

# New wheelchair a boon for hospital's specialty clinic

*The Allen County Regional Hospital Auxiliary purchased a new wheelchair with added features for patients using the ACRH specialty clinic.*

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Allen County Regional Hospital Auxiliary volunteers gathered for a demonstration of a new transport wheelchair they recently purchased for use in the hospital's specialty clinic. Front row, from left: Ridley Danner, RN, Bailee Hermreck, LPN, and Sharon Utley (seated). Middle row: Sharon King, Hellen Welch, Linda Johnson, Donna Bauer, Loretta Ellis, Jeanna Church, and Tina Poe (director of patient care services). Back row: Christi Mersman (specialty clinic nurse manager), Mary Joseph, Mary LaCrone, Pat Patton (hospital administrator), Becky Linthicum, Donna Culver, and Judy Johnson.

*Photo by Sarah Haney / Iola Register*

A new transport wheelchair is making it easier for patients to move through [Allen County Regional Hospital's specialty clinic](#), thanks to a recent purchase by the hospital's volunteer auxiliary.

The chair, funded by a \$2,530 grant from the [Allen County Regional Hospital Auxiliary](#), was demonstrated to volunteers during a gathering at the clinic on June 30. It will be used primarily for patients visiting the specialty clinic for various treatments and appointments.

"The new chair can accommodate patients up to 500 lbs. and includes several safety features that benefit both patients and staff," said Christi Mersman, nurse manager for the specialty clinic. "The new chair is much easier to turn and maneuver and it has a large brake pedal that's easy to operate so we know it's locked in place."

Mersman also demonstrated the chair's features, including hands-free footrest operation and movable arms designed to assist patients with standing or transfers.

"Whether patients come to the specialty clinic for a chemo treatment or to see the podiatrist, we want them to be comfortable, and to feel safe and secure. This new wheelchair does just that," she said. "We are grateful for our volunteers and their ongoing dedication to our hospital. They're always helping us take the best care of our patients."

**THE AUXILIARY'S** contribution is one of several recent projects funded through year-round volunteer fundraising. The group raises money through operating the hospital gift shop and hosting events such as book and gift sales, seasonal pie and poinsettia pre-orders, and a holiday memory tree program. The proceeds are used to fund [scholarships](#) and to purchase equipment and items that benefit hospital departments and patient care.

Hospital departments submit "wish list" items twice a year, which are then reviewed and voted on by the Auxiliary in collaboration with hospital leadership. Since 2023, the group has donated more than \$15,000 to the hospital. Past contributions have funded multiple wheelchairs, an ultrasound probe for the emergency department, a large Christmas tree for the lobby, and landscaping improvements around the gazebo.

Additional funding requests are under consideration for 2025.

"We'd like to thank everyone who's supported our fundraising efforts and helped make these gifts possible," said Jeanna Church, president of the Allen County

Regional Hospital Auxiliary. “Funding support for the hospital and scholarships is an important part of our mission, but we do more than fundraising.”

**BEYOND FINANCIAL** contributions, volunteers also assist with front desk reception, coordinate community blood drives, operate a hospitality cart, and deliver small favors to patients. They also organize staff appreciation events, including an annual tea party and summer ice cream socials.

The group currently includes about 20 active members and several lifetime members. In 2024, volunteers contributed more than 2,500 hours of service to the hospital.

The 2025 Auxiliary officers include Jeanna Church, president; Donna Culver, vice president; Kay Walker, secretary; and Sharon Utley and Mary Lacy, co-treasurers.