

Care Empowerment Supports Patients and Services

Written by Sioux Center News editor Steve Hoogland

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The Sioux Center community Hospital & Health Center's Foundation Board has reinstated a program that gave money to various hospital departments in the past.

The new Care Empowerment fund was developed by the foundation board to benefit various departments of the hospital.

"Back when the Sioux Center Hospital Auxiliary was in existence, each year they had two fundraisers, the fall bazaar and the food stand at the fairgrounds," said Les Brommer, chairman of the hospital foundation. "Then they'd go to the departments at the hospital and ask them if there were pieces of equipment or other items that were needed but couldn't be funded through the capital budget.

"That was called the wish list," he continued. "It was something that received a great deal of thoust from employees and departments and created a good relationship between the auxiliary and the employees."

Brommer said that in recent years, the hospital;s executive board has wanted to revive a similar program through the foundation board, which operates under the executive board.

"The foundation board is larger now and has more members," he said. "One of the things we've tried to do is look for a way to create a solid relationship between the hospital staff and hospital board.:

As the foundation board was thinking about possibilities, former hospital CEO Mike Seda came up with the idea of forming a Care Empowerment Fund.

It was eventually decided that \$50,000 should be designated toward a Care Empowerment Fund for the past fiscal year.

"I presented what we were thinking of to the hospital executive board," said Brommer. "They were very excited."

And eventually, the fund was approved.

Cheryl Sneller, the events planner for the foundation, said that the goal of the Care Empowerment Fund is to benefit patients as well as the individual hospital departments.

"The foundation's new program is about the hospital's departments being able to help with the betterment of patients," she said. "It's about wishes that will benefit patients."

In February, hospital departments were contacted and a set of proposed guidelines were formed for the Care Empowerment fund. A total of 19 applications were made by the hospital departments for the Care Empowerment funds.

The goal is that the funds can help fill in for things that are not included in the ongoing budget.

“There’s a budget in place and you only have so many things that can fit into it,” Sneller said. “Sometimes there are things that cannot be purchased. This is for those things.”

Brommer said that the empowerment fund should have positive impact.

“We wanted this to have an effect on health care,” Brommer said. “We wanted to make sure that this affected people in some way.

“Some future grants might go to housekeeping,” he said. “You’d probably never think that it’s a big issue when it comes to health care, but it is. It provides service to customers.”

Brommer said that the applications addressed some worthy needs. The guidelines suggested that the grants be given for equipment and technology, health and family, health education and preventative programs, coordination of indigent care and physical environment, community education and arts as they positively impact the health and quality of life in Sioux Center and the surrounding communities.

The first round of grants exceeded the foundation board’s expectations.

“It was amazing how much work the departments put into the wish lists,” Brommer said.

The foundation board tried to complete the first-round of Care Empowerment grants before the end of the fiscal year.

“Because the hospital’s fiscal year ends on June 30, we wanted to get one funding process finished before the end of June,” Brommer said. “In the first go-around we did not set a funding limit to the wish list. They could ask for any amount.”

Brommer said that subsequent rounds will be limited. He said that the limit for the next round is expected to be \$5,000.

“There are a lot of reasons for a \$5,000 limit, and we want to keep things simple,” he said. “They can make requests and they can be reviewed.

“In the first round, we had 19 applications,” he said. “Of that two requests were referred back to the hospital board because they were more capital purchases, and as we went through the process, we found that they were not to the point of purchase yet.

“But in that first round, we funded 17 of those for a total of between \$48,000 and \$49,000,” Brommer said. “We were very close to the \$50,000 goal. This covered a wide variety of areas.”

The foundation is presently reviewing its process for the second round.

“We’re going to ask for our applications sooner,” Brommer said. “That will give us time.

“Bottom line is that we want a good working relationship with each department,” Brommer said.

Sneller said that the hospital is excited about the impact as the program grows.

“It’s a needed program,” Sneller said. “You don’t often hear of hospital foundations just giving money to departments in their hospitals. I respect this board because it is looking out for everyone, the employees and patients as well as the community.”

The first round of requests included a number of different items.

“Some of the things are educational, some are equipment – it’s a variety of things,” Sneller said. “One of the things is new lighting for the ER (emergency room). It doesn’t seem like a big deal, but it’s important. Lighting in the ER can be invaluable in an emergency.”

The foundation presently operates a golf outing each summer and the fall harvest supper.

“We’d like the dollars that are generated to go back into the care empowerment fund for funding future needs,” Brommer said. “We know that’s not going to be enough money.”

The hospital foundation board went through a reorganization of sorts about two years ago. The hospital foundation has three committees, the activities committee, the marketing committee and volunteer committee.

And the idea went back to an idea that the original hospital board utilized.

“The old hospital auxiliary was so successful and as we look forward, we also look to those models because they were so successful,” Brommer said. “There are a lot of things that this hospital’s founders did and they worked. We have to continue to find ways to use those things.”

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