

ELLIS INSIGHT



Ellis
MEDICINE



Katie Dzikas, RN

Times Union photo

RNs Appreciate the Benefit of Your Support

When presented with the opportunity to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, nurses at Ellis were pleasantly surprised.

Over the past year, The Foundation for Ellis Medicine has raised funds to help Ellis employed Registered Nurses (RNs) return to school to earn their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees. After a rigorous application and screening protocol, in late 2017, the first four nurses were selected to receive awards that will help offset tuition costs associated with their return to college this past spring.

Made possible solely through philanthropy, the BSN Education fund provides tuition for qualified college programs, after the approved Hospital tuition reimbursement is used. In return for the award, the RN will commit to continuing his/her profession at Ellis for five years.

Katie Dzikas and Meredith Rutsky are two of the first nurses to be selected for an award.

Katie works in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Ellis and has always intended

to earn her BSN. Before coming to Ellis, she worked as a veterinary technician for several years, but she desired greater opportunities for advancement and the ability to make a difference.

Katie's mother, a critical care nurse for 30 years, warned Katie away from nursing, knowing all too well that the job requires long hours and is intense – no less than life or death, every single day. But when Katie's mother became critically ill and Katie witnessed firsthand the powerful impact nurses made in saving her mother's life, she was hooked.

Hired by Ellis in 2015, Katie is now enrolled in the new BSN program at Siena College. "In just a few weeks into my BSN program, I have learned more than I can put into words. I have learned that I play a deeper and broader role in the bigger picture of healthcare than I ever understood possible."

Meredith Rutsky is a RN currently working in Ellis's Cardiac Care unit. Hired in 2014, Meredith says, "I'm now just a few years out from that moment when my

vocation became a reality. From the shock and awe of realizing that when someone yelled for a nurse, they meant me, and that for 12 hours a day I am someone's lifeline. I know that a small mistake can have dire consequences, but a small kindness can make someone whole."

Meredith knows that her continued success in nursing begins with further education, and the critical thinking skills she is gaining while earning her BSN are a necessary part of that.

Nurses are surrounded by clinicians: pharmacists, physicians, physical and occupational therapists, among others, all with advanced degrees. Studies have shown that nurses with more education are more conversant with their colleagues and therefore provide better care. Nursing leaders at Ellis are urging RNs to go back to school to enhance their skills, become eligible for promotions, and provide more advanced care. This program is working. For the next round of awards the number of applicants is up.

“In just a few weeks into my BSN program, I have learned more than I can put into words. I have learned that I play a deeper and broader role in the bigger picture of healthcare than I ever understood possible.”

KATIE DZIKAS
Nursing Degree Award Recipient

Ellis is investing in our own, and Katie, Meredith and others are on track to complete their BSN in a few short years. All of this is made possible thanks to our generous donors. We are deeply grateful for your support. ●

Sowing the Seeds for the Future

Esther Swanker was enamored of gardening. She tended, cultivated, worked, grew, and raised plants not only in her garden but in her community.

Esther was an advocate, activist, volunteer, and tireless worker for Ellis and for a multitude of organizations that she touched throughout her lifetime.

When she passed away earlier this year at the age of 90, she planted one final garden, one that will continue to grow long after her other gardens have faded. Esther left a generous bequest to The Foundation for Ellis Medicine in her Will, helping safeguard the quality of healthcare in the community for generations to come.

Ellis was very fortunate to have Esther as a friend, energetic volunteer and generous donor during her lifetime. Her impact can be felt across every campus. At the McClellan Street Health Center her rooftop garden – given in memory of her late husband, Henry – is an outdoor sanctuary for the residents of the Ellis Center for Long Term Care. During the warm seasons, you'll find the residents enjoying the sunshine and visiting with their families – a scene



Esther Swanker in her garden in 2007

Esther envisioned when she helped design the beautiful outdoor space. On the Bellevue campus, she brought back to life the garden that, like the new moms giving birth inside, brings new blooms and new life every year. And at Ellis Hospital on Nott Street, her gifts are everywhere. Her final gift last year immortalized her and Henry among our most Distinguished Donors. Their portrait now hangs alongside notable community donors including John Belanger, Chuck Carl, and Neil and Jane Golub, among others who are recognized for contributing more than \$1 million to Ellis throughout their lifetimes.

In addition to countless other volunteer activities throughout the community, Esther played a leadership role in all

aspects of fundraising for the hospital, cultivating others to follow her lead. Her motivation was simple: Esther was devoted to this community, and through her actions and generosity worked tirelessly to make our region a better place in which to live and work.

With her final gift, Esther has left her legacy – her devotion to caring for others while making sure that Ellis continues to provide outstanding healthcare today and for decades to come. ●

Grow Your Gift for the Future

Name Ellis as a beneficiary of your Will, Trust, or insurance policy and join Esther in ensuring that great care, close to home, will be available today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

To learn more, contact **The Foundation for Ellis Medicine** at 518-243-4600 or freare@ellismedicine.org.



Sometimes a rate increase is a good thing!

What's Your Rate?

With a minimum gift of \$10,000, a charitable gift annuity through The Foundation for Ellis Medicine is a simple contract that:

- Offers attractive, fixed lifetime payments – which are not subject to stock market fluctuations – for up to two individuals.
- May provide you with tax advantages.
- Provides crucial support – used as you direct – for the lifesaving work performed at Ellis Medicine.

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY RATES ARE ON THE RISE THIS JULY!

The American Council on Gift Annuities announced rates are going up July 1, 2018, which means the benefits of supporting your community's hospital are going up as well.

Sample Charitable Gift Annuity Rates

ONE LIFE			TWO LIVES		
AGE	OLD RATE	NEW RATE	AGE	OLD RATE	NEW RATE
65	4.7%	5.1%	65/70	4.4%	4.7%
75	5.8%	6.2%	75/80	5.3%	5.7%
80	6.8%	7.3%	80/85	6.1%	6.6%
90	9.0%	9.5%	90/95	8.8%	9.3%

FOR MORE INFORMATION on how your gift to The Foundation for Ellis Medicine can work for you, please contact: **Beth** at 518.243.4600 or email at foundation@ellismedicine.org

Thoughtful Philanthropy

In a healthcare environment where operating margins are thin, philanthropy becomes mission-critical. Philanthropy provides the funding that improves the patient experience and allows the hospital to invest in the latest technology.

Your support and partnership resulted in many proud moments in 2017, and every milestone will continue to impact patients and their families for years to come. Although there are many, we highlight three significant accomplishments funded by philanthropy last year.

- The need for mental health services in our community is overwhelming, and in 2017, we celebrated the opening of our new and expanded outpatient Mental Health Clinic on State Street in Schenectady. The clinic will help more people and provide Ellis an exceptional opportunity to grow these essential services. The community supported this project gifts totaling nearly \$500,000.
 - The new \$19.4M, state-of-the-art Center for Surgical & Interventional Medicine brings increased capacity for our surgeons and more advanced treatment options to deliver better care and comfort for our patients and families. More than \$1 million in community support was donated last year alone.
 - Nurses are the lifeblood of every hospital and Ellis is no exception. In 2017, Ellis launched a new BSN Nursing Education program, funded entirely by philanthropy, to provide financial assistance to Ellis employed nurses returning to school to attain their bachelor's or master's degrees. (See page 1 for more details about this wonderful program)
- At Ellis, we know that patients are at the heart of everything we do. Their connections aren't so much with the hospital as they are with the amazing people who provide quality care—from nurses and doctors to patient liaisons and Ellis Foundation staff. It is this connection that drives philanthropy.

Thank you for helping Ellis care for our community! ●



New mother Shanora White, center, accepts a new infant car seat made possible by UHY Advisors



Ellis' Belanger School of Nursing students line up for graduation

IN ADDITION TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS HIGHLIGHTED ABOVE, THE FOUNDATION SUPPORTED A WIDE ARRAY OF NEEDS, INCLUDING:

- Equipment for radiation therapy cancer treatment
- New infant car seats for parents in need
- Care and upkeep of Ellis gardens
- Orthopedic surgical equipment
- New software for the Visiting Nurses Service (VNS) to provide better care in the community
- Dental equipment for the Residency Program
- Research to support the latest treatment for bee stings
- State-of-the-art surgical equipment to remove cataracts
- Belanger School of Nursing graduation awards and scholarships
- Equipment for women's surgery at Bellevue
- New beds for the nursing home
- Training and continuing education of nurses and respiratory and radiology techs
- A new outdoor playground for the inpatient adolescent mental health unit
- Mission trip to Uganda for a Family Medicine resident
- Renovations and furnishings to create a family respite room on the cancer care/hospice unit
- Continued support for the new Golub Center for Emergency Care and Bellevue Woman's Center



Ellis' Dental Clinic received new equipment to better care for patients. Shown above, Diana C. Sandu, D.M.D., program director, Dental Residency.

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**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

WOMENS NIGHT OUT
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2018
Rivers Casino and Resort
Schenectady

CARDIAC CLASSIC 5K
THANKSGIVING DAY,
NOVEMBER 22, 2018
Central Park, Schenectady

For more information, call
Rob Schmitz at **518.243.4600** or
visit ellismedicine.org/foundation

The Healers Gift

Our region is rich with history and influential people. Some have their names on buildings and streets, while others fly under the radar, equally as persuasive.

Dr. Michael Novak was a local board certified internist and nephrologist and resident physician educator. Inquisitive by nature, Dr. Novak was known for his uncanny diagnostic ability. Area physicians would consult with Novak when stumped by a patient's symptoms and illnesses. He was a master of the differential diagnosis – identifying patients' ailments based on a careful analysis of their symptoms – and a lifesaving healer.

During his career, Dr. Novak also dedicated his time to the Ellis [formerly St. Clare's] Family Medicine Residency program teaching new physicians to look at things out of the box, to ask questions, and, most importantly, to connect with patients. Novak was a spiritual man who was fascinated by history, especially World War II, with a deep personal connection to Israel. He passed away unexpectedly in 2013.

Dr. Novak's widow, Agatha, made a gift in memory of her husband that will benefit an outstanding, graduating resident each year for the next five years. She will present an award at the June graduation, five years after his death. Agatha's gift will continue the legacy that Dr. Novak so lovingly instilled in others: a strong commitment to medicine, teaching and lifelong learning. ●



Agatha and her late husband Dr. Novak

**MAKING YOUR EXPERIENCE
EXCEPTIONAL FROM THE
MOMENT YOU ARRIVE TO
THE MOMENT YOU LEAVE**

Free, professional valet
parking at Ellis Hospital

Main Entrance on Nott Street

*Access wheelchairs and scooters
directly from your vehicle*

 **Valet Park**
OF AMERICA
Driving You Forward™

STAYING CONNECTED

