



## **NEWS FROM THEDACARE™**

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## **THEDACARE EMPLOYEES GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY** ***870 Workers Volunteer in 2010 as Part of Helping Hearts Program***

Volunteering is second nature to Cathleen Witt. When she is not working in the laboratory at Encircle Health, a partnership with ThedaCare, she is giving her time to help in area schools, at church, and with local Girl Scouts of America troops. Though she has been volunteering on her own for many years, Witt is also one of hundreds of employees who log their hours in ThedaCare's Helping Hearts Employee Volunteer Program.

"If I'm not working, I'm volunteering, because it's just the way I can make a difference," said Witt, who has worked for ThedaCare for 12 years and has been part of the Helping Hearts program the last six. This year, she was thrilled to learn that her volunteer hours in 2010 won her the opportunity to have ThedaCare donate \$1,000 to the charity of her choice.

"I was so excited," said Witt, who already has volunteered 130 hours since Dec. 1. "I really appreciate that ThedaCare recognizes that time I put in, and I'm able to give something through the company other than my time."

In 2010, more than 870 ThedaCare employees participated in Helping Hearts. ThedaCare employees donated 84,505 volunteer hours, up from 79,984 hours in 2009, benefiting 373 community non-profit organizations. The total employee volunteer hours are equivalent to 39 full-time employees working on behalf of the community, with a value of nearly \$1.8 million in donated labor.

Jean Blaney, community involvement specialist at ThedaCare and Helping Hearts coordinator, said the power of ThedaCare volunteers is clear. During a tough economic year, employees really came through in sharing their time with local non-profit organizations.

"We had a slight drop in employees who recorded time, but we had an increase in hours volunteered," Blaney said. "What that tells me is we have avid volunteers who are actually giving more time, which is pretty neat to see."

ThedaCare created Helping Hearts in 2003 to encourage employees to become involved in the community. Through the program, employees are encouraged to record the hours they spend volunteering in the community. Based on the number of volunteer hours, employees may also earn financial contributions from ThedaCare to the charities they designate. In 2010, ThedaCare donated \$51,800 to 329 different non-profit organizations selected by ThedaCare employees as a "matching grant" to their volunteer efforts.

Greg Hackbart, a ThedaCare Improvement System employee, also joined Helping Hearts when he became an employee recently. Hackbart volunteers as a youth sports coach and for local Cub Scout packs, and in 2010 he reached a donation level to win \$200 to give to the charity of his choice. He said he is thankful that ThedaCare values volunteering as much as he does.

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“It’s just awesome, such a great benefit to have that promotes helping your community,” he said. “It’s something the company wouldn’t have to do, but they do. And it helps promote the health and quality of life in our community.”

Since Helping Hearts was created, the program has doubled in size in the number of participating employees and the hours recorded, Blaney said. The program also works to help identify, and in some cases, organize volunteer opportunities for employees. Volunteer time is recorded annually, starting Dec. 1 each year.

“As an employer, ThedaCare has a very strong leadership group that wants to continue providing opportunities that directly improve community health,” Blaney said. “Volunteerism continues to grow with our ThedaCare employees, so we just want more employees to know about it, to take action, record their time and get involved in the community.”

ThedaCare™ ([www.thedacare.org](http://www.thedacare.org)) is a community-owned health system consisting of Appleton Medical Center, Theda Clark Medical Center, New London Family Medical Center, Riverside Medical Center in Waupaca, ThedaCare Physicians, and other health care services. ThedaCare is the largest employer in Northeast Wisconsin with more than 5,400 employees. For the latest health news and updates, follow ThedaCare on Facebook and Twitter.

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