

**AHVRP Member Spotlight**  
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Wausau, WI

**How many beds does your facility have?**

150

**How many volunteers does your facility have?**

400

**“In your own words”, tell us why you got into healthcare volunteering.**

As a parent, grandparent and teacher, I read “The Lorax” by Dr. Seuss more times than I can count. One phrase, – **“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better - it's not”**, has always remained with me. This phrase has helped me to realize that volunteering is one way to make a difference in my community, in the lives of others and in my own life. I feel it is part of being a human being and we are on this earth to help one another. Volunteering continuously teaches me new things about people, compassion, cooperation, and about myself. Volunteering provides physical and mental rewards. Research has shown that volunteering helps counteracts the effect of stress, anger and anxiety because when we focus on someone other than ourselves our mood improves and we feel more optimistic. We realize that we are all in this together and we need to support each other.

While I was volunteering in the ICU waiting room an elderly gentleman, who was waiting for his wife of 52 years to come out of heart surgery, asked me why I would work and not get paid for it. We spoke for a while and I told him I did get paid. My payment was not money but something even more rewarding. My “pay” was in the form of smiles, hugs and just listening as people share their stories. Sometime later, this gentleman came back up to my desk and said the Dr. told him that his wife did very well and should make a complete recovery. With tears in his eyes, he gave me a hug and said thanks for visiting with him because it made the time go faster. With a smile, I told him I had just gotten paid with his smile and hug. He thanked me and walked off to be with his wife. At that moment, I felt totally blessed to have been there and witness the love these two individuals continued to share after so many years.