



AMH Offers More than Just Medicine for Healing: Garden Built in Conjunction with Duncan Wing Part of Pride Tour June 13

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Alton, IL - The definition of a healing garden is quite simply, “A garden in a healing setting designed to make people feel better.” The Healing Garden at Alton Memorial Hospital, nestled between the Beeby and Duncan wings, offers a sense of whimsy and hope in the heart of the hospital.

Both the Duncan Wing, which opened in March, and the Healing Garden were designed around the concept that the way a patient feels and interacts with their surroundings can play an important role in the healing process. Studies have shown links between a patient’s physical environment and their ability to manage pain and subsequently heal. People who are faced with the fast-paced, high-tech environment of modern health care are often calmed by contact with nature.

The Healing Garden, which will be one of the stops on the Pride Garden Tour scheduled for Sunday, June 13, represents growth and renewal, a place to feel connected instead of isolated. In addition to the benefits to patients, the garden offers visitors and employees a space to relax and revitalize. It’s a place to find peace and to restore strength.

During the “Building the Best Care Close to Home” campaign, AMH employees sought a unique way that their campaign gifts could benefit patients. Staff, retired employees, White Cross Auxiliary members and volunteers donated more than \$200,000, providing the garden infrastructure. Then, in response to a motion by Dr. Mark Allendorph, the Medical Staff Committee at AMH endowed the garden with a generous gift of \$5,000 to

provide flowers and plants. Carpenters from the hospital's Plant Operations Department built the pergolas, arbor and trellises.

A core group of AMH employees who enjoy gardening were tasked with bringing the garden to life. On an exploratory trip by the AMH Garden Club to the Cottage Garden in Piasa, an alliance was formed.

“We asked the owners, Chris and Bill Kelley, for suggestions on what we should plant in the garden,” said Marlene Lewis, AMH manager of Foundation and Development, and a member of the Garden Club. “Chris quickly grasped the importance of the project – to create a therapeutic environment, an area where people could decompress. Chris felt a personal connection to the project. Her mother, Denny Marmino, passed away at Alton Memorial, and Chris offered to donate her services in memory of her mother.”

In addition to beautiful flowers, visitors to the garden will also enjoy music from the Anna Beach Piano, piped into the garden from the Duncan Wing's Hutchinson Lobby through the generosity of Guarantee Electrical. Colorful mosaic benches are the work of local artist Paddy Wrob. Hospital employees will maintain the garden. Each department is responsible for one week of garden duty. During the Pride Garden Tour, Miss Eunice Smith is expected to make an appearance to serve lemonade, as she did so many times in the past.

“You know the saying, where there's no gardener there's no garden,” said Lewis. “Well, in our case, we have several hundred gardeners – employees, volunteers, artists, contractors and members of the community who care about others. We appreciate their support as we continually seek ways to better serve our community.”

ABOVE PHOTO BY DAVE WHALEY

Carolyn Stine, an AMH volunteer and a member of the AMH Garden Club, hangs a flower basket in the new Healing Garden.