

leading THE WAY

Fall/Winter 2025
ISSUE NO. 6

A HAMOT HEALTH FOUNDATION PUBLICATION



**WHERE
WE'VE
BEEN**



**WHERE
WE
ARE**



**WHERE
WE'RE
GOING**



**HAMOT
HEALTH**
FOUNDATION

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

The past decade has been nothing short of transformative for HHF. Flipping the script on a traditional hospital foundation, HHF's evolution embraced a broader calling: tackling the social and economic barriers to health while continuing to strengthen the work of clinicians and caregivers at UPMC Hamot. This timeline showcases our proudest milestones across the Four C's — Clinical Excellence, Cutting-Edge Research, Community Health, and Career Development — along with the strategic partnerships that made them possible. It tells a story not only of HHF's growth, but of a community moving forward, stronger and healthier than ever.

HHF became the first financial sponsor for the **United Way of Erie County's Community School Program**, supporting Wayne Middle School. This funding infused resources like food, clothing, behavioral health care, and dental care into the school.

▼ HHF supports **Produce Express**, a mobile produce van that improved access to healthy food in inner-city Erie.



HHF partners with **Eagle's Nest Leadership Corporation** to sponsor their employability initiative at UPMC Hamot, helping connect at-risk individuals with jobs in the hospital.



◀ With help from HHF, a trauma training program, **Ali's Angels**, launches at UPMC Hamot.

HHF partners with UPMC Hamot's Trauma Surgery Department and community members to develop the **FlipSide program**, designed to help at-risk youth avoid gun-related violence by learning about the physiological impact on the body and emotional toll on the community.



▲ HHF invests in the **Children's Specialty Care Clinic**, expanding services and providing room-wraps.

HHF provides funding for a **neonatal patient simulator**, enabling staff to hone their clinical skills and boost confidence in a low-risk setting.

Under the auspices of UPMC Hamot leadership, HHF helps manifest the **Erie Center for Arts and Technology (ECAT)**, an organization that offers career training and arts programming. Headquartered in the former Wayne School on East Avenue, HHF and ECAT collaborate to turn the school into ECAT Wayne, following a \$12 million renovation.

► HHF unveils new **Hillman Cancer Fund** designed to improve cancer care locally by funding programs, research, and capital needs.



With a \$500,000 investment by HHF, UPMC Hamot became the first hospital in the nation to use a novel **robotic bronchoscopy technology** to diagnosis and treat lung cancer.



◀ To advance maternal health research, HHF helps bring the **Magee Obstetric Maternal and Infant (MOMI) Biobank** to UPMC Hamot.

HHF helps launch the **UPMC Women's Recovery Center** in Erie. This program provides support services and resources to pregnant women struggling with substance use disorder. The outcome? One hundred percent of the babies born to mothers in the program avoided a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) stay related to maternal substance use. This led to \$4.3 million in grants to support this and other SUD recovery initiatives throughout northwest Pennsylvania.

In collaboration with the City of Erie, HHF helps bring a **neighborhood planning position** to Erie.

Magee-Womens Research Institute Erie is formed, a \$26 million investment into Erie, including \$5 million from HHF.

- Represents the first-ever satellite campus of the prestigious Pittsburgh-based MWRI.
- UPMC Hamot adds a Clinical and Translational Research Center to the first floor of Magee-Womens, UPMC Hamot hospital and an Obstetric Specimen Procurement laboratory on the third floor.
- Over 31 research studies and 1,300 local research participants.

...continued on next page

► HHF and its partners conduct the **Count Me In** survey in the 16503 zip code, reaching over 650 households. Survey reveals residents need:



good-paying jobs and career opportunities, job training, home renovations and neighborhood improvements, affordable food, and access to trusted health care.

HHF partners with **Emergency Preparedness** team to provide new AEDs throughout the Erie community and in the hospital. Additionally, HHF funds “Stop the Bleed” training. These efforts help ensure the preparedness of our community in the face of emergencies.



▲ ECAT Wayne building **ribbon cutting and grand opening**, representing a beacon of hope and opportunity in an underserved East Erie neighborhood.

HHF hires a **Community Outreach Coordinator** to assess social determinants of health needs and assist community members with resource navigation to improve their health



Funding provided by HHF and UPMC Hamot Aid Society enable the formation and launch of a **new nursing school at ECAT Wayne**, the UPMC Jameson School of Nursing at UPMC Hamot. Strategic partners in this effort included UPMC Hamot, UPMC Jameson, UPMC Hamot Aid Society, and Gannon University.

HHF partners with UPMC Hamot’s **Heart Failure Team**, investing in discharge survival kits for heart patients. As a result, there was a 7.63% decline in 30-day readmissions of acute heart failure patients at UPMC Hamot in just three short months.

HHF grants \$150,000 to UPMC Hamot to acquire **two advanced patient simulators** for training purposes.

HHF led efforts to secure **personal protective equipment (PPE)** and conducted door-to-door visits in neighborhoods heavily impacted by COVID-19.

UPMC Hamot opens **new patient care tower** with support from HHF, marking the completion of the largest construction project in the hospital’s history.

► Launch of the **SLM Breast Cancer Fund** at HHF. This fund supports cancer patients with financial need during their treatment.



UPMC Jameson School of Nursing at UPMC Hamot welcomes its inaugural class.

HHF received the **Outstanding Foundation of the Year Award** from the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

HHF, UPMC Hamot neonatal clinical staff, and other partners **lease two apartments** near the hospital to accommodate out-of-town families with a child in the NICU.

HHF steps up to lead the **Erie Permanent Supportive Housing Project Team**, a newly formed coalition operating under the purview of Infinite Erie. Charged with solving homelessness in Erie, the team establishes plans for an apartment complex using a Housing First model — a first-of-its-kind facility in Erie.

The **UPMC Jameson School of Nursing at UPMC Hamot** graduates 48 students from its inaugural cohort. Over 83% of them joined UPMC Hamot as nurses.

HHF invests \$180,000 to increase staffing and \$250,000 in capital funds to support a research lab at **UPMC Hillman Cancer Center** in Erie, enabling local cancer patients to participate in a wide range of cutting-edge and life-saving clinical research trials. Since then, about 7% of patients treated at the facility are enrolled in a clinical trial, exceeding national standards of 4% enrollment.

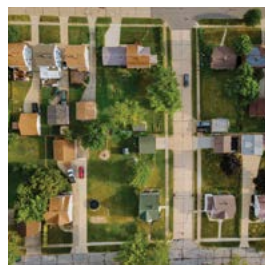


◀ The **UPMC Jameson School of Nursing at UPMC Hamot** graduates 58 students from its second cohort.



Two **insurance enrollment navigators** join the HHF team. They subsequently gain certification as community health workers (CCHW) and participate in street and community outreach initiatives.

► HHF helps fund a **weekly farmers market** on ECAT Wayne campus with a pay-what-you-can structure. The market operates in a low-income, low-access neighborhood, eliminating major barriers to healthy food access. The market expands to seven locations in Erie County over the next year.



◀ HHF Board of Trustees approves launch of **BUILD Community Development Corporation** (BUILD CDC), a subsidiary nonprofit of HHF focused on advancing health equity and improving health

outcomes. BUILD CDC's focus areas include; trusted access to health care, career and workforce development, safe and affordable housing, and thriving neighborhoods.

HHF team expands to include a **Director of Social Impact** role.

...continued on next page

WHERE WE ARE

► **BUILD** takes first steps in housing advancement with four rental apartments at 803 East Ave.



ECAT launches two new health care career programs, **Sterile Processing and Freedom House 2.0**.

HHF provides \$550,000 in funding to UPMC Hamot for updates to the **Emergency Department**.

First **RAM Clinic** held at ECAT Wayne, serving over 310 people and providing more than \$180,000 of free medical, dental, and vision care.

► **BUILD CDC** partners with UPMC Hamot to launch **food rescue program**, diverting surplus food from landfills to homeless shelters and soup kitchens.



>2024

BUILD CDC hires its inaugural staff: an executive director, a project manager, and a clinical program manager.

► **BUILD CDC** acquires **Schoolhouse Apartments**, former Erie School District administrative building, which stretches along West 21st Street from Peach to Sassafras. **BUILD** plans to convert space into 22 permanent supportive housing units for Erie's chronically homeless and 12,000 square feet of commercial space for wraparound supports provided by UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor and Regional Health Services.



HHF and **BUILD CDC** secure grant funding to launch **nascent street outreach program**, providing first aid, wound care, medical case management, and provisions such as food, backpacks, and clothes to Erie's homeless population.

The **Pay-What-You-Can** farmers market served over 3,500 individuals and provided 24,772 pounds of food in the 2024 season.

HHF and the **Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation** establish a more formal partnership. These efforts lead to a Child Life Specialist position at UPMC Hamot — a first for the hospital.

UPMC Hamot realized a \$15.2 million cost savings through the **recruitment of medical assistants and nurses** graduating from ECAT and the SON, respectively.

BUILD CDC acquires properties:

- **1032 East Ave.** will offer three affordable apartments and one commercial space, anticipated completion by spring 2026.
- **833 East Ave.** will offer two affordable apartments and one commercial space, anticipated completion by summer 2026.

BUILD CDC co-developing 701 Parade St. in partnership with **East Side Renaissance**, which will offer six two-bedroom apartments. Project completion is expected by summer 2026.

HHF provides \$200,000 to bring an **exercise physiology program** unique to UPMC Hillman Cancer Center to the Erie area.

HHF provides \$20,000 to UPMC Magee-Womens at UPMC Hamot for **patient transportation services**, removing an all-too-common barrier to accessing health care services for women in our community.

▼ **UPMC Health Plan Neighborhood Center** opens, bringing grocery shopping at Second Harvest Food Bank and a range of critical services right into the heart of the neighborhood.



2025

ONGOING PROGRAMS

- **EMPLOYEE SCHOLARSHIPS** — Supporting ongoing education for health care professionals across a variety of programs.
- **SCHOOL OF NURSING SCHOLARSHIPS & ENDOWMENT** — Helping students pursue nursing education through tuition assistance.
- **FOUNDATION EVENTS** — Events that support important causes and strengthen community connections.



◀ Second **RAM Clinic** held at ECAT Wayne, bringing over \$156,000 worth of medical, dental, and vision services to 224 patients, all at no cost to the patient.

Since opening, ECAT has **graduated 111 adults** in its career training programs in Medical Assistant, Construction Trades, Sterile Processing, and Freedom House and educated **453 school-aged students** in their youth arts programming.

The UPMC Jameson School of Nursing at UPMC Hamot **launches a second cohort** to accommodate demand for RN training, effectively doubling its student capacity.

...continued on next page



▲ **ECAT Wayne Campus** expansion project is underway. Two state-of-the-art, high-fidelity simulation labs and a new classroom for the SON are planned, as well as performing arts space for ECAT students.

Schoolhouse Apartments renovations to begin January 2026 and anticipated completion by November 2026.

This timeline tells the story of bold vision, trusted partnerships, and more than \$80 million invested to make Erie healthier and stronger. From groundbreaking research to neighborhood renewal, from training future nurses to breaking down barriers to care, HHF has redefined what a hospital foundation can be. And this is only the beginning — the next chapter promises even stronger outcomes for our community.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

▼ Local, state, and federal governments will see an estimated, combined **\$101.6 million cost savings over ten years** thanks to the graduates of ECAT and the SON via increased income tax revenue and decreased spending on public assistance programs.



Ask Board Chair **Beth Burnside** or President **Boo Hagerty** about the next decade of Hamot Health Foundation, and they won't start with dollars or donations. They'll talk about impact — about changing systems, changing minds, and above all, changing lives.

For Beth, the future begins with a bold goal: "I hope that one of the things we're best known for is making a significant dent in the homelessness issue in the county," she said. "In five to ten years, we should be showing real outcomes across all segments of homelessness." That focus on measurable change drives her vision. "Everything we do should have an outcome," Beth continued. "We should



A Shared Vision for the Future

be tracking people housed, access to health care, even indicators like crime and vitality. Are we a stronger community? That's the question."

Boo sees transformation as contagious. "Does the work cascade out?" he asked. If HHF renovates a home, does the neighbor next door follow suit? "All of a sudden," he said, "you have a healthier, more vibrant neighborhood — not just a home."

He also sees collaboration as central to HHF's success. "If I've learned anything, it's that we can't do it alone. Housing, education, community revitalization — they're all connected. No one can do it alone. But we can lead the charge."

"The issues are too complex and pervasive," echoed Beth. "One of our strengths is bringing the right partners to the table and, sometimes, being the driving force behind transformational change."

Both leaders emphasize calculated risk-taking as part of HHF's ethos. "We're willing to go where others haven't," Burnside said. And history proves her right. Ten years ago, few would have guessed HHF would help purchase the Wayne School and launch a school of nursing. Similarly, no one predicted its leadership role in the push to end chronic homelessness in Erie.

"I'm not scared to do something bold," said Boo. "I want HHF to be known as a foundation that had the guts to step way outside of their lane, one that flipped the script on how foundations act and behave, and one that puts equity back in health care."

So, what does that mean, exactly? And what lies beyond the horizon for such a gutsy foundation?

The challenges are immense and the needs constantly shifting, but for Beth and Boo, uncertainty hasn't stopped them from imagining what's possible. With

no resource constraints, Boo shared his wish list: eliminating homelessness in Erie; putting primary care offices directly into neighborhoods that need them, regardless of profitability; building a 15-story medical research tower in downtown Erie with researchers who are changing the world of medicine; and adding scattered-site housing so people can live safely and affordably across the city.

"I think I just spent a billion dollars," Boo chuckled.

While those projects may still be out of reach, the spirit behind them defines HHF's path forward. The foundation will continue to collaboratively address the social determinants of health. "We're tackling many things within that framework," Beth said. "And I think as we scratch through the surface more, our work will target root causes, like mental health."

"We're playing the long game," added Boo. "It sounds trite, but we're measuring success by asking ourselves, 'Did it change lives?'"

Data — both quantitative and qualitative — point to the incredible impact HHF has already had in individual lives, within the hospital, and throughout the community. HHF may not have a billion dollars to spend, but it has something rarer: a team of leaders unafraid to think boldly, collaborate deeply, and turn data into real-world impact on people's lives.

With that kind of momentum, it's full steam ahead for Hamot Health Foundation.





DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Bob and
Maureen
Dwyer

Legacy in Action

When Bob and Maureen “Mo” Dwyer talk about their lives, the conversation always circles back to family. Married for more than 50 years, they raised five children and are proud grandparents to 11, including two sets of identical twin boys. “So fun,” Mo says with a smile.

Their journey to Erie began when Mo, a St. Louis native, left home to attend Georgetown University. “That’s where I met this wonderful person,” she says, looking toward Bob. “And that was the connection that brought us to Erie.”

This community is where they built a life together, and they are passionate about making it better — for those here now and for all the generations to follow. Through recent and planned giving, the Dwyers have turned this passion into tangible impact.

A Life Intertwined With Hamot

Mo, a nurse by training, spent nearly 25 years at Hamot. Bob devoted decades as a volunteer, serving as corporator, corporator officer, board member, and ultimately chair of the board. “Mo as an employee, me as a volunteer — we’ve both felt deeply connected to Hamot’s mission for decades,” Bob explains.

That connection is what keeps their philanthropy close to home. “We feel a responsibility to support health care,” Bob says, “and Hamot has always represented the kind of mission we want to invest in.”

Even as Hamot became part of a larger health system, his perspective hasn’t changed. “Hamot joining UPMC does not detract from my belief that members of the local community — those who can afford to do so — should embrace their responsibility to support our health care needs.”

“Erie’s been good to us. Hamot’s been good to us. So, it’s time to give back.”

— Bob and Maureen Dwyer

The Roots of Generosity

Asked who taught them about giving back, both point to their parents. Mo recalls her mother’s service on community boards in St. Louis. “I sort of followed her direction,” she says. “She was very involved with different community activities, and that inspired me.”

For Bob, philanthropy was part of the Dwyer family legacy. “It’s been a Dwyer tradition to be engaged in charitable work,” he says. “That’s how Mo and I have spent much of our married life.”

Those values have carried into the next generation. Two of their five children live in Erie, and their daughter Liz has become active on local boards. “We really want to role model these values,” Mo explains. “And it’s been gratifying to see our children not only support what we’re doing, but embrace it themselves.”

A Legacy for Erie

In recent years, the Dwyers have been substantial supporters of the UPMC Jameson School of Nursing at UPMC Hamot. “The shortage of nurses seems to grow every year, and the success of that school seems to be above and beyond anyone’s expectations,” Bob says.

But the Dwyers’ giving is not limited to today. By including Hamot Health Foundation in their estate plans, they’ve joined the 1881 Circle, a special program that recognizes donors making a lasting impact through planned giving.

Through their estate gift, the Dwyers are ensuring that their support will continue to benefit the community for generations. A key focus of their planned giving is advancing health, especially for those who are less fortunate.

“We both feel very blessed — with our health, our children, our grandchildren,” Mo reflects. “Because of that, we’re able to give back with both our time and resources.”

Bob adds, “A lot of life is having positive purposes. And what better purpose than to give back if you’re able to?”

An Invitation to Others

Through their planned giving to HHF, the Dwyers are extending the generosity that has defined their lives, creating a legacy that will continue to benefit Erie for generations. Their philanthropy is deeply personal — an investment in the community where their children and grandchildren will build their own lives.

Donors like Bob and Mo Dwyer embody what the 1881 Circle stands for — using their resources and values to invest in a healthier, more vibrant future for the community they love. And, they hope, inspiring others to do the same. “If we could encourage at least one person or one couple to take the leap and do this, that would be a wonderful accomplishment,” Mo says.

A New Circle of Meaning

Named for the year Hamot Hospital first opened its doors, the 1881 Circle is HHF’s newly reimagined Heritage Society. It honors those who include Hamot Health Foundation in their estate and long-term giving plans.

HHF Development Coordinator Shawn Bednard describes it as “a way for donors to stake claim in the evolution of the future, ensuring that the Erie they’ve enjoyed will continue to advance into a haven of health and prosperity.”

For the Dwyers, this motivation is simple: “Erie’s been good to us. Hamot’s been good to us. So, it’s time to give back.”



BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Elliott Ehrenreich, Esq.

Trusted. Nimble. Agent of change.

That's how board member Elliott Ehrenreich, Esq. describes Hamot Health Foundation. These words stand as powerful reinforcement of HHF's mission, especially considering the source. Elliott is a corporate law attorney specializing in business transactions, making his description of HHF a welcome affirmation. Throughout his career, he has worked with a myriad of organizations — crawling under the hood of each to learn their mechanics. Such fine-tuned expertise has proven invaluable during Elliott's longstanding service to the Hamot institution.

Well before pulling up a chair at the Hamot boardroom table, Elliott served the hospital in a professional capacity. His proficiency as a corporate attorney proved instrumental in the affiliation process with UPMC, and he worked closely with affiliate organizations, including HHF and Regional Health Services.

These substantial engagements fostered close professional ties with leaders and staff at Hamot. Well known for his meticulous attention to detail and genuine care for the organization and community, Elliott was invited to join the hospital's board of directors in 2009. As a board member, he has demonstrated his commitment and trustworthiness at every turn, helping the hospital to achieve unprecedented growth and clinical quality.

Which brings us to the here and now. Today, Elliott serves not only as the vice chairman of the UPMC Hamot board of trustees, but also sits on HHF's own board. He also now serves as the inaugural board chairman for BUILD CDC — HHF's community development corporation.

Throughout Elliott's tenure, we have come to know him as the steady voice in the room, perpetually prepared and thinking ahead. When HHF dove deeper into addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) and proposed our vision for BUILD CDC to the board, Elliott intuitively understood the direction in which we wanted to head and why.

"HHF is not your grandmother's hospital foundation," Elliott explained. "Launching BUILD was light-years ahead in innovation."

The launch of BUILD has been a welcome extension of our work to address health equity, and Elliott at the helm of this board is a natural fit. "The work BUILD is doing is taking societal issues by the scruff of the neck," Elliott said.

Elliott and his counterparts on the HHF board have developed an appreciation for the scale and depth needed to drive meaningful solutions in SDOH. Early on, it felt daunting. But Elliott points to the BUILD team's approach, which centers on an unshakable refusal to fail: "They don't have a 'Gosh, we're never going to accomplish this' mindset, but rather a 'How soon can we start making an impact?' mindset. And that's refreshing."

This commitment to making an impact resonates deeply with Elliott. His personal values and approach to philanthropy center around creating change and improving lives. To this end, he established a nursing scholarship that memorializes his late mother. As Elliott explains, "it's incredibly important that our community have a talented pool of nurses to care for our loved ones in their hour of need." In this way, his nursing scholarship is more than a memorial; it is a commitment to the wider Erie

community, acknowledging we all stand to benefit from the high-quality nursing education offered at UPMC Jameson School of Nursing at UPMC Hamot.

To us, Elliott mirrors the exact characteristics he values in HHF: trustworthiness, nimble-mindedness, and a commitment to positive change in Erie. With his immense talent and passion, Elliott can seem superhuman at times. But we know he is actually a real human. He is, after all, a Buffalo Bills fan.



Elliott attends a Buffalo Bills game after record-setting snowfall.

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Lynn Rupp



In a health care landscape that's constantly shifting, Lynn Rupp, regional chief operating officer of UPMC Physician Services Division, has built her career on one constant: helping people find a way forward.

Her tenure has spanned a transformative era — roughly 15 years before Hamot joined UPMC and 15 after. “I love who we have become with UPMC,” she said. She has seen the growth of Hamot’s physician network from just 75 providers to more than 500, an expansion that has reshaped the depth and breadth of care available to the community.

She counts the development of the stroke program among her proudest professional accomplishments. In recent years, UPMC Hamot has been certified as a Comprehensive Stroke Center by DNV GL Healthcare and listed on the Target: Stroke Elite Plus Honor Role and Target: Stroke Advanced Therapy Honor Roll. Impressively, it also received the Get With The Guidelines® - Stroke Gold Plus Award by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, an honor earned for the past two consecutive years.

These recognitions affirm that UPMC Hamot delivers the highest level of stroke care, where speed and expertise can make all the difference in a patient’s recovery. This didn’t happen overnight. Building a successful stroke program required a multiyear, step-by-step strategy and an incredible amount of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust. “There is no one person to give credit to. The success of our stroke program is because of a team effort — a lot of people were focused on making it happen.”

It was experiences like developing the stroke program — complex, team-driven, and full of challenges — that helped define Lynn’s leadership and kept her in Erie far longer than she ever imagined. “I always thought I should stay until I felt like Hamot wasn’t the right place for me to be,” Lynn reflected. “It’s been 31 or 32 years now, and I truly feel I am exactly where I was intended to be.”

Born and raised in Erie, Lynn knew from an early age that she wanted

to dedicate her life to health care. What began with aspirations of becoming a surgeon led her into physical therapy, and later, leadership. Today, she has become one of the most influential voices guiding health care across our region.

For Lynn, leadership is about authenticity — *be yourself*. “Be who you are and use that to help other people,” she says.

“That commitment to authenticity fuels a career defined by service. Even as health care grows more complex, Lynn keeps her compass pointed toward what matters most: people. “Most of my job is trying to figure out what people need and how I help them get it,” she said. “And that’s what I want my whole life to be about — helping others and making their lives better.”

That same people-first mindset naturally extends to the hospital’s broader partnerships, including Hamot Health Foundation. “It’s amazing when you look at the evolution of Hamot Health Foundation,” she said. “Everything that I look back on and say I’m really proud of — from the stroke program to pediatrics to the physician network development — the foundation played a role. It’s a partnership that gets stronger year after year.”

Even with such a demanding professional role, Lynn is known for high energy in her personal life. She loves traveling, snorkeling, and spending time with family. Lynn laughs as she talks about her recent experiments to develop a “healthier” cookie, but don’t be fooled: the same creativity and determination drives everything she does. “You figure out the strategy that works,” she says. Whether it’s cookies or health care, “You try, you adjust, and you keep going until it’s right.” That spirit — relentless, curious, and endlessly human — is what makes her a leader people want to follow.”



Left: Lynn and her children exploring Venice together.

Right: Lynn mountain biking with friends in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.



Getting to know us

QUESTION 1

Why do you love working at HHF?

QUESTION 2

Which HHF project or initiative stands out to you as especially meaningful or inspiring?

QUESTION 3

If you had to pick a “superpower” that you bring to the HHF team, what would it be?

Charles “Boo” Hagerty

President, Hamot Health Foundation



1 Without a doubt, it is a strict adherence to our values: Creativity and Vision, Initiative and Resourcefulness, Leadership and Excellence, Collaboration and Inclusion. These are not just words to us — each and every one of us is driven by these simple, yet important words. They hang on the walls in all of our offices, and we measure ourselves regularly to ensure we are living up to the high standards we set for ourselves. Our culture is built on our values and our values drive our culture. I love this work, and I love this team.

2 Unfair question — how can you make me pick one? I have to say that I love what we get to do every day — but I think the thing I love the most is our outreach into the community to bring world-class care to all. Most hospitals say they do that, but most don't go out looking for people like we do. We talk every day about opening up TRUSTED access to health care. It has blown my mind how deeply distrustful people are and thus they do not enter our front doors. So, we go to them with our street outreach team, our community health workers, our annual RAM Clinic and our partnership with the UPMC Health Plan to open the doors of the neighborhood center, just to name a few. As time goes by, more and more people are being served, yet we will not be satisfied until all have been served. Right care. Right place. Right time. That is what UPMC believes, and we love the partnership between HHF and our health system to build bridges one person at a time.

3 RESILIENCE. In a 40+ year career, I have seen a lot of things — the good, the bad, and the ugly. It would be difficult to maintain and grow without the ability to persevere and maintain an attitude to know that every day that I go to work I have to be better than I was the day before. You can't do that without being able to shake off your failures and faults and continue to drive and perform at a high level. It's a daily mindset — I must be resilient.

Jaimee Black

Chief Operating Officer, HHF



1 Over the past 20 years, I have been privileged to see the evolution and growth here at HHF. I love the great work that we are able to do and the impact we can make across our community and our hospital. And, very importantly, the culture of our team and relationships with the people that I get to work with who are like a second family.

2 I work very closely with the Sandra Lynn Martin Cancer Fund, which helps our local Hillman patients who are in need of some support through their cancer journey. It is humbling to see how cancer can impact every facet of a person's life — physically, emotionally, financially and so, so much more. To have resources available to help others stemming from the generosity of our donors is a privilege. We are helping so many people in small ways that hopefully not only eases a burden, but provides comfort and compassion to these patients.

3 My superpower at HHF is my ability to bring people together. With so much important work to do, I focus on assembling our team, aligning our strengths, and making sure we move forward together. And I use this strength outside of our foundation in fostering the relationships of the many constituencies that we work alongside.

Laura Guncheon

Executive Director, BUILD CDC



1 HHF's work isn't abstract — it is tangible, measurable and deeply human. We see hope restored through housing, opportunities created through training, and stability built for families. As someone deeply passionate about Erie, I love being in the middle of the ecosystem of mission-aligned partners, and HHF gives me the platform to directly invest in the future of our city.

2 The recent RAM clinic was a true testament of why we do what we do. Watching our volunteers treat every patient with kindness and dignity reinforced my belief that health care access is a human right. It also reminded me that Erie has deep wells of compassion and talent and that HHF is uniquely positioned to channel that energy into lasting change. Seeing patients leave having had long-delayed dental care or getting new glasses wasn't just inspiring, it was hope made visible.

3 Just one? JK. My superpower is the ability to see both the big picture and the ground truth — connecting strategy to impact. I understand how capital stacks, partnerships, and policy levers work while never losing sight of the human lives behind the numbers. I strive to rally people around possibility, lifting with energy and conviction, and reminding that the work isn't just about fixing problems, it is about building futures.

Shawn Bednard

Development Coordinator, HHF



1 I love working at Hamot Health Foundation because the work is never finished. With so many areas of focus under the umbrella of our foundation's work, there's constantly work to be done to continue to improve our hospital, our community, and Erie's future — be it in career development or advancing community health. Beyond that, everyone who works here wants to be here, they want to put in the work, and they have a passion for the work we do. You don't get that at every business or organization, and to have it is a rare joy. It's a thrill to be part of the work, and to work with a team like we have here.

2 Schoolhouse Apartments and the start of Erie's first Permanent Supportive Housing Initiatives. Whenever I talk about this project or the methodology behind it, or the future that it can create not only for the chronically unhoused individuals it'll serve, but how it will forever change the trajectory of our community, it's hard to not get goosebumps. I think what's even more inspiring about this is the collaboration that this project has created with organizations like Housing First Erie, Infinite Erie, all the project sponsors and partners, and the individuals who have supported this project from conceptualization to the future finish.

3 Adaptive Evolution. I like to be able to flex myself into any situation, department, role, or need. Being a proverbial Swiss Army Knife has always been important to me as a career professional, and I feel as though I bring that same ability to flex and adapt here to the foundation. Now, if I can figure out how to freeze time, I could really boost my productivity.

...continued on next page

Annmarie Kutz

Grants Officer, HHF

1 I feel a deep, personal connection to our mission and vision. The opportunity to help advance medical care in the hospital — a place where I've spent the entirety of my career so far — plus the ability to support a range of groundbreaking community health strategies is incredibly rewarding and inspiring. What makes it even more meaningful is the team at HHF, who endlessly energizes my work with their vision, dedication, and humor.



2 Street outreach. When I first started on the outreach beat for the HHF newsletter, I quickly saw the immense need for programs like ours — and how so few seem to tackle it with the same open-armed approach and hands-on commitment. The work is challenging in every way — emotionally, logistically, medically, and sometimes even ethically and legally. What struck me the most is the humanity these individuals maintain, even in circumstances most of us can barely imagine.

3 Creative Force! I help transform HHF's work into compelling stories that spark interest, support, and change. My superpower also helps me see possibilities where others see limits.

Courtney Nientimp

Major Gifts Officer, HHF

1 From the moment I sat in my first interview, I could feel the passion that powers this organization. Every conversation, initiative, and decision are rooted in a deep commitment to our community's well-being. That kind of intentionality is rare, and it's what drew me in.



I love Erie. I want it to thrive not just today, but for my daughter and the generations to follow. At HHF, we are not just dreaming about a better future, we are building it. When faced with a shortage of nurses and limited access to workforce training, we helped bring the School of Nursing back to our community. It's filling a critical health care gap while empowering our neighbors to build skills and create better lives. As homelessness continues to impact our most vulnerable, we have

"I love Erie. I want it to thrive not just today, but for my daughter and the generations to follow."

— Courtney Nientimp

supported the purchase of the Schoolhouse building and are working tirelessly to help create housing solutions for the chronically homeless. And the list goes on.

Our mission is powerful, and our projects are life changing. Each one is grounded in collaboration, best practices, and a commitment to addressing root causes. I'm honored to be part of a team that shows up every day with purpose, and I'm proud to share our story with anyone who will listen.

2 In the most cliché way possible, it's tough to pick just one. But one partnership has always stood out as being especially meaningful to me: bringing the Magee-Womens Research Institute to Erie.

This initiative is a bold statement about our commitment to advancing women's health not only locally, but globally. MWRI is best-in-class, and having access to their clinical trials and clinicians right here in Erie is a game-changer for women and their families. It's the kind of resource that transforms lives and communities.

Talking about this work lights my fire. It's a dream to fundraise for something so essential, so impactful, and so aligned with the future we want to build.

3 This team dreams big. And even better, we turn those dreams into reality. The people at HHF are some of the most passionate, creative, and community-minded people I have ever met. They are brilliant, generous, and have hearts of gold. Every member adds an essential skill set that helps move the needle on a healthier, stronger Erie.

As for me? I bring the power of positivity, planning, and execution. I love dreaming alongside this incredible team, and I thrive in helping turn those dreams into action. Whether mapping out a timeline or building a to-do list, I'm here to keep the momentum going and turn our vision into reality.

Mark Louis

Major Gifts Officer, HHF



1 I love working at HHF for several reasons. We collaborate with community partners to solve local health issues — never claiming we have the answers, yet willing to lead and bring people together; connecting donors to share their treasure — because it makes them feel good is an incredible honor. Lastly, through our work, we live out our organizations values, which drives our mission to lead our community to better health.

2 I am most inspired by two initiatives we are involved in. Our School of Nursing for the affordability and life-changing jobs it is creating in our health care system. Also, the incredible growth of pediatric care in our region, which is helping families travel less while creating new opportunities for philanthropy to help children.

3 If I had a superpower, I would call it the Listener's Lens. I have a knack for really hearing people — not just their words, but the values and intentions behind them. It helps me connect authentically with my coworkers and our donors, making sure everyone feels seen, understood, and part of something meaningful.

Emily Kahler

Executive Assistant, HHF



1 I have been at HHF for the past 15 years and I feel every year gets more exciting with the projects we are working on, but what I love most is we don't ever hesitate to take on the tough things and come out on top. I love being a part of it!

2 I love being able to help people. Whether it's paying a bill for a patient, buying socks and underwear for street outreach, or pointing a person in the right direction when they call our office. Being more closely involved with the RAM Clinic this year, I got to see the 1:1 impact it made on those who came to participate. Everyone was very thankful and appreciative of our help.

3 Healing Ability — the capability to help people heal faster and reach out for help when scared or not sure which direction to go.

Sarah Prylinski

*Clinical Program Manager,
BUILD CDC*



1 HHF provides a platform for me to be who I truly am. The team supports creativity and allows for professional growth, which is very rewarding to me. I have the flexibility to try new things, pilot new projects, and serve my community at a higher level.

2 Honestly, all of the initiatives are so meaningful and inspiring because all of our work impacts a different area of our community and changes lives so impactfully. Whether it's research that helps a mom, a Children's Care Fund that serves a child in need, our cancer funds helping support a patient battling their toughest fight, or our BUILD CDC touching the lives of the most vulnerable in our city. Each and every one of our projects makes a difference to someone, and that is truly inspiring.

3 My superpower is Unbiased Care, the ability to see past everything and care for all, seeing people for who they are.

Susmita Sarki

*Community Health Worker &
Insurance Navigator*



1 Working at HHF gives me the opportunity to be part of a community-driven mission that's focused on helping the community. As a community health worker (CHW), I'm proud to contribute and serve the community knowing that even making a small difference in someone's life can have a long-lasting impact.

2 The RAM Clinic stands out as especially meaningful to me. Being part of the outreach team made me realize how encouraging one person to access the services they need makes a huge impact and makes the entire effort worthwhile.

3 If I had a superpower, it would be Empathy Vision. Whether I'm meeting someone for the first time or following up with a member, I want to recognize not just what's happening on the surface but also beyond the surface, like the quiet barriers and the unspoken fears, and use that awareness to build trust, offer support, and guide people toward meaningful change.

...continued on next page

Chase Rowland

Outreach Coordinator, HHF



1 Erie, Pa. is our home. Each day we have a chance to bolster our community and inspire change. I'm excited to be a part of a team that is working toward one finite goal and shares a passion for growth and opportunity. I love that I am just a small piece of a larger puzzle in helping others and making an impact in their lives. I am new on the team, but I have experienced that energy like I've been here for years.

2 Food rescue. Working with the HHF team and Food and Nutrition services at the hospital has been a privilege. Starting last year, the hospital has donated thousands of pounds of food. Each day we are able to serve our community and address food insecurity.

3 I think my superpower I bring to the HHF team is compassion. Seeing the good in people when they can't for themselves.

Marissa Dewey-Ramos

Community Health Worker & Insurance Navigator



1 I love working with HHF for a few reasons, but, for one, I am a person who cannot sit still nor can I not help someone. HHF has given me so much freedom in helping others. I am not restricted on who the person is that I can provide services to. They can be in a shelter or living on Millionaires' Row, have insurance or not have insurance, be a U.S. citizen or working to become a citizen. I am very grateful that I am able to give my assistance, knowledge, and skills to HHF, a team who cares about Erie and allows me to continue to help others.

2 I would have to say the RAM clinic. This year's was the first one I have attended and volunteered. The thing that was so meaningful was being able to be part of an organization that is able to help their city with medical care. The number of smiles and good vibes I saw were heartwarming! It really made me proud and grateful to be a part of HHF.

3 If I had to pick a "superpower" that I bring to HHF, it would probably be Passion. I am invested in my role at HHF. When you enjoy what you do, you perform better not only at work, but it can boost your personal growth as well. I feel like my passion to help others in my community brought the opportunity to be able to work for HHF.

Michelle Robertson

Grants Officer, HHF



1 I still love working at HHF because we are always working on something new and meaningful while keeping up with the important projects that were developed before. When HHF gets behind a project, we are able to provide real resources and real talent, usually in partnership with others in the community of northwest Pennsylvania, to make great things happen.

2 What I find particularly meaningful is the way some activities may make a huge impact in the lives of one family, such as support from the SLM Fund, while other activities impact generations, such as support for the School of Nursing, leading to job opportunities for students and their families and more access to nursing care for patients throughout the region.

3 I know I am answering a slightly different question, but I think the superpower of HHF is the team we have — we have FUN at work making things HAPPEN!

"The number of smiles and good vibes I saw were heartwarming!"

— Marissa Dewey-Ramos

"Each day we are able to serve our community and address food insecurity."

— Chase Rowland

2026 EVENTS

May 14

SEEDS OF HOPE

WHERE: The Kahkwa Club



An event connecting globally leading researchers and oncologists with local women to share the latest in breakthrough research and treatments for women.

August 17

10TH ANNUAL HHF OPEN

WHERE: The Kahkwa Club

HHF's signature golf outing supporting the SLM Cancer Fund, which helps families financially burdened by the fight with cancer.



September 12-13

REMOTE AREA MEDICAL (RAM) CLINIC

WHERE: ECAT Wayne

The RAM clinic returns to Erie to provide no-cost, high-quality health care to those in need. Dental, vision, and medical care are available.



September 26

RUNWAY FUN RUN

WHERE: North Coast Air

A one-mile walk/run on the landing strip at the airport, allowing families to get a look at airplanes and other airport vehicles while supporting HHF's Children's Care Fund.



November 14

FRIENDSGIVING

WHERE: 1020 Collective

F•R•I•E•N•D•S
G•I•V•I•N•G

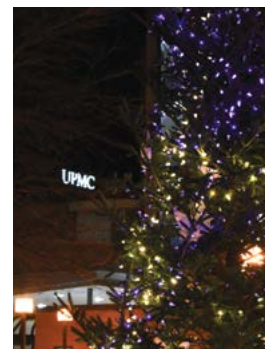
An intimate event honoring the life of Anna Clare Markiewicz in support of HHF's Children's Care Fund and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

November 24

BRIGHTEN THE NIGHT

WHERE: UPMC Hamot

Thoughtful remembrances, inspirational reflections, and music to remember those who have passed and to honor those who are special in your life.



Interested in hosting an event to benefit Hamot Health Foundation?
Contact Emily Kahler to share your ideas! 814-877-7020 or kahlerea@upmc.edu



HAMOT HEALTH FOUNDATION

100 State Street
Suite 510
Erie, PA 16507
814-877-7020

HamotHealthFoundation.org

OUR MISSION

Hamot Health Foundation will lead our community to better health.

OUR VISION

Hamot Health Foundation will transform the health and well-being of our community with an unwavering commitment to our 4 C's:



Clinical Excellence

We will proactively seek opportunities to help our providers enhance health care delivery and patient outcomes.



Community Health

We will work collectively to eliminate societal barriers that hold people back from leading healthy, vibrant, and productive lives.



Cutting-Edge Research

We will join with partners to financially support scientific research and clinical trials that drive answers to the most pressing questions in health care.



Career Development

We will help fund the education of current and future health care providers and create pathways where opportunities do not exist.

BOARD MEMBERS

2025-26 Officers

Beth Burnside — *Chair*
Danielle Bates, CPA — *Vice Chair*
Charles “Boo” Hagerty — *Chief Development Officer*
Carrie E. Ennis — *Secretary*
Bradley N. Dinger — *Treasurer*

2025-26 Board of Trustees

Danielle Bates, CPA.
Mbembo Bongutu, MD
Harold “H” Bender
Bishop Dwane Brock
Beth Burnside
Elliott J. Ehrenreich, Esq.
Sarah Ewing, PhD
Lorianne (LA) Feltz
Garrett A. Fuhrman
Emily Hirsch
Allison Hodas
Margaret Joy, Esq.
Abby Lechner
Robert Maholic, DO

Jennifer Naber, MD
Doug Smith
Kyle Strayer
Debra Uht
Lisa Watkins