Creating Hope

For Naugatuck residents Becky and Tom Moore, a sunset cruise off Long Island seemed like a wonderful addition to their 18th wedding anniversary. As the parents of triplet sons, identical twins Avery and Brody, and fraternal twin, Casey, the Moores had weathered lengthy medical complications with the boys’ premature birth 14 years earlier. Avery and Brody had both needed heart surgery, but Avery had a prolonged hospital stay. After coming home, he had required a ventilator until he was two, a nasal cannula until age three, and a G-tube until he was four. Now, those challenges seemed far away, and the boys were thriving as they strode into their teens.

Chaos
The Moore’s anniversary celebration was August 1, 2018, and that week, Brody and Casey were at Boy Scout camp as Avery and his cousin, Tristan, rode with Tom and Becky to catch the cruise. Suddenly, while stopped at a light, the Moore’s jeep was rear-ended.

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Dear Friends,

In every edition of Contributions, we share some of the amazing stories of patients and families that have faced astounding odds and difficult situations. For many, their lives are irrevocably changed.

But even in the most challenging circumstances, deep cores of resiliency often emerge, shaping the recovery process with hope and confidence. Sometimes the ability to rebound comes from the patient. At other times families drive it, but most often, resilience is a mutual effort.

These same threads of optimism, hope, and confidence percolate daily throughout Gaylord. Our staff team is deeply committed to inspiring and equipping patients to achieve more than they thought possible.

As a Gaylord donor, you share in this optimism, and your gifts allow us to move forward with confidence. Having the equipment, treatments, staff, and facilities available to offer the best care is only possible because of your faithful gifts.

Your support is foundational to everything we do!

Thank you for joining us on this demanding but rewarding journey.

With deep gratitude,

Tara Knapp
VP of Development, Marketing, and Public Relations
tknapp@gaylord.org
(203) 284-2838

“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.” Helen Keller

About this issue:
Contributions is produced by the Development Office, which can be reached at (203) 284-2881 or gaylorddevelopment@gaylord.org.

Articles in this issue were written by Katherine L. Kraines and Joy Savulak.
It was Christmas Eve in December of 2005, and as Martha Oquendo left her job, she was eagerly looking forward to celebrating the holidays with her family. But it was not to be. “I wasn’t feeling well that night, and my son started asking me a series of questions, like what year it was,” she said. “I kept saying it was 1998. I don’t remember the ambulance ride, but I do recall being very erratic and hitting the doctors.”

Genetics Roulette
Martha, who at the time was in her early 40s, was having a lot of trouble breathing, and the lack of oxygen to her brain was making her confused and combative. “At the hospital, I kept trying to get off the bed and began pulling out tubes,” she said. Quickly intubated, she was put in an induced coma for two weeks to stabilize her condition.

Unfortunately, Martha’s situation was mirroring that of her father’s. In 1978, Valentine Oquendo was diagnosed with an obscure and unnamed genetic issue that caused his diaphragm to weaken over time. The severe effects of the ailment often don’t show up until middle age when abrupt, life-threatening breathing changes occur. Many members of Martha’s family had the somewhat mysterious condition, including some of her father’s siblings and their children. Now, it was clear that she, too, had inherited it.

A weakened diaphragm meant that ventilator support might be necessary at any time, and this would require a permanent tracheostomy. But because Martha was in a coma, her husband, Miguel, had to make this difficult decision. “My father was advising him to go ahead, saying that his trach had kept him alive [for more than 27 years],” she said. Martha’s tracheostomy was done on January 6, 2006, and she said it probably saved her life.

Keep Going
Martha explained that living with a trach was less intimidating because she’d watched her father successfully deal with his trach for so long. “My father encouraged me 100 percent! When I first opened my eyes in the hospital, he was there.” Weeks later, when she came to Gaylord, her father was the first person she saw in her room. “I couldn’t speak* for the first month and a half and had to write everything down,” she said. “My father inspired me. He told me, you’ve got to keep going, don’t let this get you down!” To date, Martha has been at Gaylord 12 times since she was first admitted in January of 2006. In addition to her weakening diaphragm, she is now battling congestive heart failure.

Core of Determination
But Martha’s gentle spirit cloaks an inner core of determination that keeps her fighting. After each hospitalization, she arrives at Gaylord, needing to be weaned off the ventilator. Once that is accomplished, she is ready to rehab and regain strength. Here, too, she reflects her family’s experience. Her father and his sister were also treated at Gaylord. Martha said the consistency and familiarity of Gaylord make it feel like home. “I know I will be on Milne, and the staff know and greet me by name,” she said.

*The Passy-Muir valve now enables patients with a trach to speak soon after arriving at Gaylord. The valve wasn’t available when Martha first came to Gaylord in 2006.
The Gaylord Experience

April 30, 2019, our world changed forever. My amazing 54-year-old son, a retired commissioned officer, PhD, [at the] top of his career, was living the idyllic life on a ranch just outside of Austin, Texas, with his gorgeous, wonderful wife and two remarkable, beautiful teenage daughters. He left on a business trip to Connecticut on Sunday. That Tuesday morning, he went down to work out because, as a powerlifter, this is his daily routine. There was one other person in the gym that morning, which was unusual at a hotel gym. Within the hour, he suffered a traumatic fall off of a treadmill. Whoever was with him in the gym had the presence of mind to call 911, and he was transported to Hartford Hospital.

Within a half hour of the incident, he was in surgery. The neurosurgeon on call, who saved his life, the staff, and the Neuro-ICU nurses carefully and skillfully watched over him and brought him through the most critical days, hours, and weeks. The chances of his recovery looked beyond bleak as he rested in a coma until the week of June 10th, when he began to wake up. He still had not opened his eyes and was just barely responsive when the complex care case managers at Hartford, who knew the aftercare available, put him on the radar screen of a place called Gaylord and on Friday, June 14th, he was admitted.

Having been in the healthcare field for over 40 years, what I saw and experienced at Gaylord within the first 24 hours brought only one question from me to his wife. “How did you find this place?” Her response, “God, I think!” Well, that is the only answer for what we found at Gaylord from every person who has cared for him, every administrator who has crossed our paths, every doctor, nurse, therapist, secretary, housekeeper, and cafeteria worker. This is a level of excellence, care, and compassion that I have literally never encountered in one place in the profession in my entire life. Healthcare is a team sport and it became evident immediately that everyone on this team plays!

There is a 100-year-old tree just outside the window at the end of the hall. There is moss that grows under it. If you walk barefooted under the tree and then lie down on the moss and look up through those old branches, you can see it. It is the puzzle of a thousand shattered lives that have come to this land, to this place, to this vision to be healed. I said to one of the docs, “You perform miracles here.” He said, “Well, we make the space for miracles to happen.” Well, miracles do happen here because the hearts and hands of those who walk through these doors every day are compassionately committed to this vision of healing love, and it shows.

For my son, for his wife and daughters, and all of us for whom my son is so precious, this is what I know…if you want to excel in theater, go to New York, if you want to excel in academics, go to Harvard or Yale…if you want to learn to walk on water, come to Gaylord.

A grateful mother
July 2019
RETOOLING LIFE:

Disability Changed My Practice, Not My Heart

The only form of currency that Anna Tirado, MD, accepts as payment for her services are hugs from the grateful patients she cares for at the Gaylord Gynecological Clinic for Women with Disabilities. Since founding the clinic more than two decades ago, the gynecologist has donated every cent earned in her Gaylord paycheck back to the hospital that she credits with giving her a second chance at her career.

Down, But Not Out!
Early in her medical profession, Dr. Tirado was diagnosed with leukemia. Aggressive treatment saved her life but left her with a permanent physical disability. She spent months as a Gaylord outpatient, rebuilding her strength and learning how to adjust to her new normal.

Though her impairment was significant enough to nearly thwart her career, Dr. Tirado was resolved to find something to add to her practice “to counterbalance what was taken away.” She was impressed by the care Gaylord staff provided to patients with even more significant injuries than her own. “I was asked by the Spinal Cord Injury Program director to help develop and staff a new in-house gynecology clinic for women with disabilities. As someone with disabilities myself, I immediately said yes.” Anna Tirado, MD

An Alternative
Dr. Tirado said she had been witness to the care of women with spinal cord injuries in standard gynecologist offices that required up to five people in the exam room to support the patient’s body and legs. “It becomes a circus-like atmosphere, and the obstacles standing in the way often render it not worth the effort for these women to seek regular care. The idea was to try something different and offer patients the relief of knowing that they’re seeing people who are knowledgeable about their specific needs,” she said.

The clinic is outfitted with a custom examination table that can be adjusted to wheelchair-height for easy transfer and is equipped with special equipment to keep patients secure. It is also equipped with a Hoyer lift to safely transfer even the most profoundly disabled woman to the examination table. Each patient at the clinic receives care well beyond the time and scope that would be expected at a typical gynecological visit for a non-disabled woman, with Dr. Tirado spending up to an hour and a half with her most complex patients.

Honored
At its 101st Annual Meeting at the Aqua Turf in June, the Connecticut Hospital Association presented two of its highest honors, the 2019 Healthcare Hero Award and Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award, to Dr. Tirado and Gaylord Specialty Healthcare’s Gynecological Clinic for Women with Disabilities. “Women with spinal cord injuries, strokes, amputations, even mental disabilities, are relying on her for care that is not readily available anywhere else in Connecticut,” said Stephen Holland, MD, Gaylord’s chief medical officer. “The community benefit of this program is immeasurable. It is difficult to find talented physicians willing to treat disabled patients, but Dr. Tirado seeks out new ways to continuously advocate to improve women’s access to care.”

Anna Tirado, MD, second from left, receiving the 2019 Healthcare Hero Award.
NEW PARAMOBILE:

Helping Others Get Back Into the “Swing” of Things

I have a special place in my heart for the Sports Association. Karen Scappaticci

When Karen Scappaticci joined the Gaylord Board of Directors in 2006, she looked forward to applying the experience and insights she gleaned as a senior executive at Pfizer towards the advancement of a healthcare system that she knew “had the power to transform lives.”

But what Karen didn’t expect was to become smitten with one of Gaylord’s non-medical, yet equally life-transforming programs. “I have a special place in my heart for the Sports Association,” she confessed. “To see these athletes realize that they can participate in a sport, no matter their injury, is amazing.”

Volunteering
In addition to her board work, Karen can often be found volunteering at Gaylord’s adaptive sporting events. She’s been an annual staple at the Ken Murphy Memorial Open adaptive golf tournament, the Gaylord Gauntlet, wheelchair rugby tournaments, and at dozens of other programs. “The most fun event to watch was adaptive rock climbing,” she said. “To see someone in a wheelchair one minute, and then climbing up a wall the next is incredible.”

Karen lauded the Association’s ability to provide most sporting opportunities for free or “next to nothing.” It’s a benefit for adaptive athletes that Sports Association Program Manager Katie Joly says is only made possible through committed donors like Karen.

Donating
In July, a generous donation from the family-run Scappaticci-Steinberg Foundation was used towards the purchase of high-tech equipment for athletes with spinal cord injuries or mobility or stability issues. The Paramobile is an all-terrain wheelchair that raises users into a standing position, allowing them to fully execute a conventional golf swing. Though originally designed for use in golf, the Paramobile can also assist athletes in other activities, such as fishing or archery. Its ability to safely work on gradients of up to 30 degrees and on sideways inclines of up to 17 degrees enables golfers to play on nearly any terrain.

Participating
Karen looks forward to seeing the Paramobile in action at the Association’s upcoming clinics, veterans’ programs, and tournaments throughout the year. “I always enjoy spending time getting to know the golfers. One time, I helped set the ball for a man who was handicapped,” she noted. “Last year, I played with a group of disabled women veterans. Every year it’s different, but I marvel at the camaraderie despite their challenges.”

“Really,” Karen reflected, “the Sports Association has been a lifesaver for so, so many. They’re there to give back to people what was taken away.”
PLANNED GIVING:

Gifting Appreciated Stock

If you are considering making a year-end charitable donation, there are many ways to give. But at this time of year, there may be good reasons to consider either a stock gift or a gift from your retirement account. Here’s why.

Benefits of Gifting Appreciated Stock

Gifting appreciated stock is one of the most effective donation opportunities available for you and Gaylord. You will:

1. have the satisfaction of knowing that your contribution is making a difference;
2. avoid the capital gains tax;
3. receive an income tax deduction on the full value of the appreciated stock, if you itemize deductions.

This method of year-end giving has become increasingly popular because it enables donors to make traditional year-end gifts to causes they feel strongly about, and, at the same time, reduce their anticipated tax exposure.

For example, when reviewing an October or November statement for an investment or brokerage account, a financial advisor might point out a significant capital gain on a security that has been held for a long time (purchased more than one year ago). Mergers and acquisitions can frequently be the source of these gains. If the advisor recommends selling a portion of that security to bring more balance to the account, you will have to pay capital gains tax on the portion sold.

However, if a portion of the highly appreciated security is donated directly to Gaylord, no capital gains tax will apply. AND, the donor receives an income tax deduction for the full current fair market value of the securities, as opposed to what the donor originally paid for the securities. (The deduction cannot exceed 30% of the donor’s adjusted gross income.)

The idea of donating stock is not just for the wealthy. Anyone who owns stocks, bonds, or mutual funds with the potential for a significant year-end gain can take advantage of this planning option, as long as they itemize. Making use of this opportunity can provide greater tax savings for the donor than a simple gift of cash.

It’s a good idea to start the process of donating stock at least a week or two before December 31, so the transfer has plenty of time to be completed during the holiday.

Reducing the Tax Implications of a Required Minimum Distribution

You may also want to consider using some or all of a required minimum distribution (RMD) for a donation.

For the past few years, people over age 70 1/2 have been able to transfer up to $100,000 from their IRAs to charity, tax-free. The gift counts as their required minimum distribution for the year, but it is not included in their adjusted gross income on their tax returns. This can be a great way to avoid having to pay income tax on your RMD, even if you don’t itemize your deductions. And your RMD distribution can help protect the future of Gaylord, a cause you feel strongly about.

To qualify for the tax savings, you generally need to transfer the assets directly from the IRA to a charity, and you can’t touch them first. (You cannot first take the RMD for yourself and then write a check to Gaylord in the same amount.) It is important to contact your IRA administrator about making this type of transfer. Using this type of gift, you can fulfill your obligation to take a required distribution from a retirement account and not pay any income tax!

There are many ways to help. Please contact Tara Knapp in Development at (203) 284-2882 to learn more. If Gaylord is to continue to provide the life-changing services it offers, we need your help.

LEGAL, TAX, AND INVESTMENT DISCLAIMER: This information is not intended to be and should not be treated as legal, tax, or investment advice. Readers, including professionals, should not, under any circumstances, rely on the content herein as a substitute for their own research and obtaining specific legal, tax, or investment advice from a qualified advisor.

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A YEAR AND A WEEK:

“T’m Going Forward!”

Life is unpredictable. It’s full of obstacles and situations that push us and mold us to be even greater than we can imagine.  

Jay Ross

It was Jason Ross’s second day at Gaylord, and he wasn’t in the best of spirits. Only two weeks earlier, the single dad of two teenage sons was living his best life. He was a bank compliance officer, volunteer firefighter, and a self-proclaimed “gym rat” who sometimes worked out twice a day.

But when an oncoming car veered toward his motorcycle last June, Jay had no choice but to swerve. The bike hit the curb, throwing him onto the sidewalk. It was at Yale New Haven Hospital where he first heard the word they said would likely follow him for the rest of his life: paraplegia. Of all the sudden changes in his life, the loss of being physically active weighed the heaviest on the 37-year-old’s heart. Being at the gym was his passion and outlet. Without it, Jay was just not Jay.

Needing Inspiration
Sensing his low mood, Gaylord nurse Cezary Wroblewski, RN, suggested that they venture outdoors to watch the Gaylord Gauntlet 5k Trail and Obstacle Run, a fundraiser for the Gaylord Sports Association, taking place on campus that day. They arrived at the starting line in time to witness Jillian Harpin, the 2018 Gauntlet’s featured adaptive athlete, push off in her wheelchair. “That’s going to be you some day,” commented Cezary. “Yeah, right,” Jay responded.

For a brief time, Jay struggled to find purpose in his new reality. But one day he picked up a pair of weights. He was surprised — and dismayed — by just how much strength he had lost, but the revelation made him more determined than ever to resume his fitness routine. He purchased parallel bars for his home. Eventually, Jay returned to the gym and became involved with the Gaylord Sports Association, trying his hand at archery, biking, and even rock climbing. Jay’s outlook began to shift.

Reorienting Life
“There was no point in dwelling on the negatives,” he said. “It was time to make the best of the situation. My kids motivated me to get up and do what I had to do. And then I was like, listen, I’m going to embrace what happened. I’m going forward.”

Jay’s stalwart resolution made him the unanimous selection for the 2019 Gaylord Gauntlet’s featured adaptive athlete, a role that would make him a public ambassador for the Gaylord Sports Association and a living testament to the transformative power of adaptive sports. He doubled down at the gym, incorporating exercises to increase his core and upper body strength to face the Gauntlet’s two-dozen grueling obstacles.

A Run at the Gauntlet
On June 22, 2019, Jay rolled up to the Gauntlet starting line surrounded by a support team from the Sports Association that also included his sons, his family, and some of his former nurses and therapists. The team cheered as he pushed his racing chair through thick mud and rugged terrain and tackled each obstacle in his own way. At one obstacle, he crawled under a labyrinth of wires with a boogie board supporting his lower body. He conquered another, a daunting wall climb, on belay. With

Continued on page 9
exhaustion and pride written all over his mud-spattered face, Jay crossed the finish line in just over two hours, a new record time for a featured adaptive athlete.

The gravity of accomplishing his goal, exactly one year and one week after his accident, was not wasted on Jay. “The best part was knowing how proud my boys were,” he said. “They were like, ‘You did it, Dad! I can’t believe it! You killed it!’ And that meant everything.”

**New Horizons**

“Watching his transformation has been amazing,” said Joy Savulak, Gaylord publicist who befriended Jay in the months leading up to the race. “In the four months since we first started working together, I’ve seen him grow so much in confidence. Like a butterfly, he’s emerged on the other end with a solid sense of purpose and a real desire to reach out beyond himself to inspire others.”

Jay has since become involved in adaptive waterskiing and is working with the Gaylord Sports Association to develop a new workout program to be launched soon. “I am not going to limit myself anymore. Anything that pokes its head out at me is fair game. I’m taking a new look at everything from now on. Life is unpredictable,” he reflected. “It’s full of obstacles and situations that push us and mold us to be even greater than we can imagine.”

Jay’s inspirational story was shared in an article in Men’s Health digital edition several weeks after the Gauntlet. To watch video of Jay’s journey through the Gauntlet or to see his story in Men’s Health and other media, visit [www.gaylord.org](http://www.gaylord.org)
Battling Back Again, continued from page 1

Who would have thought I could have fun recovering from a spinal cord injury and learning to walk again? But Gaylord made that possible!

Avery Moore

“They crash was so loud it sounded like a bomb went off,” Becky said. “It was chaos! But I remember looking back at Avery and Tristan, who were both wearing seatbelts, and thought everyone was okay because I didn’t see any blood. Then, Avery said he couldn’t move.”

Creating Hope
The rest of the family was not seriously injured, but Avery was paralyzed. He was taken to Good Samaritan Hospital, where a CT scan revealed a C5 spinal cord injury. Unable to use his hands or move from mid-chest down, he was transferred to Stony Brook University Hospital where a pediatric trauma team performed a spinal fusion. Becky stayed at Avery’s bedside, determined to remain hopeful. “They wouldn’t tell us anything,” she said. “I told the doctor I wasn’t going to give up hope that Avery would walk again. He said he appreciated my optimism. We had to create hope on our own.”

After a week at Stony Brook University Hospital, Avery was ready for rehabilitation, but the Moores wanted him closer to home. Becky tasked Tom, Brody, and Casey with finding the right facility in Connecticut. The trio toured a local rehabilitation hospital and then Gaylord. The boys voted hands down for Gaylord. The SCI Adolescent Family Suite, which allowed them to stay next door to Avery at no cost, the Loft, which is equipped with technology and video games, and the fact that the family’s dogs could come to campus were deciding factors. Plus, they liked that it didn’t feel “institutional.”

Hint of Movement
When Avery arrived at Gaylord on August 8, he couldn’t move his hands, trunk, or legs, but he did have some areas of sensation. “The initial diagnosis had been a complete spinal cord injury,” said Becky. “But Tom was joking with Avery the weekend after we got to Gaylord when he noticed Avery’s knee move.” The following Monday, Tim Kilbride, Avery’s physical therapist, called David Rosenblum, MD, and said Avery’s knee had moved three times. It was now obvious that his injury was incomplete; he had some movement below the point of injury. “I remember Dr. Rosenblum congratulating Avery,” she said. “That was about two weeks after the accident, and it was the first sign that there would be an improvement.”

With resilience born from the challenges of the boys’ premature birth, the entire family now focused on Avery’s recovery. Either Becky or Tom was by Avery’s side 24 hours a day. “Being with him all of the time allowed me to advocate and to pick up on things you might not notice otherwise,” said Becky. “We also learned and practiced the skills that might be needed when he came home, since we had no idea what to expect in terms of recovery.”

Throughout his two months as an inpatient, Avery made steady progress with an intense schedule of physical and occupational therapy. His regimen eventually included walking using the ZeroG® Gait and Balance System and using adaptive equipment to help him draw and paint to improve his hand function. One of his favorite activities was aquatic therapy.

Not Yet!
Avery quickly became known among the staff for his quiet determination, positive attitude, and sense of humor. “The fact that Avery had overcome everything just for this [accident] to happen was mind-blowing,” said Becky. “His attitude was amazing. At Stony Brook, when they did neuro checks, he couldn’t move anything. But when they asked him to squeeze their hands, he would say ‘Not yet!’ rather than ‘I can’t.’”

Continued on page 11
A Father’s Inspiration, continued from page 3

Pushing On
Of course, Martha would rather not be dealing with any of these issues. “It’s scary, and sometimes I cry,” she said. “There are times when you feel sad and overwhelmed, and days when you can’t even put on your socks. And you have to say to yourself, ‘I can’t do that today.’ But then there are times when you slip on that sock, and you go on!” She credits her mother and family with the fact that her father lived for more than 30 years with his tracheostomy. “I also have that support from my husband, children, sister, and brother, and I had it with my father,” Martha said. “If I can’t do something, they are there for me. A big thing is having someone there egging you on, pushing you to do what you can, even when you’re feeling overwhelmed or helpless.”

Helping Others
Because of her positive attitude and the length of time that she’s had the trach, physicians will sometimes ask her to talk to other patients to let them know that having a tracheostomy isn’t the end of the world. “I tell them that you can live with this as long as you take care of yourself,” Martha said. “Does it limit you? Yes, it sometimes does. Is it scary? Sure, but you do get used to it. I don’t even notice mine anymore.”

“‘If I can help someone facing a similar situation, it means a lot. Families can be especially worried about the quality of life someone will have with a permanent trach,” Martha explained. “But families have to go in with a positive attitude. If you don’t, then the patient isn’t going to give 100 percent.”

Miracle Workers
There are residual issues, including loss of sensation, problems with feeling temperature changes, and balance and coordination problems that Avery will have to manage for the rest of his life. But the fact that he can walk without assistance and has regained the use of his hands, including fine motor skills, is fantastic. Reflecting on their experience at Gaylord, Becky said, “I recommend Gaylord to every person I talk to who needs any type of rehab. I mean, the care Avery had here – the nurses, doctors, PTs and OTs – was phenomenal. I call them miracle workers!”

True to form, Avery beat the odds and walked out of Gaylord using a walker on September 30. He returned to Gaylord for outpatient therapy for the next ten months, which included physical, occupational, and aquatic therapy, and the KinesIQ system, a new addition to outpatient therapy that assists with balance and coordination.

Caring and Bonding
When Martha Oquendo first arrived at Gaylord, Care Manager Jennifer Kleinschmidt, RN, BSN, was working as a floor nurse. With each of Martha’s successive admissions to Gaylord, Jen learned more about her and her family. “I’m very attached to Martha. She is truly an amazing woman. There is always a smile on her face and if she isn’t smiling, you know it’s because she’s not feeling well,” said Jen. “As a nurse at Gaylord, you bond with your patients because you spend a lot of time with them. You see them come in with such challenging situations and then they are often able to go home. Just seeing them make progress is so rewarding. Martha is like family to me!”
Gaylord Specialty Healthcare is currently raising $10 million to renovate and modernize the 100 patient rooms and areas, nurses’ stations, staff rooms, and storage areas in Lyman and Hooker. The dated wings, built in the 1950s and 1970s, needed to be modernized to match those in the Milne Pavilion, which was built in 2008.

Work on the first floor of Lyman has been underway since March and is expected to wrap up in late October. Branford’s O,R&L Construction is the main contractor for the project. The first floor of Hooker is next with a completion goal of April 2020.

**Patient room renovations include:**
- Ceiling-mounted patient lifts
- Rearrangement of the headwall medical fixtures
- Smart televisions
- New flooring, paint, and window blinds
- New cabinets, sinks, countertops, and bathroom fixtures
- New beds and furnishings

On Thursday, September 26, 2019, we hosted a Hard Hat Tour to preview some of the recent Lyman renovations. About 80 attendees joined us in the newly redone patient solarium for finger food and to hear about the upgrades from Director of Facilities Bob Hall and VP and Chief Nursing Officer Lisa Kalafus. Attendees then toured areas under construction and saw a new patient room with artist renderings of what a room will look like when completed. President and CEO Sonja Labarbera and VP of Development, PR and Marketing Tara Knapp and other staff greeted attendees, answered questions and received excited, positive feedback about the renovations.