

# HEALTH HOPE OPPORTUNITY

## A Beacon of Hope

Sheldon Clubhouse is a member-driven community supporting people who have severe and persistent mental health challenges. The members receive many benefits as they journey to mental wellness. They learn to build relationships, find resources, develop skills, and set goals to live a fuller life.

Leasa came from a very dark place. When mental illness and depression took over, she spent 16 years in her apartment with the blinds drawn. She only left when she had to be hospitalized. She wanted more out of life but did not know where to start. Cherry Health practitioners worked with her through therapy, coaching, and medication adjustments. They also referred Leasa to Cherry Health's Sheldon Clubhouse program, where her rebirth began. Leasa has been a Clubhouse member for six years and often spends up to 30 hours there weekly.

At first, unable to trust people, she kept to herself. In learning to trust others, she has become a true leader. Thanks to her regained confidence, Leasa now serves on the Clubhouse Advisory Board. She appreciates having a voice and being a voice for others. She and the Clubhouse Manager have co-presented at national conferences, and she has earned educational certificates from Grand Rapids Community College.

The staff teams up with members to identify talents and abilities. Members work on meal preparation, at the media center, and in the snack shop or thrift store. Staff coaching and support helps members become successful employees. In turn, local businesses partner with the Clubhouse to provide paid employment opportunities. Those businesses are guaranteed staffing if a Clubhouse member cannot appear for work. In that situation, a Clubhouse employee will fulfill that responsibility. It is one more system of support that members receive.

Leasa is an ambassador for the important work that the Clubhouse does in our community. She shares:

*"Sheldon Clubhouse means everything to me. This is a community where there is no judgment. It's a special place where members can freely share their abilities. When a donor supports Sheldon Clubhouse, they give people with mental illness a light in their life. Some people refer to the Clubhouse as their home, but for me, it's a beacon."*



*Leasa (R), supported by Clubhouse Manager Tara VanDyke, gained the confidence to present her story at a 2022 conference.*



Cherry Health's Lakeside Clubhouse in Holland does similarly great work along the lakeshore. We will feature this location in a future issue of Health, Hope & Opportunity.

# “They Back Up Passion with Results”



*Our in-school health care services make great care more accessible.*

One of the most amazing ways our donors support us, in addition to their financial gifts, is by inviting friends into the Cherry Health story. That is how Bill and Karen Lawrence came to make their first gift to Cherry Health.

“A friend invited us to the spring fundraiser, Prescription: Strength, and we decided to attend because we were familiar with Cherry Health’s reputation,” says Bill. “This was our first time attending a Cherry Health event, and it drilled that reputation home.”

The Lawrences acknowledge that they have good primary care for themselves and want everyone to have the same. “Good health care should not be a privilege,” Bill observes. “It was a moving, impactful experience to hear how Cherry Health provides quality care. It was especially powerful to hear about their work with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and how screening can help prevent a lifetime of health issues.”

“I volunteer at Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Academy, and I see some of the difficulties that families have,” Karen shares. “It’s a godsend for them to have in-school health care. It is hard enough to get students to school, much less carve out time for an extra trip to the doctor. Cherry Health makes great care easily accessible.”

Bill and Karen direct much of their giving to organizations that assist children and families. “There are so many wonderful organizations out there, with lots of passionate people serving in them,” Bill notes. “It’s hard to choose where to make your gifts. Cherry Health has a 96% patient satisfaction rate. They are a significant employer touching a lot of lives. We appreciate that Cherry Health can back up their passion with results.”

“The longer we live, the more we realize that we are very blessed. We feel very strongly that it is our responsibility to give back. That’s what we are called to do.”

— Karen Lawrence

## Cherry Health *Celebration*

Plan to attend Cherry Health Celebration, an evening event presented by Cherry Health Foundation

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 • 6-8 p.m.**

**AT FREDERIK MEIJER GARDENS & SCULPTURE PARK. INVITE YOUR FRIENDS!**

*Individual and corporate sponsorships are available.*

Visit [bit.ly/chcelebration23](https://bit.ly/chcelebration23), scan the QR code, or call 616.965.8254 to register.



# “It’s a Little Box of Hope”



Bob Smith, our Director of Behavioral Health, Therapy, is in the lifesaving business. And one of his favorite tasks is restocking Narcan vending machines.

Narcan is used to reverse an opioid overdose. Opioids — such as oxycodone, fentanyl, Vicodin, and heroin — depress the central nervous system, which controls breathing. People who overdose die because their body forgets to breathe. Narcan blocks, or fills, opioid receptor sites, so that the central nervous system can keep working.

So why does Cherry Health offer Narcan, and why in a vending machine? “Our society has created far more stigma around substance use disorders than around other chronic health conditions,” says Bob. “The Centers for Disease Control has identified substance use disorder as a chronic disease. But social stigma continues to interfere with equity in health care. People with this disorder need help finding healthier habits and safer

coping skills. They also need help managing diet, exercise, and medications to improve outcomes. Without that support, we will continue to see unnecessary deaths.”

The vending machine is a free, easy, non-judgmental way to help prevent death from opioid overdose. There is no camera, and it is available 24/7. “You carry Narcan to save other people,” Bob points out. “We have an opioid epidemic on our hands. People are dying. That includes people taking prescription drugs. These are preventable deaths. If you administer Narcan, you can save a life, just like you would with an EpiPen or defibrillator. Narcan is a little box of hope.”

“Our clients are living testimonials to the importance of Narcan,” Bob notes. “Many of the people we work with are alive today because Narcan was accessible and used to save them. We can’t provide treatment to dead people. As long as people are alive, Cherry Health can continue to support change and recovery.”

Cherry Health, in partnership with The Grand Rapids Red Project, installed two Narcan vending machines in December 2022: one at Heart of the City Health Center in Grand Rapids and one at Montcalm Area Health Center in Greenville. Bob calculates that approximately 100 kits per month are picked up from each machine. “The State of Michigan supplies the Narcan,” he notes. “All we pay for is the electricity and the time to replenish the machine. Stocking the vending

machine brings me such joy. Every time I’m there, someone stops by to talk. Sometimes it’s just a ‘thank you.’ Other times, they ask questions, and I can help them learn.”

Substance abuse disorder affects people of all races, classes, genders, and professions. “We should all carry Narcan, because you just never know when you might be able to save a life,” Bob concludes. “Everyone deserves another chance.”



We would like to install Narcan vending machines at two additional locations, at a cost of approximately \$7,000 each.

Please contact:  
Kathy Lipnicki, Annual Giving Manager,  
at [kathylipnicki@cherryhealth.com](mailto:kathylipnicki@cherryhealth.com) or  
616.965.8237 if you can make a gift to help save lives.

PLEASE COMPLETE OUR READER SURVEY —

# WIN FREE TICKETS!

PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ENTERED FOR A CHANCE TO WIN **TWO FREE TICKETS** TO

Cherry Health  
*Celebration*



Simply scan the QR code using your mobile device or visit

[bit.ly/cherrysurvey23](https://bit.ly/cherrysurvey23).

## Get Involved in the Mission!



Give online at [cherryhealth.org/donate](https://cherryhealth.org/donate).



Use the enclosed envelope.

# The Numbers Are In!

## And Cherry Health Scores Big

One of the most important steps in measuring quality is asking patients about their experiences with us. The numbers for 2022 were humbling and gratifying. Overall, we had a 96% patient satisfaction rating.

That's an impressive score, given that we had over half a million visits from almost 59,000 patients last year. It reflects the mindset of our staff. They come to work every day with a single goal: to offer high-quality health care to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. Thank you to everyone who helped our patients feel so satisfied with Cherry Health.



## Thank you, Sponsors!

A Comprehensive Sponsorship has far-reaching impact. This single annual investment supports both of our annual fundraising events – helping to expand outreach and build mission awareness. Nearly 59,000 patients benefit from the innovation, vital programs, and accessible health care services that are funded through gifts to Prescription: Strength and Cherry Health Celebration each year.

Cherry Health relies on the compassionate commitment of our Comprehensive Sponsors to help make communities healthier places to live, grow, and thrive. Each of these partners is providing powerful mission support in 2023. We could not do it without them!



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Comprehensive sponsorships for 2024 will be available in November. For more information, contact [foundation@cherryhealth.com](mailto:foundation@cherryhealth.com).



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