

2020 Annual Report

A Focus on Vision



Strength
at Your Side



Dear Friends –

There is no denying 2020 was a year we will never forget.

It was a year that tested our personal resilience, flexibility and patience.

It forced us to reevaluate and prioritize what we value most in life, which for many of us, caused us to reflect upon the people and things for which we are grateful.



Organizationally, Unity also experienced a year unlike any other. It was a year of cancellation, of quarantine, of uncertainty. However, our commitment to providing the best end-of-life care never wavered. Our teams continued to provide stellar care and support to patients and families. And grief support was needed at an entirely new level so we implemented technology solutions to virtually support grieving individuals and community partners throughout Northeast Wisconsin. In addition, the transition to EPIC, our new electronic health record system, paved the way for improved staff efficiency and enhanced communication with area providers.

But amidst the flurry of Covid-19, we worked, we cared and we strategized. Our vision for the future is now. As we revisited Unity's priorities to lead community transformation in aging, death and grief, now more than ever we have a renewed focus on our vision. We are excited to geographically expand our redesigned palliative program, Supportive Care Management, and launch a new nonmedical home care service, Care Companions, designed to help adults remain independent and safe.

As we continually seek ways to increase access, improve care and provide more care options for patients and families, the core of Unity remains – to provide the best end of life care for all in our communities.

I invite you to continue with us on our journey. Together we will enhance access to quality care and support for those in our communities. Your support makes this possible!

With humble gratitude,

Alisa A. Gerke, Executive Director

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Amy James, MD Joins Unity as Medical Director

Unity welcomed Dr. Amy James, MD as Medical Director in June. She brings to Unity nearly 20 years of combined experience in hospice care, palliative care and internal medicine and served most recently as Palliative Care Director for Bellin Health. Dr. James is responsible for the review and certification of patient referrals to Unity's hospice and palliative care programs as well as the oversight of patients' medical care and treatment plans. She is an integral part of patient care teams and guides the work of those who provide direct services to our patients while maintaining compliance with current standards of hospice care.



"I am overjoyed to join the Unity family. I have so much respect for this organization and their mission and am grateful for this opportunity."

– Amy James, MD

An EPIC Launch

In 2020, Unity embarked on an extensive state-of-the-art technology system implementation in order to upgrade our electronic health record system (EHR). As we remain committed to ongoing technology enhancements that best support our patients, families and staff, we saw this major undertaking as a way to more efficiently provide Unity patient care teams and administrative staff the software tools needed to manage real-time digital information about each Unity patient. EPIC allows enhanced real-time tracking of important information such as patient demographics, primary caregiver contact information, scheduled and completed visits, care plans for all Unity disciplines (nursing, social work, and chaplains), medication lists and patient supply needs. Each patient visit is clearly documented within the system which ensures patient information is readily available to all members of the patient's care team. Rated by healthcare providers as the best acute and best ambulatory EHR for physician productivity and effectiveness, Unity worked with Bellin Health, one of our hospital partners, to build and implement this state-of-the-art technology software system. The year-long process included 15 Unity work groups who held hundreds of Zoom and WebEx meetings in order to design, build, test and implement the system. Throughout the complex implementation, our patient care staff remained committed to learning the processes and are now finding the documentation flow easier than our previous EHR system. EPIC is certainly improving real-time communication and information sharing with our hospital partners Bellin Health, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital and HSHS St. Mary's Medical Center, as well as Prevea Health and other clinic and hospital systems, which is enhancing the continuum of care experience for patients and families we collectively serve.

Grief Services Expands to Meet Greater Need

Unity's vision of a community where no one must grieve alone has guided our grief support programming. Recent research undertaken by Unity showed that a handful of other organizations offer adjunct grief support in Northeast Wisconsin, but none offer the level of comprehensive services and experience provided by Unity. Research also emphasized the increasing need for grief support in workplace and school settings.

The depth of professional expertise of our Grief Services team, consisting of six Grief Counselors, Master's Level Counseling Interns and trained volunteers, positions Unity to meet the growing and evolving needs of those grieving in our communities. We are excited to share that planning is underway to explore additional workplace and school grief support programming as well as space in our community to provide healing in a caring, warm environment.

Unity's Grief Services are also offered virtually. Visit www.unityhospice.org/virtual-grief-support or call 920-338-1111 for more information.

Jack and Engrid Meng Hospice Residence

Thanks to impeccable infection control practices, Unity's patients at the Meng Hospice Residence and their families remained safe throughout COVID. While important protocols prevented the spread of illness, steps were also taken to ensure quality of living. Although we needed to limit the number of family members who could visit at one time and proper PPE was required, we continued to allow patients the opportunity to spend meaningful, in-person time with loved ones. These face-to-face visits are critical to the well-being of our patients and families. Other changes included:

- In place of face-to-face visits by therapy dog Chloe, a life size cardboard cutout of Chloe was created as a happy reminder of her visits.
- Weekly fresh floral donations from buds n blooms lifted spirits.
- A donor "flamingoed" the Residence in honor of a family member who passed at the Meng Hospice Residence.
- Administrative staff shared holiday cheer and joy with residents by caroling at their windows.
- The grounds, gardens and walking trails were utilized tremendously this year by patients and families and also those in the community who wanted to enjoy time together outdoors. Unity wishes to extend a tremendous thank you to IEI Construction for their generous donation of materials and labor to update and expand the Memorial Garden bench and brick areas.
- We also made sure to provide much-needed spiritual support, with 94% of residents requesting chaplain visits during the last seven days of life.



Unity Awarded \$204,000 Bader Philanthropies Grant over Two Years

Unity received one of five "CONNECT—Socially Isolated Older Adults and How Technology Can Help" grants awarded by Bader Philanthropies, Inc. to help reduce social isolation and loneliness, two serious yet underappreciated public health risks that affect a significant portion of older adults.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and immediate social distancing restrictions, this grant proved invaluable to those on our program. This funding allowed Unity to purchase iPads, train staff and purchase licenses so patients, families and care teams could remain connected. By the end of 2020, the grant made possible:

- Enhanced service to 79 hospice patients by connecting them virtually to care teams and family members.
- Supported 64 bereaved clients by connecting them virtually with grief counselors and grief support groups.

The grant work will continue throughout 2021 as we continue to build upon ways to connect socially isolated older adults with friends, family members and care teams.

Bader Philanthropies, Inc., is a Milwaukee-based foundation, committed to improving the quality of life of the diverse communities in which it works. The organization funds innovative projects and programs, convenes partners, and shares knowledge to affect emerging issues in key areas such as Alzheimer's & Health Aging, Employment, The Arts, Urban & Jewish Education and Youth Development.



Unity hospice patient connects virtually with her two siblings, ages 97 and 99, via Zoom. The siblings had not seen each other for nearly one year due to COVID-19 nursing home restrictions. Funds from Bader Philanthropies brought such joy and peace to these siblings!

Unity to Launch Nonmedical Home Care Service in Fall 2021

Unity recognizes many older adults require nonmedical support in their homes to maintain or improve their quality of life and retain their independence. Research shows it can be overwhelming to find and access quality and trusted services throughout the 13 counties we serve. To transform the way we age in Northeast Wisconsin and reinforce Unity's relevancy within the healthcare continuum, Unity plans to launch Care Companions in fall 2021. This new service will help adults remain independent and safe in the caring environment of their choice by providing nonmedical support which includes companionship, light housekeeping, errand running, meal preparation and assistance with feeding, bathing, grooming, toileting, dressing and taking medications.



HOSPICE CARE QUICK FACTS

- 1,893** Number of our family, friends and neighbors who received hospice care
- 347** Number of Veterans who received hospice care
- 11** Average age of pediatric patients who received hospice care
- 63,786** Number of visits made to hospice patients by a member of Unity's care team
- 81%** Percentage of patients who lived their final days outside of a hospital setting

GRIEF SUPPORT QUICK FACTS

- 4,306** Number of individuals who benefited from Unity's grief support services
- 368** Number of hours grief counselors spent facilitating support groups
- 8,239** Number of phone calls made by grief counselors to provide support
- 100%** Percentage of *Navigating Grief, Generations, Hope and the Holidays*, and *Grief Connect* attendees who would recommend the support groups to others¹

¹ Source: 2020 Unity Grief Support Survey

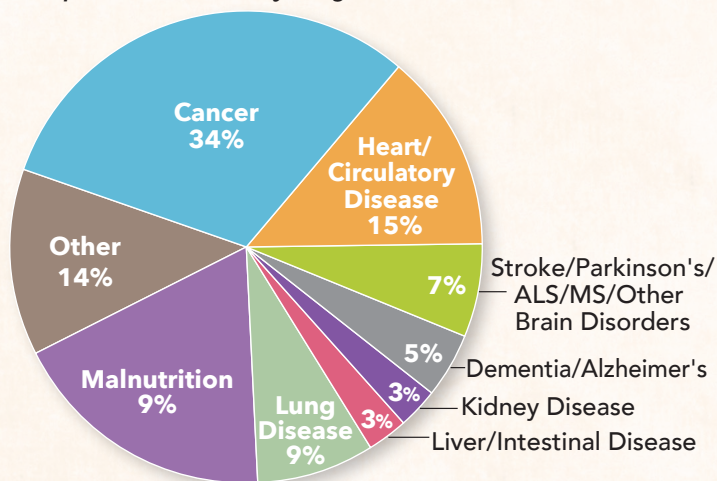
VOLUNTEER SERVICE QUICK FACTS

- 291** Number of total volunteers
- 32** Number of new volunteers
- 11,681** Hours served
- \$337,519** Value of service
- 21** Number of patients served by Unity's Veteran to Veteran Companion Program
- 634** Number of memorial bears and pillows handcrafted from the cherished garments of loved ones to serve as lasting keepsakes

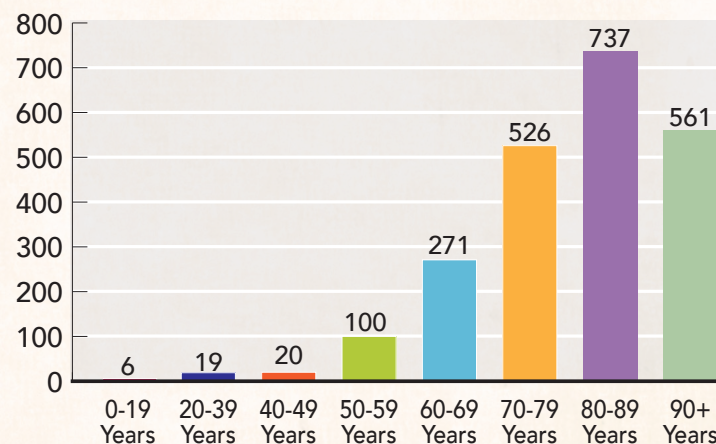
PALLIATIVE CARE QUICK FACTS

- 68** Number of our family, friends and neighbors who received palliative care
- 886** Number of visits made to palliative patients by a member of Unity's care team

Hospice Admissions by Diagnosis



Hospice Admissions by Age



Family Creates Florence Kowalkowski RN Scholarship for Unity Staff

Due to the financial challenges Florence faced while pursuing her nursing degree, and the compassionate care she received from Unity's dedicated caregivers during her final months of life, her family created the Florence Kowalkowski RN scholarship to help provide financial assistance to a Unity staff person pursuing a career of service through nursing.

For Florence Kowalkowski, the discipline of nursing offered something more profound than a vocation; it fulfilled a life-long spiritual calling. Florence graduated from St. Mary's School of Nursing in 1949 and, through nursing, positively impacted many lives. In addition to her work in hospitals and clinics, she devoted herself to in-home care for terminally ill friends and neighbors, even before the advent of hospice. After retiring, Florence continued to embody the spirit of nursing by volunteering for Unity.

A heartfelt thank you to Florence's family for this meaningful scholarship.



Florence Kowalkowski raised four children with her husband, Frank. She was honored as a Press Gazette "Everyday Hero" and was named Mother of the Year by the Assumption B.V.M. Council of Catholic Women. Florence inspired those around her, including her children and grandchildren, with her positivity, work-ethic and good humor.

Unity Joins Wisconsin Nonprofit Hospice Providers to Create Wisconsin Hospice and Palliative Care Collaborative

Unity Hospice has joined together with Wisconsin's leading nonprofit hospice and palliative care organizations to form the Wisconsin Hospice & Palliative Care Collaborative (WHPCC), a strategic partnership focused on enhancing access to quality care for chronically and seriously ill patients in an era marked by rapidly changing reimbursement structures.

WHPCC, now formally incorporated as a 501(c)(3) provider network, is comprised of Unity Hospice, Agrace, Rainbow Hospice Care, Hospice Alliance and Sharon S. Richardson Community Hospice. Together, WHPCC serves a geography where nearly 80 percent of Wisconsin's 5.8 million people live. WHPCC's vast geographic footprint enables the network to efficiently partner directly under a single contract for home-based, supportive services.

In many ways, launching WHPCC formalizes the collaborative work in which these innovative community hospices have been engaged since 2006. Over the past decade, this strategic partnership has enabled the

standardization of best practices including, but not limited to, hospice eligibility decisions, clinical documentation, quality benchmarking, diversity and inclusion, staff education and volunteer management. Collectively, all of these innovations have improved the quality of hospice and palliative care throughout the state of Wisconsin while delivering cost savings to the market.

WHPCC members continue their long tradition as independent organizations. The focus will be to leverage decades of expertise in community-based care in order to meet the changing needs of seniors. With the extra layer of support that the collaborative provides, those with serious illness or those with advanced disease can often age in place at a lower cost. WHPCC members are the experts in delivering care in this environment.

For more information about WHPCC, visit www.whpcc.org.

Unity Introduces Supportive Care Management

Unity's redesigned palliative program, Supportive Care Management, offers those living with advanced chronic illness such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, respiratory illness, Alzheimer's disease and kidney disease a wrap-around service to help manage symptoms and stress, provide education on illness and medications, initiate engaging conversation about goals, hopes and fears, and provide recommendations in collaboration with their health care providers.

Research shows patients with advanced illness have a favorable impression of the term "supportive care" over "palliative care." Patients are more likely to equate supportive care with enhanced communication, education, and psychological and social support. Additional research shows providers are more likely to refer patients to a service named "supportive care."



SUPPORTIVE CARE MANAGEMENT

For people living with advancing chronic illness

Goal is disease management

Nurse practitioner, registered nurse, social worker, chaplain and provider care team visits

Coverage provided by private insurance and grant funding

Curative and life-prolonging treatments acceptable for all ages



WHAT BOTH HAVE IN COMMON

Focus on dignity, optimizing quality living and avoiding unnecessary hospitalizations

Ongoing education related to disease process and changing care needs

Personalized care plans based on wishes of patient that specify care goals, shared collaboratively with the patient's primary provider

Care team visits made wherever patient calls home

Seamless care that follows patient into all settings including hospital, skilled nursing facility, assisted living facility, and or private home

24 hour access to RN telephone consultation



HOSPICE CARE

For people with a life expectancy of six months or less

Goal is to support the highest quality of life possible for time remaining

Scheduled and urgent registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, certified nursing assistant, social worker, chaplain, grief counselor and care team visits

Full coverage, including medications, supplies and equipment related to terminal prognosis, provided by Medicare, Medicaid, VA and private insurance

Life-prolonging treatments acceptable for pediatric patients ages 18 and under only

Trained volunteers available for companionship, socialization and caregiver respite

Respecting Valor Veteran Pinnings and Flag Raisings

Unity recognizes the significant sacrifices so many in our community have made in support of our freedoms. As a proud partner of We Honor Veterans, Unity is committed to providing Veteran-centered care and honoring our nation's heroes. As such, we honor local veterans by offering flag raising events to our facility partners and conducting pinning ceremonies for all veterans on our programs. During a flag raising ceremony, Unity veteran volunteers retire the existing facility flag and raise a new flag, provided in part by De Pere VFW 2113 and Unity. Unity then honors all veterans from the facility by reading the creed of the appropriate branch of service, conducting individual pinnings and presenting each veteran with a certificate honoring his or her service. Despite modifications to our pinning and flag raising ceremonies in order to be compliant with social distancing guidelines, all veterans who participated shared their heartfelt appreciation.



Gathering of Remembrance

Remembering and honoring a loved one is an important part of healing after a loss. With the goal of creating connection during a time of social distancing, Unity offered virtual spring and fall Gathering of Remembrance events which included reflective music, candle lighting and inspirational messages of hope and healing. Feedback from the spring service guided the development of an informed consent process which allowed us to share the names of loved ones during our fall event.

Unity Holds First Online Auction

During a year that required flexibility and creativity, Unity held our first-ever online auction in November to help fund patient care. The auction featured unique items and services which were purchased from the comfort of home. Items ranged from a virtual wine tasting donated by LedgeStone Vineyards, to a diamond necklace donated by Rummele's Jewelers. Mark your calendars for this year's auction to be held **Friday, November 26 - Wednesday, December 1**. To donate or join the planning committee, please call our Development Department at **920-338-1111**.

Unity's 6th Annual Honor a Life Holiday Gathering



Music provided by Hannah Rose VW.

Typically attended by 300 people at the National Railroad Museum, this year's Honor a Life Holiday Gathering was held virtually and viewed by nearly 5,000 people. The moving ceremony included songs, words of hope and the inclusion of 111 names of loved ones who died and were being honored and remembered. While we hope to gather in person again this year, we will continue to offer a virtual option. A special thank you to Cellcom for once again sponsoring this meaningful holiday event.



"As you make your way through the shadows of grief, embrace the warmth of the sky to guide you in finding peace and the promise of light. In the glow of the lantern may you find hope and light within."

– Carlie Petersen,
Ornament Artist

Unity Launches Gifted Wishes

Unity launched Gifted Wishes, a program that helps make end-of-life wishes come true for hospice patients. The launch was funded by monetary donations made by Unity employees, as well as a matching \$10,000 grant awarded by the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation. The Gifted Wishes program has brought patients and families joy and happiness during some of their most difficult times.

Wishes granted through the program range in size and complexity, however, each holds a uniquely special place in the hearts of those who receive them. Examples of granted wishes include: a special dinner, supplies to make a keepsake such as a finger imprint or jewelry, a bear that plays the recorded voice of the patient relaying a special message, and an electronic tablet to communicate with loved ones. "In a time of such sadness and grief, Gifted Wishes gives patients and families so much light and hope," said Jane, a Unity Social Worker.



Ruth, a Maine native, grew up with a love of seafood. Since moving to Wisconsin, nothing compared to the seafood from out east. Ruth's wish was to enjoy her very favorite seafood meal from back home – clams! Unity's Gifted Wishes program was able to grant this wish for Ruth and have fresh clams delivered right to her home.

Donate today to help make more Gifted Wishes come true. Learn more at unityhospice.org/giftedwishes.

Ways Your Gift Makes an Impact

- \$50** One month's attendance for a child at Unity's Generations, the area's only community grief engagement support group designed for grieving families with children and teens ages 4-18
- \$60** Three Veteran lap afghans handcrafted by Unity volunteers
- \$150** Helps provide basic needs for Veterans on our hospice program
- \$295** One night of hospice stay at Unity's Jack & Engrid Meng Hospice Residence for a patient with limited or absent financial resources
- \$400** Helps fulfill the final wishes of hospice patients made possible through Unity's Gifted Wishes program
- \$500** A personalized 4" x 8" Memorial or Honorarium Brick installed in Unity's Gardens
- \$1,000** A personalized 8" x 8" Memorial or Honorarium Brick installed in Unity's Gardens
- \$1,475** Five nights of hospice stay at Unity's Jack & Engrid Meng Hospice Residence for a patient with limited or absent financial resources
- \$2,000** Annual Compassionate Touch® training, licensing and materials used by our Certified Nursing Assistants to reduce pain, anxiety and depression through this skilled touch technique
- \$2,500** Helps support annual maintenance and beautification of Unity's Memorial Gardens

As a nonprofit 501(c)(3), your donation to Unity may be tax deductible. There may be further tax advantages with planned giving. Contact Unity's Development Department for more information.

Unity Resale Shoppe, LLC is Open and Thriving!

Voted Best of the Bay for the second year in a row, Unity Resale Shoppe, LLC offers a beautiful and ever-changing array of household goods, furniture and clothing at incredibly low prices. Proceeds from sales help fund Unity's CommUnity Care, a financial assistance program that ensures everyone in our service area has access to Unity's services, regardless of ability to pay. Unity Resale Shoppe, LLC welcomes donations of furniture, décor and clothing from anyone in the community during all shoppe hours.

The Shoppe is staffed by over 60 volunteers who donated nearly 7000 hours in 2020. These volunteers help accept donations, price items, stage items and cashier. While closed early in the year due to COVID, the two Unity staff managers worked to bolster online sales, reorganize the sales space, expand the shoppe's social media presence and maintain customer engagement. Some of our merchandise can now be found on Poshmark, Mercari and eBay. Customers can also stay up to date by liking our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/UnityResaleShoppeLLC/](https://www.facebook.com/UnityResaleShoppeLLC/).

To shop, donate or join our amazing volunteer team, give us a call or send us a message!

Unity Resale Shoppe, LLC

1641 Commanche Ave., Green Bay, WI
920-339-5501
[Facebook.com/UnityResaleShoppeLLC/](https://www.facebook.com/UnityResaleShoppeLLC/)

Store and Donation Hours

Monday-Thursday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Friday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Store hours may vary during holiday season.





Strength
at Your Side

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WWW.UNITYHOSPICE.ORG

If you wish to no longer receive newsletters from Unity, please contact our office to be removed from the mailing list.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tom Bayer, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital
Doreen Kluth, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital
Jody Wilmet, Bellin Health

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Functions as Unity's Board of Directors

Amber Allen, HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center
Patty Allen, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital
Brian Burnette, MD, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital
Amy James, MD, Bellin Health
Kathy Kerscher, Bellin Health
Kathryn LaFond, MD, Bellin Health
Sally Luehring, HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center
Ken Nelson III, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital
Therese Pandl, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital
Paul Pritchard, MD, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital
Lois Van Abel, Bellin Health
Beth Wagner, Bellin Health
Helen Wellens, Bellin Health

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Functions as Unity's Philanthropy Ambassadors

Pete Baeten, Volunteer, Retired
Jo Beno, Retired Vice President Private Banking
Mike Blaney, Retired Funeral Director
Rob Charapata, Funeral Director
JoAnn Cotter, Partner, Retired, Wipfli LLP; VP – AfterCare, Cotter Funeral Homes and Cremation Care
Dee Geurts-Bengtson, Director of Corporate and Foundation Sponsorships, St. Norbert College

PATIENT AND FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Tina Bryson
Lisa Corbeille
Ruth Heffernan
William Hinkfuss
Jennifer Kaufmann
Mark Kralovec
Laura Krause
Tracey Mayo
Mark Richards
Christi Schlueter
Gwen Wilke
Deb Winters

Request a Virtual or In-Person Educational Speaker

Unity offers free education on a variety of end-of-life topics for members of faith communities, civic groups, clubs, schools, businesses and health care organizations. Education is presented by experienced physicians, nurses, social workers, counselors, chaplains, certified nursing assistants and administrative staff. All presentations can be tailored to meet your time requirements and area of interest.

AVAILABLE TOPICS

- Advance Care Planning
- Care for the Caregiver
- Care of the Dying/Hospice 101
- Compassion Fatigue
- End-of-Life Symptom Management
- Grief and Loss
 - Children and Grief
 - Grief and Self Care
 - Grief in the Workplace
 - Journey of Grief
 - Life after Caregiving
 - Talking to Children about Death and Dying
- Respecting Valor Veteran Centered Care



Call 920-338-1111 to schedule a free education session.

What Legacy would you like to leave Northeast Wisconsin?



A legacy gift to Unity ensures your values live on while you make a lasting impact for generations to come. Whether you choose to gift a specific dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, or life insurance, you'll make a profound difference in the long term sustainability of Unity and the end-of-life experience of those in our community. To discuss legacy gift options, please call our Director of Development at **920-339-5571**. If you are leaving a legacy gift to Unity, please let us know!