



News Release

Contact: Amy Blaser, Vice President

Phone: 402-562-3371

Email: [aebblaser@columbushosp.org](mailto:aebblaser@columbushosp.org)

Date: July 5, 2022

### **Help others, help yourself — volunteer at Columbus Community Hospital**

#### **For Immediate Release**

**(COLUMBUS, Neb.)** – Columbus Community Hospital is looking for volunteers and VolunTEENs to help provide the best care to its patients, families, visitors and medical staff. It's a need that has intensified because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"The pandemic was hard on our volunteer program," said Angie Ramaekers, director of volunteer and guest services at the hospital.

On March 16, 2020, the hospital suspended volunteer shifts for the overall safety of staff and volunteers. In late 2020, some volunteers were allowed to return, but most remained furloughed. The hospital reopened all volunteer shifts in July 2021. "Many of our volunteers did not return," Ramaekers said.

Volunteers are an invaluable part of the hospital. They serve as an extension of the health care team and focus on various fundraisers for medical equipment and programs.

While they help the hospital, volunteering also helps them. Those who take time to volunteer can reap physical and mental rewards.

Volunteers tend to be more active, and research shows many chronic health conditions become better after volunteering. It also helps their mental state, decreases stress and gives them a sense of accomplishment. Volunteering can help with social connections and create new friendships.

"Volunteers often acknowledge they feel younger because they stay active, which helps to improve physical health and mental health, and is also a way for people to build and maintain friendships," said Ramaekers.

Other benefits include the following:

- Free flu shots.
- Free annual wellness blood draws.



- Cardiopulmonary membership discounts.
- Experience and references for future placements.
- Inclusion in hospital and volunteer activities.
- Tax credits for travel.
- Cafeteria discounts.

To become a volunteer at the hospital, people must make a minimum of a one-year commitment to volunteering, have a friendly attitude, provide references and complete an application, background check, orientation and annual training. In addition to those requirements, VolunTEENs must be between 14-18 years old and current high school students.

"Students can do career exploration through volunteer service," said Ramaekers. "VolunTEENs also have an opportunity to build relationships with health care professionals, which may benefit them with employment references or even paid work opportunities down the road."

Once they are accepted into the program, hospital staff will assign each volunteer or VolunTEEN to an area and task that fits their special talents, interests and needs.

To learn more or become a volunteer, please visit [columbushosp.org](http://columbushosp.org) or call volunteer services at 402-562-4791.

###