



# GIVING *Hope*

Miracles happen because of you

## Finding *New Life* at L.E. Phillips Libertas

You Helped Sam Recognize and Overcome His Addiction



Sam Gunnarson didn't realize how serious his alcohol addiction was until he was at L.E. Phillips Libertas. He was sharing a room with someone detoxing from heroin. "I was shocked with

him to be honest and for the first time, Sam shared the truth about his drinking. Together, they determined he would be a good fit for the inpatient residential treatment program.

*"I had been dying for a while. At L.E. Phillips, I started living again. They already knew I was an alcoholic, so I had no choice but to be my authentic self. It was liberating." – Sam Gunnarson*

There were many other firsts during his time in residential treatment – the first time on a regular eating schedule again, the first time meeting others struggling with addiction, the first time being himself.

As others shared their stories and he learned more about addiction, he gained new perspective on his own story. He realized for the first time that his grandmother – the family member he had been closest too – was an active alcoholic. She died right before he arrived at L.E. Phillips, but he felt her with him on the journey.

He also started to recognize that his drinking had slowly been killing him – physically, emotionally, and socially. Before entering treatment, he rarely ate; he was withdrawn from friends even at parties; he stole and lied to cover up his drinking.

Sam found power in shedding the secret he had been trying to hide for so long. Everyone at L.E. Phillips knew he was an alcoholic. He felt he could be vulnerable and that was liberating.

Today, Sam lives in St. Paul and works as an administrative assistant at another treatment center. He's proud of where he is today, sharing, "I have a really solid community of sober people here."

Four and a half years after treatment at L.E. Phillips Libertas, Sam says the biggest lesson he learned was that addiction and its consequences in life are very real. "If I didn't get help, it was going to kill me," he said.

Your support of L.E. Phillips Libertas helps people like Sam recognize their addiction. You give them the emotional support and coping tools to overcome it and start living again.

how real it all was," said Sam. "I had never seen addiction with my own eyes before."

From Sam's view, he simply liked the party scene. Maybe he was overdoing it, but it was "just fun". Even when he was expelled from UW-Eau Claire, he couldn't see his addiction for what it was.

He slowly realized that something in his life needed to change and built up the courage to ask his mom for help. She didn't want to talk to him when he was drunk, but he nervously dialed her number any way. A wave of relief came over him when she said, "I know this place in Chippewa Falls..."

Sam entered detoxification at L.E. Phillips Libertas where medical professionals monitored him 24-hours a day. As his withdrawal symptoms eased, he met with a licensed substance abuse counselor to figure out the next step.

He didn't know how to quantify the number of drinks he had per day and struggled to answer the question out loud. But the counselor encouraged

## MOM: a “birth by design” experience for families

Your support is empowering families throughout Western Wisconsin



Preparing for the birth of a child can be overwhelming, especially the first time. Thanks to donors like you, families in the Chippewa Valley have a new place to find support.

Since the fall of 2020, the Maternity onto Motherhood (MOM) Program has been helping families navigate the physical, emotional and lifestyle changes that come with parenthood, first, as parents get ready to welcome a newborn and then, as they return home from their hospital stay. This program educates families on prenatal care, planning for the birth of baby, proper car seat installation, available community resources and lactation consultation.

“Today’s journey to and through pregnancy and parenthood looks different and we want expecting mothers and their partners to feel safe and connected to community resources,” said Maria Green, Women and Infants Center Manager. “Offering this program provides parents with a map to follow on their personal journey to parenthood.”

Because of your support, families from Western Wisconsin have access to the MOM program at HSHS St. Joseph’s and Sacred Heart Hospitals. Every birth is different, and every family has their own ideas on how they want their experience to unfold. The MOM program gives them all the tools they need to do just that.

“During this pandemic, the MOM program has become more important than ever,” said Maria, “It has allowed us to build relationships with our families giving them the knowledge to make their own decisions and individualize their own birthing experience.”

With such a welcoming response from the community, the MOM program has also begun exploring other offerings to ease the adventure of parenthood. In the fall of 2021, alongside our partners at Prevea Health, prenatal yoga courses will be made available via Zoom. The vision is to continue to offer more insight and education within the MOM program to further allow each family to create their very own “birth by design.”



Because of donors like you, parents in Chippewa Falls have a supportive place to turn. You are giving them the knowledge and confidence they need to make the best choices for their babies.

**THANK YOU!**

## Maternity Onto Motherhood PROGRAM



# QPR

## QUESTION, PERSUADE, AND REFER Your support is saving lives throughout the Chippewa Valley

What if someone you know was contemplating suicide? Would you know the warning signs? Would you know how to respond and react to prevent them from taking their life? Because of your support, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital is doing just that through their Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) program. You are saving lives in the Chippewa Valley by teaching community members how to identify the warning signs of suicide and what to say to prevent a loved one from taking their life.

QPR is a national program hosted by HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital and funded by donors like you. The programming teaches people how to learn and recognize warning signs that someone may be thinking about suicide, and how to help them in a respectful and dignified manner. QPR trainings are just like CPR. It is an emergency response to someone in a crisis and can save a life!

"Suicide is very hard for most people to talk about," said Laura Baalrud, Outreach Facilitator at HSHS St. Joseph's and Sacred Heart hospitals.

Since the programs beginning, in 2014, QPR has held 302 classes helping 8,653 people in the Chippewa Valley learn how to effectively prevent someone from attempting suicide. Not only have QPR classes taught individuals how to identify warning signs of suicide, they also have trained 55 individuals in Western Wisconsin to be certified trainers. Now, these trainers will take what they learned into their workplace or school and teach others.

"One of our biggest goals is to teach people how to respond in a suicide crisis," Laura commented. "We want to be able to get people talking more about suicide prevention and mental health conditions - in hopes of saving more lives by providing more help."

Suicide is one of the most preventable causes of death, yet we lose close to 800,000 people worldwide each year. According to the World Health Organization, that's one person every 40 seconds. Again because of your support of HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital, YOU are giving the community access to the tools necessary to

SAVE LIVES!



## On the Road to Fight Breast Cancer

Your support is saving  
lives in Western  
Wisconsin

On May 24, 2021, Hospital and Prevea leaders, donors and friends gathered for the unveiling of the new mobile mammography coach and celebrated with an official ribbon cutting ceremony. Mobile mammography coaches have proven to provide convenient access for annual mammograms to remote regions. The level of care it will bring to women in Western Wisconsin is vital to life - thanks to YOU!!



### *On the Road to Fight Breast Cancer, cont.*

“Mammograms provide us an X-ray image of the breast, which can help us detect any tumors or other abnormalities,” said Megan Bauer, mobile imaging coordinator at Prevea Health. “They play a key role in the detection of breast cancer, the second most common cancer among women. If we can catch cancer early with a mammogram, it is likely more treatable. Mammograms can even help us detect some forms of cancer before they develop.”

Early detection is the most important and best defense against breast cancer. Your support is allowing women greater access to mammograms. The mobile mammography bus is expected to serve at least 2,500 women in the area annually, by making stops in Rice Lake, Ladysmith, Cornell, Menomonie, Mondovi and Arcadia. Bringing this technology to women outside of the medical facility and into their own location increases the access to screening mammograms.

## **12 Months: 12 Gifts of Healing and Hope** Become a monthly donor today

Providing renewed health and hope to patients at HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital is now easier than ever. By becoming a monthly donor, you can continually comfort and heal the patients in our care. As a monthly donor, you will contribute/receive:

- Make automatic monthly donations paid from your credit card.
- Designate your gift to a specific need like cancer care or to the area of greatest need.
- Receive an annual acknowledgement letter for tax purposes.
- Elect to change or suspend your donation at any time.

### **BEGINNING IS EASY!**

1. Visit our secure, online donation form at <https://giving.hshs.org/sjcf/donate>.
2. Select a monthly gift amount or add your own.
3. Check “Make this a monthly gift”
4. Provide your contact info, payment method, and any optional details.
5. Click “Donate Now”.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please contact us at 920-433-8620 or [WI-Foundations@hshs.org](mailto:WI-Foundations@hshs.org).

## **SAVE THE DATE • SAVE THE DATE**

