Hope Care Team Earns Gaylord Cup

The December Gaylord Cup recognizes the remarkable Milne 1 complex medical team of Respiratory Therapists and Nurses who went far above and beyond to make an unforgettable moment possible for two ventilator-dependent patients. Many team members had already finished their shifts but chose to stay late, working together to help the patients safely leave their rooms — a feat in itself — and make



their way down to the hallway by the inpatient gym to watch the start of the Lighting Hope celebration.

But they didn't stop there.

continued on page 3...

Mini Trees and Menorahs Brighten Gaylord Hospital

Amazon Spreads Holiday Cheer to Our Patients

Thanks to a generous donation from our community partner, Amazon, every Gaylord Hospital patient who wants one can enjoy a Christmas tree or menorah this holiday season. This marks the fourth consecutive year of partnership with Amazon - bringing over 500 trees and menorahs to brighten patient rooms to date!

We kicked off the season with a visit from Santa (Does he look familiar? Hint – he usually spends his days at the pool…) and his trusty sidekick, Santa Claws.

How did this tradition begin? In December 2022, a young woman arrived at Gaylord Hospital after a long illness left her unable to walk. Spending the holidays away from family and friends, she bought a small Christmas tree for her room and it instantly lifted her spirits. Inspired, she wanted to share that same joy with other patients. With support from her family and friends, she provided trees for 30 rooms. Amazon was so moved by her story that they helped make her goal of spreading holiday cheer to the entire hospital a reality.

Missed the event? Watch Fox 61's coverage:

<u>Gaylord Hospital Patients Receive Some Yuletide At Their Bedside</u>

Check out photos from the day on page 3...

nnovation

reamwork

nclusion

S afety

ntegrity

C ompassion

A ccountability

R espect

E xcellence

FYI DEADLINE

Submissions for the next issue due: **Wed, Dec 17, 2025**Submit requests in JIRA

Our mission is to enhance health, maximize function and transform lives.









Fairfield Clinic Cuts Ribbon With Community Support and Stories of Hope

Community leaders, partners, staff, patients, and families came together to officially cut the ribbon to open Gaylord's new Fairfield County outpatient clinic. The evening featured a standout keynote from Fairfield rehab aide Garrett Mendez and his mother, Eileen, who shared how his inpatient and outpatient recovery at Gaylord following a brain stem stroke prepared him for his current role supporting others as part of the Gaylord team.

Local leaders spoke to Gaylord's broader impact.

First Selectwoman Christine Vitale called the space "the perfect venue for healing."

"I know that your expertise will just bring people past their difficulties to a brighter and healthier future," she shared.

"I term all of you as miracle workers because what you do with people with catastrophic needs is remarkable," said State Senator Tony Hwang.

"All of us know Gaylord as a trusted partner in healthcare," said State Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey. "It's actually those of you who are providing the care day in and day out who are transforming people's lives. You offer hope."

Thank you to everyone who made this evening a success!

Timken Foundation Grant Expands Technology for Nursing Education and Patient Care

Gaylord has received a \$33,750 grant from the Timken Foundation of Canton to purchase five new Workstations on Wheels (WOWs), mobile computer workstations that let nurses access patient information and document care right at the bedside.

Four WOWs will support hands-on training in our Center for Education so new nurses can gain hands-on experience with the technology they will use at the bedside. One WOW will go directly to a patient care unit, helping nurses deliver safe, efficient care where it matters most.

Thank you to the Timken Foundation of Canton and our local partners at Schulz Electric, Power Systems by Timken, for advancing education and strengthening patient care at Gaylord.

Gaylord Cup (continued)

With thoughtful planning and careful coordination, the team then brought both patients *outside* into the courtyard to experience the full magic of the illuminated gardens. For patients who may not have been outdoors in months, the fresh air, twinkling lights, and joy on their faces were the true highlight of the night.

This group's compassion, teamwork, and holiday spirit embody the very best of Gaylord — and truly lit up the season.

Thank You!

Nursing – Alyssa Battick, Angela Savulis, Andrea Lambie and Siobhan Falk Respiratory – Alfea Beusejour, Iliriani Selmani and Tammy Maher

















To help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, SURGICAL MASKS MUST BE WORN CORRECTLY.

Please remember:

- 1. **Staff and volunteers** are required to wear masks in **inpatient clinical areas** and **inpatient gyms**.
- 2. **Visitors** are encouraged—but **not required**—to wear masks at this time.

Infection Prevention 12/4/2025



"Care is powerful. And when we extend it to one another, it becomes culture"

-Mitch Podob

These days, so many are carrying quiet stressors — rising costs, family pressures, uncertainty at home, or simply the weight of a world that feels heavy. You never know what someone beside you might be navigating, and we want every member of our community to know: your wellbeing matters here. Not just as employees, but as whole human beings.

We look out for our patients, and we look out for each other, too.

To supplement Gaylord's existing resources, HR has gathered confidential supports and community resources to help you and your loved ones through whatever life brings big or small.

See the full list of employee and community resources on page 11.





December's Featured Courses:

- Patient Hand-Off and Communications Failures (0.5 credit hours)
- Transferring Safely (0.25 credit hours)
- Leading in the Age of Generative AI (0.5 credit hours)
- Building Up Your **Emotional Intelligence** (0.5 credit hours)

Each month, one lucky scholar will win a raffle prize by completing any one of the monthly featured courses above in Gaylord University!

Keep an eye out in the January 8 edition for December's Scholar Spotlight Winner!

Download the **UKG Pro Learning App** and use access code "gaylord"

To find the featured courses, select: "Training" > "Courses" > then search by course name or topic

Save the Date: Upcoming Education

- **Grand Rounds:** Register in Gaylord University via the Course Calendar
 - Jan 29 12-1p: Kate Rudolph & Jill Hellstrand, Disorders of Consciousness - Kyriacou Lecture Hall
 - Rescheduled for Feb 4, 12-1p: Christopher Conner, Vagus Nerve Stimulation (originally Dec 17)
- Mulligan Movement March 7 & 8, 2026

Is someone you know interested in starting a career in healthcare?

Our CNA Academy is now accepting applications for January 2026!

Whether you're just beginning your journey or looking to take the next step, we're here to help you build the skills and knowledge needed to succeed.

Apply today! https://hubs.la/Q03XvjnR0



Why? Optic sensors in the recycling facilities can't read the color black, therefore these items are not properly sorted and contaminate other materials.

This includes ALL black plastic items - not just food containers!

These pesky black containers are NOT recyclable... but they don't have to end up in the trash right away! Try using them for:

- Storing small items, like craft/office supplies
- Catching water under a potted plant
- Organizing a drawer or shelf (they're stackable!)

What you can do:

- Avoid buying black plastics when possible
- Let businesses know that you would prefer they use recyclable plastic or compostable containers.
- Donate washed, clean containers to your local soup kitchen, or offer for free on facebook marketplace! (They always go fast)

Thank you for your support! We are all contributing to our reduction of waste and the health of our environment.



DONATE those black takeout containers!

Drop off your clean containers in Brooker Lobby or contact Kate Brophy in Marketing.

kbrophy@gaylord.org, x3459

All containers will be donated to Hands on Hartford, helping underserved communities near Kate's hometown, through food access programs, homeless outreach, prevention services, and more.

How Many Ukuleles Does It Take To Start An Impromptu Sing-along? *Evidently, Four*

A big thank you to the Wallingford Ukulele Club, who turned an ordinary weekday into an impromptu holiday musical.

Their bright strumming drew in everyone within earshot — patients, staff, visitors — and before long, a full "Jingle Bells" sing-along had broken out.

Turns out, nothing cuts through winter gloom quite like a few ukuleles and a whole lot of cheer.

<u>Click here</u> to hear them play on our Facebook page.



MISSION COMPLIANCE

MONTHLY INTEL FROM THE RISK SQUAD:

IT, PRIVACY, AND COMPLIANCE



Prevent HIPAA Violations: Stay Compliant Through Policy Awareness

Protecting patient privacy is everyone's responsibility. Gaylord Hospital maintains a comprehensive set of HIPAA policies and procedures designed to safeguard Protected Health Information (PHI) and guide staff in safe, compliant practices.

Every employee should be familiar with the policies and follow the procedures to prevent privacy breaches, maintain patient trust, and ensure we meet federal and state regulatory requirements.

Below is a highlight of key HIPAA policies that can be found on SharePoint under **Policies -> Administrative.**



Megan Fluskey RTA - Wallingford

Glenda Guadagno Respiratory Care Practitioner

Garrett Mendez RTA - Fairfield
Jacob Salee Pharmacist
Jenna Wilborne RN - Hooker 1
Isamar Colon CNA - Hooker 1



Prevent HIPAA Violations by following HIPAA Policies & Procedures









Safety Coaching is an important way to build and sustain our Culture of Safety

Safety Coaches are peer mentors, whose job it is to recognize and acknowledge good high-reliability behavior, and to remind staff about opportunities to improve behavior that does not stay true to a culture of safety.

A Safety Coach's job is to help staff remember our CHAMP Safety Behaviors and Tools.

The Safety Coaches are currently looking for new members to represent nursing services. RN, LPN, PCT, MT, and CSA are all welcome! The Safety Coach meeting is 60 minutes long and held once a month. For those who work on the off shifts, or have time constraints, this meeting can be attended via conference call. This is an excellent opportunity to share safety concerns from your department! Please reach out to Evelyn Bykowski X3278 or Sue Stango X2725 if you are interested in joining!

CHAMP Reminder

BEHAVIORS ASSOCIATED TOOLS

Phonetic & Numeric Clarifications Communicate Clearly

SBAR Hand-Off Effectively

STAR Attention to Detail

Cross Check / Coach Teammates Mentor Each Other

ARCC It Up

Practice & Accept a Questioning Attitude Validate & Verify

Stop the Line - "I need clarity"



Happy Holidays!

The winter season is upon us and we have new seasonal items arriving just in time for gift giving.

The Gift Shop is overflowing with holiday gift ideas, stocking stuffers and warm accessories for the cold winter months! Free wrapping and no sales tax. Your purchase supports Gaylord's Scholarship Program too!

GIFT SHOP HOURS

 Monday
 12:30 PM - 4:30 PM

 Tuesday
 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

 Wednesday
 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

 Thursday
 12:00 PM - 3:30 PM

 Friday
 12:00 PM - 3:30 PM

 Saturday
 CLOSED

 Sunday
 10:30 AM-1:30 PM

Hours may be subject to change

When you shop **tax-free** at the Gaylord Gift Shop, your dollars help fund the Barbara Chase-Lane, Dolly Parisi, and The Kornguth Scholarship Funds. Scholarships are awarded to employees, volunteers, and children of employees/volunteers pursuing an education/degree in Nursing, Allied Health, or in a healthcare-related field.

A formal application process is required and a committee reviews the applications and selects recipients. The number of scholarship recipients is dependent on the amount of monies donated from sales in the Gift Ship and the contributions to the various scholarship funds.

The Gift Shop offers delivery to patient rooms with a minimum \$5 purchase. MC/Visa/Discover accepted.

For information, call (203)741-3235 during store hours.



Need to communicate to all staff in a snap?

If you would like a SnapComms screen saver created, submit a request through **JIRA** (via SharePoint) to let us know. **Please note:** requests emailed directly to team members cannot be guaranteed to be received or processed.



1ST ANNUAL

Cookie Decorating

COME DECORATE SUGAR COOKIES WITH FOOD AND NUTRITION

> December 18, 2:30 pm Cafeteria





Friday, December 19

The featured organization is:

Girls Inc, Meriden

Girls Inc., a national non-profit organization that inspires girls to

be "strong, smart, and bold" through research-based programs, mentorship, and advocacy, providing girls with skills for leadership, healthy living, and economic independence, often serving vulnerable populations in the U.S. and Canada. It offers a pro-girl environment to help girls overcome challenges and reach their potential.

Click here to learn more

Employees need a Jeans for Charity sticker or button to indicate their participation.

Stickers can be purchased for \$2 in the cafeteria, Jackson Java, Jackson 2 outpatient, Human Resources, and all outpatient clinics.

SANTA IS COMING TO GAYLORD!





Live Holiday Music

Join Chaplain Vince and a small (but very merry!) group of Gaylord musicians for an afternoon of holiday favorites in the Inpatient Gym. All are welcome — come soak in the music and the spirit of the season.

> Friday, December 12 at 4pm Inpatient Gym

Questions? Contact Chaplain Vince at VGierer@gaylord.org.

REMINDER

for all emergencies dial 3399



Need to access Gaylord's Employee Assistance Program? Call (860) 233-6228.

Complementary Headshots Available

For anyone who:

- Wants one
- Needs one
- Has been gently told they need one
- Or is reading this and feeling targeted

Thurs, January 15
• 9am–3pm •

Click Here to book your slot

Outpatient headshots available on site.
Contact Kate Brophy with any questions.
x3459 • kbrophy@gaylord.org



CASH or VENMO

only

REMEMBER

Lock your belongings and/or close your door when not in office.







While Supplies Last!

Brooker 316
Between the hours of
8am and 4:30pm

Questions? Reach out to Georgette at x2881

RESOURCES & SUPPORT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

Dear Gaylord Team,

In difficult times, please remember that you are never alone — there are numerous resources available throughout Wallingford and New Haven County to support you and your loved ones. Below is a summary of local and employee services for food, housing, mental health, and more.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

GAYLORD'S EAP is a confidential counseling and support service available 24/7, 365 days a year.

1-888-209-7840 | www.ResourceAdvisor.com

Professional counselors are available to help with:

- Personal or family concerns
- Work stress and career issues
- Financial or legal worries
- Substance use and addiction

Up to 3 free sessions per issue for you or a family member.

Employees also have access to:

RULA (www.RULA.com) – an online platform connecting you with licensed therapists for confidential virtual sessions. Get help with:

- Stress, anxiety, and depression
- Substance misuse
- Family and relationship issues
- Work-life balance

Depending on your benefit package, you may receive between three and twelve counseling sessions per year at no cost.

Food Assistance

GLOW FOOD PANTRY – 26 Parker Farms Rd, Wallingford (Fridays, 3–6 p.m.)

WALLINGFORD YOUTH & SOCIAL SERVICES – Referrals for food and emergency assistance (203) 294-2175 | yss@wallingfordct.gov

CONNECTICUT 2-1-1 – Statewide directory of food pantries and hot meal programs
Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org

Housing and Energy Assistance

Wallingford Youth & Social Services – Emergency and housing support

6 Fairfield Blvd, Wallingford | M-F, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

They provide referrals for youth, families, and seniors, including emergency housing, family counseling, and volunteer opportunities.

New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI) – Energy and heating bill assistance

74 Cambridge St, Meriden | (203) 235-0278 | ct.gov/heatinghelp

Assistance may include help with fuel, electricity, or emergency repairs through Operation Fuel and the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program. Applicants typically need proof of income and documentation such as rental agreements or SNAP/SSI benefits.

Local Social Services

Wallingford Social Services offers help with:

- Emergency food vouchers and pantry referrals
- Energy and benefit screenings
- Advocacy and application assistance
- Referrals to senior, veteran, youth & family programs, and holiday assistance

(203) 294-2175 | Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Director: Mandy Miranda | Caseworker: Kim Stein | Coordinator: Gary Redman

Senior Support

Wallingford Senior Center provides benefit counseling, Meals on Wheels, and more for residents age 60+. (203) 265-7753

Statewide Assistance

CT Dept of Social Services (DSS) offers programs for food, healthcare, financial, and elder care support. Need immediate help? Dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org for 24/7 guidance to local services.



If you or your family are experiencing difficulties, please don't hesitate to reach out to these organizations, or our HR team for additional guidance. We are committed to supporting you — today and always.

- Mitch Podob Vice President. Human Resources

DECEMBER IS SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER AWARENESS MONTH



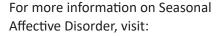
The Behavioral Brief

Your guide to Behavioral resources



Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that typically occurs during the fall and winter mouths, when there is less natural sunlight. If you experience persistent feelings f sadness, fatigue, or loss of interest, it's important to recognize when it might be time to seek help. Treatments such as light therapy, counseling, or medication can help manage your symptoms.



- <u>Seasonal Affective Disorder</u>
 (SAD) | Cigna
- <u>Feeling Depressed | Cigna</u>
- <u>Light Therapy | Cigna</u>



Gratitude is more than just saying "thank you"—it's a mindset that can improve your overall health and happiness. Taking a few moments each day to reflect on what you're thankful for can help reduce stress, improve sleep, and boost your mood. As we head into the season of giving thanks, it's a great time to start a gratitude habit that supports your emotional well-being.

Explore More on Cigna.com:

- Practicing Gratitude
- Mental and Behavioral Health Center
- How to Be Happy: 10 Tips

The Importance of Goal Setting

Setting realistic, meaningful goals is a powerful tool for enhancing motivation and well-being. By giving us direction and purpose, goals provide a sense of clarity and focus that helps us prioritize what's important. Whether you're looking to start a new healthy habit or make progress toward a long-term endeavor, breaking down your goals into actionable steps can increase your chances of success.



- Setting Goals
- Change a Habit by Setting Goals
- <u>Tips for Setting and Sticking</u> to Your Health and Wellness <u>Goals</u>

Did you know Gaylord holds a weekly 'Photo of the Week' Contest on the intranet homepage?

Share your amazing photos with us and your photo may be chosen for display on the intranet homepage for one week for all to see. Please email photo entries to publicrelations@gaylord.org with your name, department, title and brief description of the photo.





Breaking News



2026 LIMITS FOR RETIREMENT PLAN CONTRIBUTIONS

The IRS has announced the 2026 cost-of-living adjustments for 401(a), 401(k), 403(b), and 457(b) governmental plans. The following chart reflects the 2026 limits, as well as the limits for the previous two years.

	CALENDAR YEAR		
	2026	2025	2024
401(k), 403(b), and 457(b) salary deferral limits	\$24,500	\$23,500	\$23,000
Age 50 catch-up contribution for 401(k), 403(b), and 457(b) governmental plan participants	\$8,000	\$7,500	\$7,500
Higher catch-up contribution limit for individuals ages 60, 61, 62 or 63	\$11,250	\$11,250	
FICA wage threshold requiring Roth catch-up	\$150,000	\$145,000	
HIGHLY COMPENSATED EMPLOYEES ¹			
• Compensation in excess of ²	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$155,000
Maximum compensation ³	\$360,000 3	\$350,000 ³	\$345,000 3
INTEGRATION ¹			
Maximum excess allowance	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%
• Social Security taxable wage base ⁴	\$184,500	\$176,100	\$168,600
TOP HEAVY/KEY EMPLOYEES ¹			
Officer having annual compensation from the employer greater than	\$235,000	\$230,000	\$220,000
1% owner of the employer having annual compensation from the employer greater than	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
415 LIMITS			
• Defined benefit plan dollar limit	\$290,000	\$280,000	\$275,000
Defined contribution plan dollar limit	\$72,000	\$70,000	\$69,000

¹ Determined as of the plan year beginning on or within the applicable calendar year.

²An employee who earned more than the indexed amount in the prior year and, if elected by the employer for the plan year, was in the top-paid 20% of employees at the workplace when ranked by compensation for the prior year.

³ Certain governmental plans have grandfathered participants who are subject to a different maximum compensation limit.

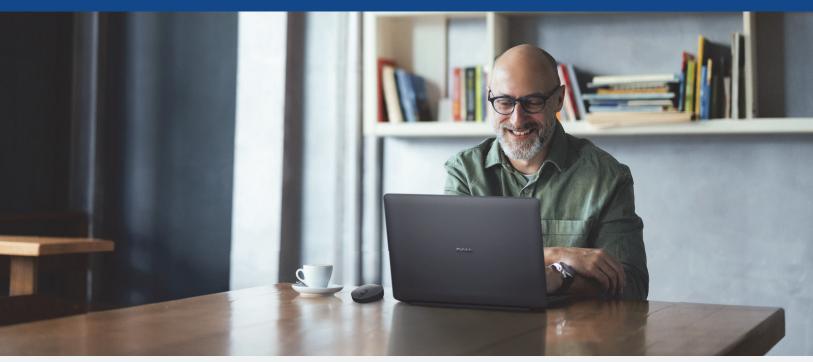
⁴ Announced by the Social Security Administration.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE



The biggest deals are almost gone.

Powerful PCs and accessories make the perfect gift. Plus, get an additional 10% off with your education discount.





On Sale until 12/21 at 7AM CST Dell 16 Plus Laptop \$69999

Save **\$450**

Intel® Core™ Ultra 7 processor, Windows 11 Home, 16GB memory*, 1TB* SSD

OC: USEDB16250HBTSHMGX



On Sale 12/15-12/21 Alienware 16 Aurora Gaming Laptop \$1,04999

Save **\$350**

Intel® Core™ 7 processor, Windows 11 Home, 16GB memory*, 1TB* SSD, NVIDIA® GeForce RTX™ 5060

OC: USEAC16250HBTSHQNX



On Sale 12/15-12/21 Dell 14 Plus Laptop \$64999

Save **\$450**

Intel® Core™ Ultra 7 processor, Windows 11 Home, 16GB memory*, 1TB* SSD

OC: USEDB14250HBTSHKSM



On Sale 12/8-12/14 Alienware 27 360Hz QD-OLED Gaming Monitor - AW2725DF \$55999

Save **\$300**

Immerse yourself in splendid visuals and thrilling speeds with our fastest QD-OLED gaming monitor, featuring QHD resolution, 360Hz refresh rate, and VESA DisplayHDR True Black 400.

Visit Dell.com/Student to access your education discount.

Offers valid 12/8/2025-12/22/2025 AT 6:59 AM ET. unless otherwise noted.

Offers subject to change, not combinable with all other offers. Taxes, shipping, and other fees apply. Free shipping offer valid in Continental U.S. (excludes Alaska and P.O. Box addresses). Offer not valid for Resellers. Dell reserves the right to cancel orders arising from pricing or other errors. Microsoft and Windows are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. Screens simulated, subject to change. Windows Store apps sold separately. App availability and experience may vary by market. Disclaimer: Each participating business in the Dell Member Purchase Program is responsible for distributing this communication to their employees or members in compliance with their own privacy and internal policies and guidelines. Copyright © 2025 Dell Inc. or its subsidiaries. All Rights Reserved. Dell Technologies, Dell, EMC, Dell EMC and other trademarks are trademarks of Dell Inc. or its subsidiaries. Other trademarks may be trademarks of their respective owners. 6046267



