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2024 Adirondack Health Foundation Gala Sets Record

On July 6, 2024, the Adirondack Health Foundation hosted its annual summer gala, attracting a record setting crowd of nearly 490 guests and raising \$250,000 for the Cornerstone Campaign. The campaign focuses on building a new Renal Dialysis Center and fully renovating the patient care floors and rooms at Adirondack Medical Center.

The gala also honored Joan Grabe with the prestigious Dr. Edward L. Trudeau Award. Grabe, a registered nurse and long-time supporter, was named trustee emerita this year after completing three terms on the Foundation board.

In addition to co-chairing the Cornerstone Campaign, she serves on the Hunter Bellevue School of Nursing advisory board and was inducted into the Hunter College Hall of Fame, where she also earned an honorary doctorate.

In his presentation, Dr. Michael Bettmann, an Adirondack Health board member and friend, praised Grabe's dedication. "Joan is truly a force of nature—passionate, direct, and fully committed to every challenge she takes on," Bettmann said. "She is a wonderful grandmother, Adirondacker, and friend, and we are lucky to have her as part of the Adirondack Health family."

Attendees enjoyed an elegant evening with live music, gourmet dining, and two raffles. Heather Perkins of Lake Placid won the Best of Live Ultimate Sports Fan package and Adirondack Health RN Matt Coullier took home an antique wooden boat, generously donated by former Upper Saranac residents Joe and Charlotte Blitt.

Learn more about the Cornerstone Campaign at ahfcornerstone.org

Adirondack Health Expands Cardiology Access with PA

By Britt Proulx

The Heart Center at Adirondack Health is expanding access to care as Physician Assistant Jessica Shumway has joined Dr. Anthony Tramontano full-time.

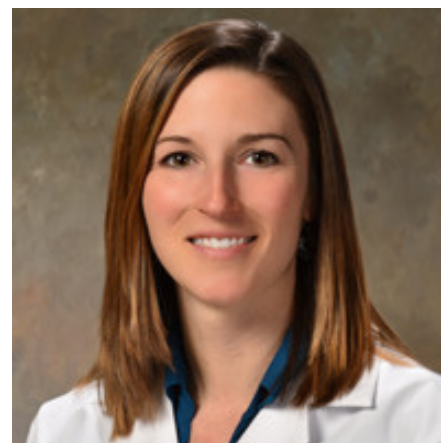
"This expansion allows us to see patients faster," Shumway said. "Heart disease is prevalent, and without the Heart Center, patients would have to travel several hours for care. We want to make sure they don't wait months for an appointment."

Shumway, a North Country native, grew up in Potsdam and fell in

love with the Adirondacks while camping at Fish Creek. "I remember telling my grandmother that one day I would work at that hospital," she said of Adirondack Medical Center.

Shumway earned her Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies from the University of New England in 2015.

Dr. Tramontano said, "Jessica has great experience and compassion. We're now able to see patients faster and expand our services."



Jessica Shumway PA-C

With Shumway's full-time role, the Heart Center added two new exam rooms, including one for echocardiography. The team also welcomed Echocardiography Technician Olivia Coats and Registered Nurse Renee Towne.

To schedule an appointment with The Heart Center at Adirondack Health, please call 518-897-2388.

Save the Date



**Adirondack Health Foundation's
Annual Gala
July 12, 2025**



The Scoop with Britt: Oncology's Mia Ross Honored for 50 Years of Service

By Britt Proulx

Nurse Practitioner Mia Ross celebrated 50 years with Adirondack Health in May and was honored for her five decades of service at the Employee Service Awards.

For the past 40 years, Ross has been a familiar presence for oncology patients at Adirondack Medical Center in Saranac Lake. She began her career in 1974 as a nurse's aide and steadily advanced her education while raising two children and continuing to work. Ross earned her registered nursing degree through the Regent's External Degree Program in 1978, followed by a bachelor's in nursing in 1988, and a master's as a nurse practitioner in 1998.

Ross has worked in multiple specialties throughout the hospital, but her time in the ambulatory surgery unit led her into oncology. At that time, oncology care was not available at Adirondack Medical Center or other area hospitals. A physician would fly from Albany Medical Center once a month to collaborate with Ross, who was an RN at the time.

The oncology program began to take shape after Dr. John Ruckdeschel, an oncologist from Albany Medical Center, befriended a local woman who traveled three hours for breast cancer treatment. Recognizing the burden of the long journey, Dr. Ruckdeschel reached out to Dr. Alfred

Decker, a surgeon in Saranac Lake, who facilitated the start of oncology visits at Adirondack Medical Center. Dr. David Johnson later became the medical advisor for the hospital's oncology service. As word spread, more patients sought care locally, and oncology visits increased from monthly to biweekly, and eventually to weekly. In 1983, oncology officially became a department.



Mia Ross

Today, Adirondack Medical Center offers same-day evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment when needed.

Dr. David Mastrianni, the current oncologist at Adirondack Medical Center, returned in 2022 after Dr. Eric Pillemer's retirement. Mastrianni previously served as an oncologist at AMC for nearly 15 years. "It's been a great career, and the doctors taught us so much," Ross said. "They are amazing."

Although some might find oncology emotionally challenging, Ross described it as one of the hospital's best-kept secrets. "People enjoy

coming here, even though they're receiving chemotherapy," she said. "Working with them is incredibly rewarding. Patients come in weekly or monthly, and they know who will be there to take care of them. There's a level of trust and familiarity. Even when a patient doesn't survive the disease, you know you've helped them through a difficult time. The gratitude from patients and their families makes it all worth it."

Ross retired from her full-time role in 2015 but continues to work on a per-diem basis in oncology. She also helped recruit Sara Ames, now the department's nurse practitioner. "Now I work per diem, and I love it," Ross said. "Every time I go to work, I run into a patient from years ago whose cancer was cured. It's so rewarding to see them again—it feels like reconnecting with old friends."

Reflecting on her career, Ross described her 50 years at Adirondack Health as the "greatest career ever."

"It's amazing that such a small hospital has an oncology unit with renowned doctors," Ross said. "We were the first to offer rural oncology in the area. Oncology care has evolved so much in the past decade, and we've kept up with the latest technologies and treatments, offering the same level of care as larger hospitals."

Foundation Feature: A Sweet Donation

Turning lemons into good deeds

Juliet Wright, daughter of Tara and Jacob Wright, held a very successful lemonade stand during IRONMAN weekend in Lake Placid. Juliet gave out free drinks to athletes and support staff throughout the weekend but all other patrons of the stand paid for her homemade lemonade.

Juliet stopped by the Foundation Office on River Street recently and donated half of her proceeds to Adirondack Health – the other half she donated to the Tri-Lakes Humane Society. We're grateful to Juliet for thinking of Adirondack Health patients!



Mount Marcy Society Update



In September, members of the Mount Marcy Society enjoyed a behind-the-scenes event at Adirondack Medical Center, where they visited the operating room with Dr. Bartlomiej Szczech to learn about the latest in surgical technology. Attendees were given a live demonstration of the MAKO robotic surgical system, which assists in precision joint replacement surgeries.



During the demonstration, members learned how the system uses 3D imaging to enhance surgical planning and reduce recovery times.

The Mount Marcy Society honors individuals who have contributed \$1 million or more to the Adirondack Health Foundation to support our mission of providing excellent healthcare, close to home.



***Executive Chef John Vargo's* Apple cider glazed butternut and rosemary cornbread stuffing**

With fall here and winter knocking at the door, this sweet and savory cornbread stuffing is a special treat. It is a comforting addition to our holiday table or a cozy intimate dinner for two. The recipe is easy to prepare ahead of time and pairs well with hearty roasts or stews that we enjoy this time of year.

Ingredients:

Cornbread:

2 cups yellow cornmeal
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar
2 Tablespoons baking powder
2 Tablespoons kosher salt
2 cups milk
2 large eggs
½# salted butter melted – plus ¼# melted for coating baking pan.

Apple Cider Glaze:

1 cup fresh apple cider
2 Tablespoons butter
2 teaspoons cornstarch

Stuffing:

1 medium sized butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and diced into ½ inch pieces.
4 stalks of celery diced into ¼ inch pieces
1 red onion diced into ¼ inch pieces
2 Tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
6 cups of prepared chicken, turkey, or vegetable stock.
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

Procedure:

First make the cornbread:

Coat a 9" x 9" baking pan with melted butter and set aside. Mix all dry ingredients well and set aside. In a large bowl, mix the milk and eggs and whisk together. Add the mixed dry ingredients into the milk/egg mixture. Add the melted butter and stir well. Pour the batter into the baking pan and place in a pre-heated 400°F oven. Bake for 20 - 25 minutes or until fully cooked. Set aside and let cool.

Next prepare the apple cider glaze:

Place the cold apple cider and cornstarch into a small saucepan. Whisk well and then heat gently until it simmers and thickens. Add the butter to the glaze and stir until melted. Hold warm until ready to pour over the stuffing.

Lastly prepare the stuffing:

Place the stock in a medium saucepan and add the celery and onion. Bring to a slow simmer and cook for 10 minutes. Add the diced butternut squash and return to a simmer. Add the fresh rosemary, kosher salt, and fresh ground black pepper. Break the cornbread gently into a large mixing bowl. Add the seasoned stock and vegetables to the cornbread a ladle at a time until desired moisture is achieved. Be sure to add all the vegetables, even if you wish to reduce the liquid quantity for drier stuffing. Place the stuffing mixture into a buttered casserole dish and bake at 325°F for 20 minutes. Pour the apple cider glaze over the stuffing when it comes out of the oven hot. Keep warm and serve as a delicious side dish!



The Powers of Colors: Fruits and Vegetables

By Joni Gerkin, RDN

Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables is a great first step toward making healthy food choices. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables are linked to the prevention of chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and certain cancers.

The low-calorie, high-fiber content of whole fruits and vegetables plays a key role in disease prevention. To better understand the benefits of these foods, pay attention to their colors. The colors represent the primary phytonutrients they contain. Phytonutrients are compounds plants produce that benefit the human body when consumed. Each phytonutrient offers unique benefits, so it's best to eat a variety of colors to ensure your body receives a broad range of these health-promoting compounds.

Whenever possible, eat the skins of fruits and vegetables, as they are often the most color-dense—and thus the most phytonutrient-dense—parts. Fruits and vegetables in season typically contain more phytochemicals, as these compounds break down over

time after harvest. Freezing fruits and vegetables preserves their phytochemicals and other essential nutrients.

Most fruits and vegetables contain multiple phytonutrients, but their color indicates which phytonutrient is most prominent. Below are examples of common phytonutrients and their health benefits:

Red: Lycopene

Benefits: Anti-inflammatory, supports immune function, may reduce the risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease.
Examples: Tomatoes, red peppers, watermelon, papaya.

Orange: Beta-carotene

Benefits: Supports eye and skin health and strengthens the immune system.
Examples: Carrots, cantaloupe, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, red cabbage.

Yellow: Lutein

Benefits: Supports cardiac, eye, and skin health; linked to reduced risk of macular degeneration.
Examples: Corn, star fruit, yellow

bell peppers, Yukon Gold potatoes, acorn squash.

Green: Chlorophyll (with indoles and isothiocyanates)

Benefits: Provides antioxidants that may help prevent cancer.
Examples: Leafy greens, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, avocado, green beans.

Blue and Purple: Anthocyanins

Benefits: Prevent inflammation, protect cardiovascular health, and reduce allergy symptoms.
Examples: Plums, figs, blueberries, eggplant, blackberries.

White: Allicin

Benefits: Lowers blood pressure, supports cardiovascular health, offers anti-tumor properties, and promotes gut health.
Examples: Onions, garlic, leeks.

Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables ensures your body gets a wide range of essential phytonutrients and other health benefits.

Learn more about Adirondack Health's Medical Fitness Services at ahmedicalfitness.org

Keene Health Center Receives Generous Donation for Upgrades



On Friday, May 24, we celebrated a ribbon cutting to highlight renovations at our Mountain Health Center in Keene, made possible by Dr. and Mrs. Christopher (Audrey) Hyson, pictured at far right. About 30 guests, along with Adirondack Health CEO Aaron Kramer, enjoyed a tour of the facility and refreshments and catching up with the Hysons, who are enjoying retirement. The Hysons generously donated funding for new flooring and cabinets in the exam rooms and new paint and carpeting throughout the health center. We're grateful to the Hysons for their contributions to our care.

Yoga for Oncology Patients

A comprehensive yoga practice designed to mitigate the short and long-term side effects and achieve long-term health.

Classes Times and Locations
Medical Fitness Center, Group Fitness Studio in Lake Placid: Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

Adirondack Medical Center, Redfield Room in Saranac Lake: Wednesdays at 4 p.m.

Oncology Patient Cost: \$5/class
To register, please call 518-523-8521



Include Adirondack Health Foundation in your DAF giving this year.

Donor Advised Funds (DAF) are a fast growing giving method to manage charitable donations. Donor Advised Funds allow donors to make a charitable contribution, receive an immediate tax deduction, and then recommend donations to non-profit organizations from their fund over time. Please ask your Donor Advised Fund advisor to call the Foundation office at 518-897-2597 when making a first time DAF gift.



Call 518-897-2597 for more information

