



Clinic

Spring 2026

Connection

LAFC Celebrates its 25th Anniversary!

In 2001 the Clinic opened its doors to patients in need of access to health care. In the past quarter century, we have been able to serve more than 21,000 patients and provide over 110,000 patient visits. Our 25th anniversary is a significant milestone made possible because of the generous support from the community, the dedication and hard work of our staff, and our amazing volunteers – who have given more than 168,000 hours in total over the past 25 years!

LAFC has reached this important milestone, in no small part, because of the overwhelming community response to our mission of delivering compassionate care to our neighbors in need. The Clinic is forever grateful to all of you who continue to provide us with the resources to make this considerable accomplishment possible!

We invite you to join us as we celebrate our silver anniversary throughout 2026 with a variety of activities and events. Please watch for anniversary information in this newsletter, on social media and via emails that will include stories, videos and details about special anniversary events and celebrations.



LAFC's humble beginnings on Lapham Street in an early 2000s photo



LAFC volunteers use every available inch of the first clinic location's 2,000 square feet on Lapham Street to accommodate patient visits.

Volunteer Spotlight

When Jan Verona started volunteering at LAFC, she never gave a thought to how long it might last. She's still at it – 23 years later! Some Clinic staff members affectionately call her the “Leader of the Pack.” Jan is the longest-serving volunteer in Clinic history with more than 6,000 hours – roughly three years of full-time work.

Growing up in Milwaukee, Jan had an aunt and a cousin who were nurses. She listened to their stories and respected their careers. She got a late start on her own nursing journey. “I was a stay-at-home mom raising six kids.” But Jan began working nights as a nursing home aide while she studied to become



Volunteer extraordinaire, Jan Verona

an LPN. She went on to earn her Registered Nurse degree and spent 11 years working at St. Joseph's Hospital before retiring in 2002. She had moved to Pewaukee by then and when she heard about the newly opened free clinic in Oconomowoc, Jan explains, “I checked

it out and decided it was for me! I can help people, learn, and still enjoy being in the nursing field.”

Jan says volunteering at LAFC is far different from hospital nursing. “The stress and craziness are gone. It's calm. I used to be in charge of seven or eight patients at a time. Now it's more about teamwork and helping each other.” Perhaps the biggest difference is that she's not doing it for a paycheck now. She shares her time and experience because, Jan explains, “It's so rewarding! Learning from patients, hearing about their hardships, knowing that you're helping to make their lives a little easier.”

Jan is usually at the Clinic twice a week, but the flexibility of volunteering is another plus. She often sees the same patients. “We get used to each other. Sometimes a patient will recognize me outside the Clinic and say hi. That feels good. I always try to leave them with a compliment and a smile.” One of Jan's favorite things is “seeing the expression on a patient's face when they realize we are actually helping them – when they thought no help was available.” She says anyone considering being a volunteer at LAFC – even if they have no medical experience – should do what she did 23 years ago. “Check it out. Take a tour. See if it's for you.”

Honor a Loved One at LAFC

There are people in everyone's lives who leave a lasting mark, shaping who we are. Sometimes we're lucky enough to be related to them – or they've simply made a lasting impression on our life. Imagine the impact of honoring that person by recognizing them through a special sponsorship opportunity at LAFC.

You can honor someone who has touched your life. Their name could continue to bring comfort, hope, and inspiration to countless people for years to come. Every patient who benefits from that space will feel the care and kindness they inspired.

Sponsorships available until June 30th:

- ❖ \$25,000 – Medical Exam Room Sponsorship (15 years)
- ❖ \$10,000 – Medical Exam Room Sponsorship (5 years)
- ❖ \$2,500 – Listed on 25th Anniversary Friend of the Clinic Plaque
- ❖ \$1,000 – Listed on 25th Anniversary Friend of the Clinic Plaque

Celebrate 25 years of LAFC compassionate care by honoring someone special. Contact megan@lakeareafreeclinic.org to reserve your sponsorship today and help make a lasting impact at LAFC.

Growing the Harvest for Health

Over the years, many college students reached out to Anna Pludeman, Clinic Manager and Volunteer Coordinator, in search of volunteer opportunities during their summer breaks. However, because most Clinic volunteer roles required long-term commitments, there was rarely a good fit for short-term, seasonal help.

At the same time, Anna was hearing from patients who wanted better access to fresh, healthy produce – something that is also inherently seasonal. That's when the idea clicked. Anna developed a role for LAFC VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) Kristine Kristiansen, to connect these two needs. Along with nine dedicated college students, Anna and Kristine created and implemented a program that partnered with local farms and individual gardeners to collect more than 400 pounds of fresh local produce to be distributed to more than 100 patients at no cost.

Said Anna, "I was blown away by the passion and drive of these students, and it was heartwarming to see how people appreciated it!" Christina Binn, a volunteer nurse at the Clinic added, "Most patients were enthralled with their fresh produce. A few said they had access to gardens for fresh vegetables and declined their bags, as they wanted others to have fresh produce too."

This year, they are expanding the program by extending its timeline and offering donated garden plots to patients who want to grow their own produce.

How can you help? If you are a gardener with surplus produce, donations will be accepted at the Clinic from June 2 to August 13. For questions, contact kristine@lakeareafreeclinic.org.



Harvest for Health volunteers Kaitlyn Amtmann (front center) and Maya Kannel help a LAFC patient choose fresh local produce at the Free Farm Stand.



Harvest for Health volunteers (from l to r) Maya Kannel, Ellie Kadow, Amanda Gracia and Mary Scott clean, sort and package donated fresh local produce.



Harvest for Health volunteers Maya Kannel (l) and Caroline Frost harvest fresh local produce from a partner organization, Zachariah's Acres.



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**Our Mission is
to improve the
overall health of
those in need**

For more information about Clinic events, comments or questions about this newsletter, please contact Megan Welsh at 262-569-4990 or megan@lakeareafreeclinic.org.

Clinic Connection editors: Mary & Michael Rode
Contributor: Mike Miller



Mark Your Calendars

- ✓ **Saturday, May 31st: 1:05 PM - First Pitch**
Enjoy some baseball at the Lake Country DockHounds vs. Milwaukee Milkmen game and make a difference! With every ticket priced at just \$17.00 (not including taxes), a generous \$10.00 goes directly to the Lake Area Free Clinic! Please use this link to purchase tickets: <https://www.gofevo.com/event/Lakearea2>
- ✓ **Saturday, July 18th: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**
L AFC Community Open House
Connect with us July 18th for the Clinic open house and tours. Learn about the Clinic and the patients we serve and enjoy free food provided by the Oconomowoc Lions Club.
- ✓ **Saturday, September 12th: 5:00 PM**
L AFC Gala
Join us for the Clinic's annual Gala at The Valerie in Oconomowoc

In Lieu of Flowers

Flowers fade, but a legacy lives on. Have you ever thought about what you want yours to be? People choose to remember an organization in their planned giving for many different reasons – but at the heart of each decision is a desire to make a lasting difference.



Lab volunteer and L AFC board member, Jackie Stetina

Jackie Stetina, an L AFC board member and long-time volunteer at the Clinic, shared what it means to her to include the Clinic in her estate plans. “Leaving a legacy gift is a way to ensure one of my core values, access to health care for all, continues to be realized in the community. By including the Lake Area Free Clinic in my estate plans, I can help sustain this vital service beyond my lifetime.”

What story do you want your life to tell? To make L AFC part of it, please visit www.lakeareafreeclinic.org/legacy or contact megan@lakeareafreeclinic.org.