



Passavant Hospital Foundation leads efforts to thank UPMC Passavant health care heroes by displaying signs around the hospital campuses at McCandless and Cranberry.

## Passavant Hospital Foundation shines a spotlight on our health care heroes

The doctors, nurses and hospital staff at UPMC Passavant are shining a bright light daily during these uncertain times. Their heroic efforts are incredibly admirable and so sincerely appreciated.

"This pandemic is not yet over," said Zach Perpetua, MSN, RN, CMSRN, CNL, Clinical Education Specialist at UPMC Passavant. "We are still working hard in the hospital every day. If you know anyone working in the hospital right now caring for COVID-19 patients, please thank them. They've made sacrifices far beyond anything they ever considered they would."

Visible and admirable are the many acts of heroism and kindness that have been taking place at UPMC Passavant throughout the pandemic.

### One medical team threw their patient a bridal shower that the pandemic had denied her

While 2020 has been such a topsy-turvy year for all of us, it has been even more so for Kaitland Flak Sneed. Kaitland and her boyfriend of five years, Tyler, got engaged last December and had scheduled their wedding to take place on July 25. However, their plans imploded when the pandemic hit in mid-March. Then, on April 12, Kaitland, 28, suffered two grand mal seizures and was diagnosed with brain cancer.

Through it all, Kaitland remained positive. Doctors were able to remove 95% of the tumor and Kaitland underwent seven consecutive weeks of daily

radiation and oral chemotherapy, with the understanding she'd have to continue maintenance chemotherapy one week a month for at least one year.

"We try to get to know our patients on a personal level so we can be sure that there is nothing getting in their way of getting through their treatments and healing," said radiation therapist Ashley Pluchinsky, BSRT(R)(T). "When Kaitland told us about her bridal shower being cancelled and her wedding being postponed, we knew we had to do something to make her feel special."

Ashley and her team collected donations from co-workers and partnered with Passavant Hospital Foundation to hold a surprise bridal shower for

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Above: Radiation Therapists Sue LaGoy, RTRT and Ashley Pluchinsky, BSRT(R)(T); Bride-to-Be Kaitland Flak Sneed; Jen Dindak, RTRT, and Barb Morrison, RTT. Inset: All the food was prepared by UPMC Passavant's Dietary Department and paid for by Passavant Hospital Foundation.



Kaitland at the hospital, making sure every detail strictly complied with all necessary COVID precautions.

They arranged socially distanced seating in the garden located outside the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center at UPMC Passavant and decorated the grounds with Kaitland's favorite colors — green and purple. They gathered music, floral arrangements, party tents and coordinated with the UPMC Passavant Dietary Department to secure individual servings of food and cake. Then they invited Kaitland's family from Buffalo, NY, three of her closest friends, her radiation team, medical oncology team and support staff from the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center at UPMC Passavant.

"After my radiation treatment on June 18, Ashley told me that the wig

lady wanted to take pictures of me. She led me down the hall to the courtyard," Kaitland recalled. "Through the doors, I could see a bunch of people and tables of food. There were about 35 people there. I started crying. I was in tears the whole time."

Each guest brought gifts or gift cards.

"It honestly made my year a whole lot better. No exaggeration," Kaitland said. "I've never experienced such compassion before. I'll remember it forever."

Kaitland's wedding eventually took place on August 21 in North Park with a limited number of guests. She plans to renew her vows and hold her reception this same time next year.

### Orthopaedic Technologist paints a happy picture for co-workers

Prior to becoming a registered orthopaedic technologist and helping to rehabilitate patients following their knee and hip replacements, UPMC Passavant's Sam Chilcote had considered becoming an art teacher. His love for art came to the forefront again in March, when he realized how serious the pandemic was becoming. Stay-at-home orders provided the time and solitude to begin painting again. His goal was to use his artistic talents to brighten the spirits of co-workers who now are enduring long, grueling hours at the hospital.

"I wanted to do something to uplift my colleagues. I just wanted to make people smile through all this madness," he said.

So he created five original acrylic paintings.

One depicts a calming underwater group of colorful fish; another features dancing daisies; the third is a caring heart; the other two are a male and female nurse superhero, both wearing scrubs and a cape. The paintings are displayed in prominent locations in the hospital's main lobby and employee entrance.

"All of his works are a special source of comfort for the doctors, nurses and all of our health care heroes. They're a beautiful tribute from one colleague



Orthopaedic Technologist Sam Chilcote and one of his acrylic paintings on display at UPMC Passavant.

to another that will symbolize the strength and courage amid such a challenging time," said Peggy Hayden, DNP, RN, NEA-BC.

Once the pandemic is over, Sam hopes to auction off the paintings and donate the proceeds to UPMC Passavant.

### Bridge To Hope support group is virtually unstoppable

Medical personnel aren't the only ones experiencing increased workloads due to COVID-19. Janine Sidoruk's work hours, for instance, have increased 400 percent.

Janine is the program consultant for Bridge to Hope, an outreach program of Passavant Hospital Foundation that meets bi-weekly to provide support for families affected by a loved one's substance abuse.

"When the pandemic hit, support groups like Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous had to abruptly change because they couldn't meet in person. This left their members stranded out in left field. As a result, many people relapsed," Janine said. Thus, she saw families who had previously graduated from Bridge to Hope return because their loved ones relapsed. The group also welcomed several new families.

Converting from in-person meetings to virtual sessions was a challenge. Janine, who admits she's not technology savvy, scrambled to learn everything about various video-telephony and online chat services, including Zoom and Microsoft Teams software, before creating a platform and managing it for Bridge to Hope meetings. She had to ramp up publicity and so much more.

Group members were patient and even assisted Janine with testing the new platform. "We have such a strong base of people who keep coming to meetings to support one another. Their commitment to continue meeting despite the pandemic was so strong," Janine said.

Pam Redman has been involved in the group for three years. "I miss the human contact, seeing people face-to-face, in person," she said. Still, she's grateful to be able to continue meeting, even if it's only online. "Bridge to Hope is just that — hope for family members with loved ones in addiction," she said.

"This pandemic is such an isolating occurrence for everyone, but especially for people suffering substance abuse disorders," Janine explained. "They already feel isolated so it's even more difficult and anxiety-ridden for them right now. That's why groups like Bridge to Hope are more important than ever."

### Foundation shines a light

Throughout the pandemic, Passavant Hospital Foundation has been fulfilling its mission of advancing the health and wellness of the community through education, outreach and grant making, without interruption. It has also provided for additional needs in these unprecedented times. The Foundation supplied more than 4,000 meals to UPMC Passavant Health Care Heroes. It also launched a COVID-19 Impact Fund, raising more than \$12,000 to help Cancer Care Fund and Patient Assistance Fund recipients offset any added costs and hardships caused by the pandemic.



Sarah Roberts, MSN, and Mary Lou Stiefvater, RN, Senior Professional Care Manager from UPMC Passavant Care Management Team, above, enjoy a complimentary lunch from Passavant Hospital Foundation.



Paul Hoolahan was among the more than 400 people who participated in a parade to honor the health care heroes at UPMC Passavant in McCandless (above, left). Hundreds of cars comprised the parade (right).

### A procession of gratitude

Passavant Hospital Foundation invited the community to participate in a twilight parade around the hospital grounds on April 15 to honor the many health care heroes at UPMC Passavant.

"Despite the rain, more than 400 participants in 200 vehicles lined up in a procession of thanks and circled the hospital parking lot five times. They beeped their horns, flashed their headlights, applauded, yelled, screamed and displayed signs of appreciation," said Passavant Hospital Foundation President Anthony R. Savannah.

The gesture did not go unnoticed.

"I just want to say 'thank you' to the entire community for rallying around us and supporting us. They made this stressful situation a lot easier to bear and without them, we wouldn't be able to do it, so thank you," said Juliann Cornelius, BSN, RN.

"From all of us here at UPMC Passavant and from me, personally, I just want to say 'thank you' to the community. We love you, we're here for you, and we will get through this together," added Shannon Seitz, MSN, RN, PCCN.



### Passavant Hospital Foundation awards grants totaling \$215,596

This year, Passavant Hospital Foundation, in partnership with Passavant Hospital Auxiliary and UPMC Passavant, provided grants to fund 21 projects ranging in cost from \$500 to \$60,000 for a total of \$215,596. Each project improves patient diagnosis, treatment, comfort and/or safety, or significantly improves the working environment for staff. Three of these grants helped fund:

#### ■ A Pulmonary Function Lab Treadmill

UPMC Passavant is one of only two hospitals within the health system that possesses a specialized treadmill which connects to a pulmonary function machine to monitor heart rates, oxygen volumes and saturation, and more. The new treadmill will replace an older model.

#### ■ A Wound Center Auto-Fluorescent Imaging Device

This non-invasive, portable, hand-held device locates and identifies bacteria present in wounds but not visible to the unaided eye, allowing immediate modifications in care and decreasing healing times.

#### ■ Coming Soon: Consumer Drug Take-Back Boxes

Anyone wanting to get rid of unused or expired medications can safely do so by dropping them into a Drug Take-Back Box permanently located in the lobby of UPMC Passavant in both Cranberry and McCandless. All meds will be sent for certified destruction in compliance with the DEA Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010. The grant covers the costs of the receptacles and fees for drug disposal.



### UPMC Passavant offered a “Check Your Heart” seminar

In partnership with Passavant Hospital Foundation, UPMC Passavant offered a free educational seminar on heart health earlier this year, prior to the COVID-19 shut-down. Cardiac Electrophysiologist Sandeep Jain, MD, and Cardiologists John T. Schindler, MD, and Venmathi Indramohan, MD, addressed various heart issues for the nearly 200 community members in attendance. Free screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose also were offered, as well as one-on-one discussions with pharmacists and dietitians. Participants learned about breakthrough advances in cardiovascular medicine and how new minimally invasive cardiac procedures offered at UPMC Passavant can lower surgical risk, reduce recovery time and enhance quality of life.

### Teen volunteers received Passavant Auxiliary scholarships

**Deeksha Chirra** volunteered more than 100 hours in the Patient Care Unit, stocking rooms. “I got to talk to patients and make their stay a little more comfortable, and got to work with nurses,” she said.



She graduated from South Fayette Township High School and now is studying to become a physician specializing in Emergency Medicine. “I’d also love to work with Doctors without

Borders to help people in underserved areas,” she added. The Auxiliary awarded her a \$2,500 scholarship.

**Sharon Kim** volunteered more than 150 hours at UPMC Passavant. She started in Dining Services before transitioning to Patient Care on the 6th Floor and then the Emergency Department. Currently, she is studying Biological Sciences on the Pre-Med Track at the University of Pittsburgh. “Volunteering at

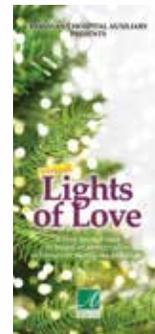


Passavant has given me rich experiences that helped me grow as a person and

### Honor and memorialize loved ones while helping patients

In its 34th year, the “Lights of Love Tree” will be displayed in the lobby of UPMC Passavant throughout the holiday season. Each light will honor or memorialize a special person.

To designate a light for a loved one, Passavant Hospital Auxiliary is accepting donations of \$5 for each name. Dove ornaments featuring your loved one’s name are available for a donation of \$10 each. The tree-lighting ceremony will take place *virtually* on December 4.



Past donations have helped fund therapy equipment, free valet parking for patients, and more. For details, call Nicole at 412-748-6640 or visit [www.passavanthospitalfoundation.org](http://www.passavanthospitalfoundation.org).

confirmed my desire to pursue medicine,” she said. She was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship from the Auxiliary.

**Madeleine Schreiber** volunteered more than 120 hours in the kitchen and nursing unit of Floor 4 at UPMC Passavant. Her dream is to become a pediatric nurse. “This may sound cliché, but I really do see nurses as heroes. They are a true inspiration and give me a reason to push myself in school and work hard for what I want,” she said. She graduated from Vincentian Academy and was awarded \$2,500 by the Auxiliary. She currently is studying nursing at Bowling Green State University.

**Dylan Zavetsky** volunteered in the pharmacy, delivering new meds and switching out old ones in patient rooms throughout the hospital. “I loved every minute,” he said. “It was the best feeling to know that my work would lead to the improvement of people’s lives.” Dylan received a \$2,500 scholarship from the Auxiliary and currently is studying biology at Slippery Rock University. He plans to become a Physician Assistant.

