees with practical strategies they could begin using immediately, regardless of age, mobility or fitness level. By framing health as a series of empowering choices rather than obligations, the lectures encouraged participants to take ownership of their wellbeing in realistic and sustainable ways.



Mike Studer addresses the Salem audience.

This community health lecture series delivered significant benefit throughout the region by reducing barriers to trusted health information and fostering shared learning. Participants left with increased knowledge, motivation and confidence to make informed lifestyle decisions.

Thank you to Mike Studer for sharing his expertise, to our community for embracing this opportunity to learn, and to Salem Health’s supporters for making these events possible.

Number of volunteers **302**

Total volunteer hours **29,383**

Pet volunteer hours **550**

Youth volunteer hours **7,525**

Connections Van volunteer hours **1,024**

# Salem Health invests in rural community health and safety

Salem Health is deeply embedded in the community, and hospital leaders work hand-in-hand with representatives from government agencies and other nonprofit organizations to assess and address community needs.



Free health screening with Medical Teams International in Woodburn, Oregon.

Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics has made a commitment to expanding program supports in rural Marion and Polk counties. Established partners have helped advance this goal.

**Salem Angels**, an organization that supports youth in foster care and their families, has recently expanded to rural Polk County through Salem Health's major grant process. Children in foster care tend to have higher levels of academic instability, homelessness, incarceration and mental health challenges. Salem Health's investment in Salem Angels helps to provide stable homes for these kids to learn and grow safely.

Expanding health screenings and health care for people in Polk County is a strong step forward to help bridge a significant shortage of medical providers. At the state level, the Oregon provider-to-population ratio is one provider for every 358 people. In Polk County, the ratio is one provider for every 2,245 people.

Salem Health supports **Salem Free Clinics' Polk Community Free Clinic** in Monmouth both through a grant investment and additional partnerships with providers and Community Health Educators. Salem Free Clinics provides free health care, behavioral health care

and dental care for uninsured and underinsured community members.

Salem Health also brought **Medical Teams International** to the rural areas of Marion and Polk counties, providing dental services and health screenings throughout the region.

As the result of a community needs assessment, the **Falls City Resource Center** was opened in 2024. The center provides space for multiple services requested by the local community, including access to in-person medical appointments and telemedicine. Salem Health purchased supplies for the two clinic rooms within the center. Food and hygiene supplies are scarce in parts of our rural communities.

Salem Health supports these rural communities — north Marion County, the Santiam Canyon and Polk County, through multiple grant funds to increase the availability of much-needed medical resources.

## Community investments — year in review

Total community benefit: **\$213,071,023**

Financial assistance: **\$137,140,423**

Community health improvement, subsidized health services and community benefit operations: **\$65,590,814**

Health professional education: **\$9,467,997**

Cash and in-kind donations: **\$762,648**

Research: **\$109,141**

# Clinical education: Making the best care even better

At Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics, staying ahead of ever-evolving changes in health care is essential to improving patient care. This progress is made possible by our donors. Through your generosity, our clinical education team provides our nursing staff with high-quality continuing education rooted in evidence-based practice, research and industry standards. Every year, these vital education programs are funded by donations to the Salem Health Foundation's clinical education fund.

"Education is a commitment to our nurses, our patients and our community," said Amy Brase, clinical education manager.

"It allows staff to work at peak performance. Our team believes in the right education, at the right time, for the right people, with the right outcomes. We couldn't do what we do without the support of foundation donors, and we are so grateful."

Your contributions ensure that nurses have the tools and

knowledge to deliver exceptional care. With ongoing education, staff provide their best and patients benefit. "Patients deserve the very best we can give them," Brase said. "Our community depends on us to provide uncompromising care and respond to ever-growing needs."

This impact is reflected in the achievements of team members like Amy Stokes, RN, professional development specialist, who was named the 2025 March of Dimes Educator of the Year. Stokes is grateful to donors who support clinical education.

"This generosity is essential to the growth and development of staff – and, therefore, essential to the health of our community," Stokes

said. "Funding education ensures that our staff receive the training they need so our community receives the best health care possible."

Your support transforms education into excellence, and excellence into better care for every patient. Thank you for making this possible.

**“Patients  
deserve the very  
best we can  
give them.”**  
— Amy Brase, Clinical Education Manager

Sarah Daniels, RN; Mandi Dix, RN; Elizabeth Windell, MD; and Amie Wittenberg, RN, discussed regional trauma care at the 2025 State of Health Care Forum.



# Donor impact:

## Clean clothes empower healing

Imagine this: You're rushed to the emergency room after an accident. Your clothes are torn and soiled. You have nothing clean to wear when it's time to go home and no one to bring you something. What happens next?

That's where the Salem Hospital and West Valley Hospital Clothing Closets step in. Launched in 2012 by Salem Hospital nursing staff, this program meets a vital need — clean clothing for patients. With help from Volunteer Services, the closets have grown to 11 locations across both hospitals, serving more than 1,500 patients last year.

Why do nurses and volunteers care about clothing so deeply? Because it's about dignity. "The clothing closets are just the greatest value," said Jessica Morales, RN. "Recently, a patient came in with an infected wound and badly soiled clothes. Clean clothing made a huge difference. Patients are always so grateful."

Every item is new, free, available in multiple sizes, and ready 24/7 in high-need areas. Volunteers keep the closets stocked, seeing it as their way to care for patients. "Being involved has opened my eyes to the needs of our patients," said volunteer Debbie Jamison.



Debbie Jamison restocks the Clothing Closet.



**“Providing clean clothing allows patients to leave with dignity.”**  
 — Earlene Naylor, former volunteer services manager

This program wouldn't exist without Salem Health Foundation donors. Clothing Closets are the Foundation's largest annually funded project, and their impact is profound.

"It's all about the patients," said Earlene Naylor, former volunteer services manager. "Providing clean clothing allows patients to leave with dignity. We couldn't do this without donor support. Helping is a privilege."

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# Care bags

## An enduring legacy of love

Few words stop a person in their tracks quite like, “You have cancer.” In an instant, life changes. Even when surrounded by loving family and friends, fear, isolation and uncertainty can feel overwhelming.

For Lynetta and Kevin Kirsch of Salem, those words became a call to action. When Lynetta was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007, the couple began navigating the long and often exhausting journey of treatment together. Along the way, they noticed something deeply important was missing — extra comfort and meaningful support for patients enduring chemotherapy. That realization planted a powerful seed of compassion.

Working from home, Lynetta and Kevin created the Chemo Bags Filled with Love project and personally funded the first bags. Their daughter, Brandi, designed the logo, making the project a true family effort. Each bag was thoughtfully filled with items to comfort and encourage patients during treatment — books, snacks, hand sanitizer, journals and puzzles. “The bags are like a warm hug that says, ‘I’m here with you. I understand. You are not alone,’” Lynetta said.

With the help of Kathy Wolfe, RN, Salem Health Cancer Center nurse navigator, the bags were distributed to breast cancer patients receiving chemotherapy. As word spread, the community responded to care for neighbors facing cancer. Bake sales, raffles and local funders, such as the

Linda L. Vladyka Breast Wellness Foundation, helped the program grow to serve all patients undergoing infusion therapy.



Lynetta Kirsch and Kathy Wolfe

In 2010, the Salem Health Foundation, supported by generous community donors, began funding Chemo Bags Filled with Love, transforming a grassroots effort into a sustainable program that continues to meet the emotional and practical needs of cancer patients.

Now, in 2026, the impact is profound. Donor generosity has provided thousands of patients with supportive care bags, each one a reminder that their community stands beside them. Today, Foundation support ensures every cancer patient receives a bag, now available in versions tailored for male and female patients, as well as specialized resources for those experiencing hair loss.

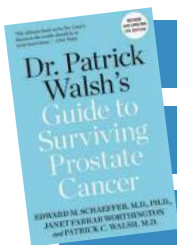
Wolfe and Andi Petrone, Director of the Salem Health Cancer Center, agree that donor-supported programs make a meaningful difference.

“The Foundation — and the generosity of our community — fill a tremendous need in our Cancer Center. This support truly changes lives,” Petrone said.

### Your generosity. Their strength. The power of giving in the fight against cancer

Every day, the generosity of our donors brings hope and strength to patients courageously facing cancer. Your support provides vital resources — from compassionate care programs to direct patient support — that ease the burden of diagnosis and help patients and their families navigate their journey with dignity and resilience. Together, we’re transforming compassion into healing.

#### 2025 cancer patient programs and services funded by our donors



Prostate cancer books

Screening event for women

Softee recovery camisoles

Patient care bags

Direct patient assistance

Thermometers



Total investment **\$72,000** / Number of patients helped **2,022**

# Stop the Bleed

Donor support saves lives



Alyssa Miller teaches Stop the Bleed.

When tragedy struck at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012, experts from law enforcement, medicine and government asked a critical question: How can we save lives before help arrives? The answer became a national movement — Stop the Bleed.

The concept is simple but powerful: uncontrolled bleeding is a leading cause of preventable death. If bystanders know how to act, lives can be saved. Just as CPR training has done for decades, immediate intervention matters.

Locally, this lifesaving effort was championed by Joey Van Winkel, a former flight RN who now works at West Valley Hospital. Stop the Bleed, part of Salem Health's trauma and injury prevention program through the Community Health Education Center, is taught by staff to equip community

“ Without funding, these classes wouldn't exist. And without trained community members, lives would be lost. ”

— Alyssa Miller, Emergency Room RN and class teacher

members with the skills and confidence to step in when seconds count. Thanks to funds from the Salem Health West Valley Foundation, each participant leaves with a kit of essential supplies, ready to make a difference.

Classes are offered twice a year, and hundreds of people have already been trained to save lives when seconds count. Alyssa Miller, RN, of West Valley Hospital's Emergency Department, leads these classes with unmatched energy and passion.

“Foundation support is essential,” Miller said. “This program connects us to our community in a powerful way.”

We're incredibly grateful to our donors — your generosity fuels the impact behind the Salem Health West Valley Foundation's lifesaving work. Every gift to this program means more people gain the skills to stop the bleed and save life. Because when every second counts, a prepared community can make all the difference.

# Connecting patients to care

With new tires courtesy of Les Schwab

Our West Valley Hospital Connections program was chosen for Les Schwab's Tires for Purpose program and received a new set of tires for the van!



Jim O'Brien, Connections volunteer driver.

Connections, run by Volunteer Services and funded through our Salem Health West Valley Foundation, provides free transportation to and from medical appointments in Polk County.

The Les Schwab Tires for Purpose program was developed to partner with organizations that help people in our local communities.

Thank you, Les Schwab of Dallas! We could not be more grateful for this wonderful and meaningful gift!



# Donor impact:

Where excellent care meets compassionate support

## PATIENTS

**More than \$475,000 in program support**

**Direct assistance:** Co-payments, transportation assistance

(gas cards, bus passes), medication assistance, medical equipment and more

**Vulnerable patients:** Food Farmacy, Clothing Closet, ADA kits for community members with disabilities

**Children and families:** Car seats, Diaper Depot, NICU parent resources, stuffed animals for emergency room, cribs for safe sleep

**Dementia or comfort care patients:** Cognitive stimulation tools and activity cart supplies

**Wellness and prevention:** Smoking cessation tools, diabetes care food bags, and books for prostate cancer patients



## WORKFORCE

**\$175,000 invested in our care providers**

**Continuing clinical education, certification and resiliency programs:**

Oregon Stroke Network Conference, Oregon Pediatric Emergency Education Class, Association of Diabetes Care and Education Conference, American Art Therapy Association Conference

Scholarships to students pursuing health care fields



**\$24,000 to support healthy communities**

## COMMUNITY

**Collaborative investments with Salem Health Community Benefit:**

Polk County Family and Community Outreach, Salem Free Clinics, Salem for Refugees, Salem Angels, Helping Hands Resources and Santiam Service Integration Team

**Resources to partners removing barriers to access health care:**

Kickin' Cancer, Center for 50+ and Darian's Gift



## Donors supported \$1,234,927 in vital programs

Greatest Need	\$740,945	Fentanayl Free Oregon	\$25,015
Patient transportation resources	\$100,000	Connections Van	\$24,233
Cancer services / programs	\$99,218	Pediatrics, OB and NICU	\$14,236
West Valley access programs	\$94,251	Cardiac services / heart	\$19,860
Health care scholarships	\$71,788	Parkview Family Lodge	\$6,988
Patients in crisis	\$32,003	Diabetes care	\$6,391

**Gifts from:** Businesses 15% Foundations 2% Community Groups/Other 15% Legacy Giving 36% Individuals 32%

**For a full list of 2025 donors, please go to [www.salemhealthfoundation.org/thank-you-to-our-donors-2025](http://www.salemhealthfoundation.org/thank-you-to-our-donors-2025)**

## What is legacy giving?

Legacy giving is a powerful way to make a lasting impact, supporting Salem Health Foundation's mission for generations to come. A legacy gift is any contribution arranged today that will be realized in the future, often through an estate plan. These gifts help ensure compassionate, high-quality care and vital programs remain available for our community.



Charitable trusts	Real estate	Bequest
Retirement plan	Gift annuity	Life insurance

The most common way to give is by including Salem Health Foundation in your will or living trust through a simple bequest. Donors can also name the Foundation as a beneficiary of a retirement account [IRA or 401(k)], life insurance policy or donor-advised fund — often with just a quick form update.

Another meaningful option is giving appreciated assets, such as stocks or mutual funds. These gifts may provide tax advantages while maximizing your charitable impact. Whether your gift is large or small, legacy giving is a heartfelt way to care for the community you love — today and always.

If you are interested in legacy giving, please call Jill Munger at 503-814-1957 for more information. Be sure to consult your attorney, accountant or financial planner to determine the best option for you!

## 1946 cape donated for Salem Nurse Honor Guard

When MaryLou Wirfs graduated from the Emanuel Hospital School of Nursing in 1946, she received a deep blue wool nursing cape — a symbol of her profession and dedication. Her son Pete Wirfs says she treasured it for decades.

“I don't think she ever wore it,” he said. “She tucked it away with her diploma to be cherished forever.”

MaryLou went on to become one of Oregon's first 10 registered nurse practitioners in 1973, graduating from one of the state's two nurse practitioner programs at the time. After MaryLou passed away at age 93 in 2017, her family chose to give the cape new life. They donated it to the Salem Health Foundation, where it is now worn by members of the Salem Nurse Honor Guard.

Last month, tribute leads Kristie Lawrence, RN, and Dana Hart, RN, wore the cape during two Florence Nightingale tributes performed at memorial services.



MaryLou Wirfs, the original owner of the 1946 cape

“Donating her cape is our way to honor our mother's lifelong dedication to nursing,” Wirfs said. “Now it honors others who shared the profession she loved.”

The Salem Health Foundation supports the Salem Nurse Honor Guard by providing ceremonial items, including nursing capes, caps, white roses, altar tapestries, and Nightingale lamps.

“This historic cape is more than a unique gift,” said Foundation Development Director Jill Munger. “It helps bring the legacy of nursing to life and inspires those who wear it while honoring nurses who have passed.”

“Wearing this cape is a privilege we cherish,” said Hart (shown right), the honor guard's founding member.





# health care for **EVERY** body

Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics is proud to be a community-based nonprofit health system. We are dedicated to improving the health and well-being of everyone we serve.

## **CANCER CENTER**

Salem Health Cancer Center is a collaborative alliance that brings together cancer care providers, primary care and specialty practices. Our support services include registered dietitians and oncology counselors to customize treatments and provide the best possible experience and outcome for our patients and their families.

## **EMERGENCY ROOMS AND URGENT CARE**

**Salem Hospital's** emergency room is a State of Oregon Level II Trauma Center, with 24-hour immediate coverage by general surgeons in addition to specialties like orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, anesthesiology, emergency medicine, radiology and critical care. **West Valley Hospital** provides around-the-clock emergency care, typically with short wait times. It's the only 24-hour emergency service in Polk County and has been serving Dallas for more than 100 years. For less acute needs, Salem Health offers same-day urgent care clinics in Salem and Woodburn.

## **FAMILY BIRTH CENTER**

Whether this is your first baby or another happy addition to your family, Salem Health Family Birth Center and the Salem Hospital NICU are here to support every step of your growing family's journey. Our level III NICU has dedicated nurse practitioners and respiratory therapists on-site 24 hours a day to provide consistent and compassionate care.

## **HEART AND VASCULAR**

Salem Health's heart and vascular services offer state-of-the-art care, including general cardiology, complex diagnoses, surgical and nonsurgical treatments, and rehabilitation. We provide comprehensive treatment for irregular heart rhythms, blockages in the heart, diseased/damaged heart valves, peripheral vascular disease and more.

## **ORTHOPEDICS**

Our experienced and highly trained physicians treat a wide variety of conditions, ranging from minor sprains to complex joint reconstruction. The Joint Replacement Center of Excellence is continually recognized for providing excellent outcomes and fast recovery times.

## **PLASTIC SURGERY**

Salem Health Plastic Surgery offers a wide breadth of plastic surgical procedures, reconstructive surgery, injectables, noninvasive anti-aging treatments, laser and medical spa treatments. Through personalized education and individualized care plans, our goal is to assist you with the treatment process and help you attain your aesthetic goals.

## **PRIMARY CARE**

With medical clinics in Salem, Dallas, Monmouth, Independence and Woodburn, Salem Health's primary care providers believe that health care isn't only about treating symptoms — it's about helping people of all ages feel their best.

## **REHABILITATION**

The rehabilitation team provides comprehensive treatment for patients of all ages throughout the mid-Willamette Valley. Whether you've experienced an injury, are recovering after surgery or suffer from a movement or function disorder, we are here to help with multiple convenient locations in Dallas, Monmouth, Salem and Woodburn.

## **UROLOGY**

Our expert team provides comprehensive urologic care with compassion and expertise. We offer advanced diagnosis and treatment for a wide range of conditions of the urinary and genital systems.



503-561-5200  
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