The Gingham Tree Resale Shop (GTRS) is a place where items from the past help shape the future of Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital. Through a strong partnership with the community in which items are donated and purchased, GTRS sales have increased by 128% since 2001 and have contributed a total of $2,120,275 over the last 10 years. The funds were used to enhance the hospital’s level one trauma emergency room (the only level one trauma center from DuPage County to the Illinois-Iowa border), update the pediatrics unit, renovate the chapel, support construction of the Good Samaritan Health and Wellness Center, assist in renovation of the cardiac cauterization lab, and to purchase state-of-the-art equipment for new surgical suites.

The Auxiliary’s current pledge of $500,000 will be completed in two years, supporting the Kenneth B. Holland Oncology Unit and the President’s Fund for Special Needs, Innovation, Education and Patient Care.

In 2011, 80 volunteers donated 15,380 hours of service. They ensure that no items go to waste by making repairs to restore the merchandise to sale at its highest appraisal. Any unused items are donated to local charities for recycling purposes. One of the most unique and valuable donations was an original 1918 painting by Maxfield Parrish. Dubbed “the common man’s Rembrandt,” the painting was an advertisement for Swift Premium Ham and was appraised at $100,000 by a museum expert. The volunteers allowed the vintage piece to be included in a national tour after its restoration.

GTRS opened its doors in 1973. It is the top revenue producing resale shop for the Advocate Health Care System and delivers on its motto: “You give us good stuff….we do great things.”
Desert Mission volunteers assist in a variety of programs that include housing development, home rehabilitation and economic development, a food bank, community health center, children’s dental clinic, a preschool learning center, and a behavioral health clinic.

Many low-income families and individuals in crisis turn to Desert Mission’s behavioral health clinic, known as Marley House, a licensed outpatient clinic, for programs and resources to help them resolve issues and find stability for a brighter future. The clinic provides counseling and intervention services, including mental health and substance abuse services, prevention outreach to local schools to help youth with social skills, anger management, and self-esteem.

The Food Bank provides emergency food boxes, which contain a three to five day supply of food that can be tailored to the nutritional needs of seniors and families with infants. Snack Packs, which are backpacks full of food, are provided to children so they don’t go hungry on the weekends.

The Community Health Center provides primary health care to low-income children and their caregivers who have no health insurance. The services include screenings and wellness exams, treatment of minor or acute illness and injury, management of chronic disease and low-cost lab and diagnostic services.

The Neighborhood Renewal program is a community development corporation that works with homeowners, those who dream of home ownership and business owners to create stronger and safer neighborhoods. Programs include home development, housing counseling, homebuyer education, home purchase assistance and economic development.

Changing the world one family at a time; that’s Desert Mission’s goal.
The Landing, A Healing Place for Kids program provides support to children grieving from the death of a parent, sibling or someone special in their life. Recognizing the difficulty children have in dealing with a loss, the program provides a supportive and understanding environment where children and families can share their experiences.

The dedicated volunteers believe that grieving is nature’s path to healing and that youths grieve as intensely as adults, but in different ways. They recognize that childhood losses can result in difficulties in behavior or relationships that continue in adulthood. In addition, the duration and intensity of grief are unique for each individual and caring and acceptance assist in the healing process.

The Landing volunteers oversee the day-to-day operations, organize the trainings and provide all of the support for the program. There are more than 40 trained facilitators and group leaders. The volunteers handle the community outreach, manage a facility, and train new volunteers. In addition, there are over 50 other volunteers who do landscaping, plan events for the children and organize fundraisers.

All volunteer facilitators must go through the training program to lead bi-weekly meetings where the children ages 3-18 can share their experiences as they move through the healing process. The services are free, confidential and easily accessible on the campus of United General Hospital. In just four years, the Landing has expanded its services beyond hospital. The local high school requested services from the Landing to begin a group for grieving students. The Landing now meets bi-monthly with up to 60 students participating. Most recently, the local middle school requested a program for their children which began in the fall of 2012.

The local newspaper featured an article on the Landing and they were flooded with calls from people wanting to volunteer as well as those looking for information on the services they provide. In August, the group hosted a “Community Grieving Event.” It provided people in the community an opportunity to hear some ways that they can deal with their own grief and to address some very public losses. These community outreach events go beyond the scope of helping children grieve. It makes the work they are doing visible and public.
In-Service Program
Parent Wisdom In Shared Experiences (ParentWISE)
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
Chicago, IL
Pat Magoon, President & CEO

ParentWISE was built on an initiative started by the Lurie family in memory of their son who was treated for cancer at Chicago’s Children Memorial Hospital (now Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago). Recognizing how much they would have benefitted from speaking with veteran parents whose children had been treated for cancer, the Lurie family provided the seed money to create support by parents for parents in the oncology clinics. They offer support to families whose children were born prematurely, develop cancer, will be vent-dependent when discharged, or need complex cardiac surgery, or stem cell or organ transplant.

Parent volunteers know firsthand the challenges associated with having a child who needs specialized medical or surgical care. They remember the shock and grief of the diagnosis, the coming-to-terms with it and the development of unexpected strengths in dealing with it. They give of themselves from the heart to help others on similar journeys.

ParentWISE coordinators, who are hospital staff, recruit, train and support volunteers in their role as mentors. The volunteers support parents in person and/or by phone. This parent-to-parent program has also fostered the development of Peer Wisdom in Shared Experience (PeerWISE), through which former patients return as volunteers in support of current patients.

ParentWISE has grown from a dedicated group of six parent volunteers in 1987 to over 100. In the last fiscal year, ParentWISE volunteers provided 6,210 parent contacts (over 3,000 hours of service), either by phone or on-site in support of current patient families. A key component of their role is to listen, allowing parents to vent their feelings around their child’s condition as well as ask questions and express concerns about their child's treatment, prognosis and future.

Expansion to provide support for parents throughout the hospital was the shared vision of hospital leadership and the Family Advisory Board. ParentWISE furthers the hospital goal to provide excellent family-centered care. ParentWISE volunteers are a sign of hope to families that they too, someday, will get beyond their current situation.