

Volunteer legacy celebrates its first million

Written by hebronjournal

Wednesday, 10 April 2019 19:37 -

“It’s called Things and Stuff on Hebron’s main street,
“It’s packed with bargains that can’t be beat (that are mighty sweet).”

In March of 1967, a new hospital was under construction, and members of the Hospital Guild documented, “the need would be great,” in its minutes:

“It was decided to have a county wide rummage sale in Hebron. Mrs. Penry was appointed Chairman, her Committee, Mrs. W.E. Baker, Mrs. Jim Johnson and Mrs. M.L. Christensen. Mrs. Penry named the operation “Things and Stuff” and the sale continued throughout July and August.”

Fifty-two years later, the Thayer County Health Services Guild is celebrating a \$1 million milestone and preparing itself for the second million while Things and Stuff thrives, and annual fundraisers provide the Guild opportunities to purchase equipment and other necessities for the hospital.

Its humble beginnings on a Friday afternoon in the spring of 1950 started with gathering reading materials for patients, mending hospital linens and canning garden vegetables. In 1950, the hospital was located in the former women’s dormitory of the Hebron Academy.

The ladies who met to form the Guild decided to meet four times a year and committees were assigned. The first president was Eleanor Saylor.

At the second meeting in July, 31 ladies came, some from the towns of Chester, Bruning, Belvidere and Hubbell, and mending topped the volunteer list of things to do.

According to the minutes of the October meeting, the Belvidere ladies hemmed 75 towels and the canning committee reported 258 quarts of vegetables in donated jars had been sealed.

At that same meeting, H.L. Nacke explained there was a bond proposal for taxpayers to assume the hospital’s debt.

The volunteers pressed on, creating tray covers for special dates and holidays, and paying \$6.50 for children’s gowns.

While the ladies kept hemming, the Guild began funding larger needs for the hospital, and answered emergency calls for assistance at the hospital as the 1953 tornado wreaked havoc.

The Hebron Lions Club also stepped up with an emergency generator for the hospital.

A salad master, window air conditioner, drinking fountain and a few lawn chairs were purchased by the Guild in 1954. It was also decided the Guild would research a plan to facilitate loans for girls who planned to pursue careers in nursing.

In 1957, the Guild recorded purchases and projects to provide surgical instruments, a portable X-ray machine, 14 electric fans among other items.

Jump ahead three years, and members of the Guild acknowledged their mission had changed:

“Many disposable and pre-sterilized supplies were becoming available, and had proven practical from the standpoint of economy and patient safety. Sewing and mending was becoming less of a problem, and hospitals were being advised not to use home canned garden products.”

The volunteers decided they would amend the Guild’s constitution and officially call themselves, “The Guild Council of Thayer County Memorial Hospital.” Members were encouraged to be active in the idea of a new hospital.

Mrs. Dale Hinrichs of Bruning was elected president in 1966. She appointed a representative from each town in the county to help the hospital planning committee with mailings. Guild members were nudged to vote for the new facility in the upcoming election.

Volunteer legacy celebrates its first million

Written by hebronjournal

Wednesday, 10 April 2019 19:37 -

The hospital voted in and under construction by 1967, the Guild had already discussed furnishing its new lobbies.

“The need would be great” project showed the rummage sale profit at \$1,197.89. In the same year, the Guild proposed they decorate a large Cedar tree at the old hospital with Christmas lights in memory or honor of a loved one. Each light was a donation, and the “beautiful” tree was officially named, “Lights of Love,” and its first fundraiser made just over \$1,000.

In 1968-1969, the Guild’s purchases included 30 trees for the grounds, drapes for the lobbies and office, ash trays, medical filing cabinets, a riding lawn mower and a wheel chair. The ladies also kept up with the candy strippers by forming a committee and purchasing uniforms.

By 1974, Things and Stuff “had become a major source of income, and was open each week throughout the year, on Thursdays from nine to nine,” according to the minutes.

Guild member, Carol Krueger, said the shop was on top of the former bank at 4th and Lincoln Streets.

“They hauled everything up and down 30 steps,” Krueger said.

In 1979, however, the Guild looked for new opportunities to fundraise. Medical equipment was constantly being updated. The furniture the volunteers had purchased for the hospital needed repair. And Guild members were zeroing in on the hospital’s latest need, an X-ray unit.

“Things and Stuff, Lights of Love and the gift shop income would not suffice, and many new projects were being discussed,” they recorded in the minutes.

A quilt raffle began in 1980 and raised \$335. Two years later, a food sale was held, cookbooks sold, and a Things and Stuff sale was held at the VFW.

Meanwhile, the Guild’s purchases had expanded — a Narco-Medical Infant Care System, an Infant resuscitator and a Flame Photometer were just three of the many items members provided.

They held special events, like the Autumn Tour of Homes and Salad Luncheon and Style Show. Memorials to the Guild were also coming in.

Volunteers helped at food stands, Bingo fundraisers, at the golf course for the celebrity tournament and recycled aluminum, newspapers and glass.

By 1989, Things and Stuff was bringing in thousands with a tally of \$20,532.90 that year.

“You have come a long way, ladies!” Stan Clouse told them in the 90s. Clouse was the vice president for the Lutheran Homes.

Last year, Things and Stuff brought \$53,336.21 for medical equipment, along with \$2,500 from the quilt raffle, bake sale and Lights of Love.

Today, Guild members are more ambitious than ever, voluntarily serving over 150 hours throughout the year helping with blood drives, Women’s Health Night, mass flu clinic and the county fair.

At Things and Stuff, the hours multiply to 7,300 hours collectively between helping folks make purchases and sorting items for the store.

Last year, the Guild contributed \$25,000 to the Cattlemen’s Ball and pledged another \$20,000 for a new medical transport.

Over time, members also developed their own scholarship program and each year, the Guild provides \$1,000 to students pursuing a medical degree.

“Keep bringing gently used items to our donation box,

“It could be tops, pants, scrubs, shoes or socks.

“Even plates, knick knacks or an out of tune fiddle,

“We’ll sell ‘em to buy equipment for the hospital.

Volunteer legacy celebrates its first million

Written by hebronjournal

Wednesday, 10 April 2019 19:37 -

“This coming April, you will hear cheers and hollers,
“As we celebrate the milestone of raising one million dollars.”