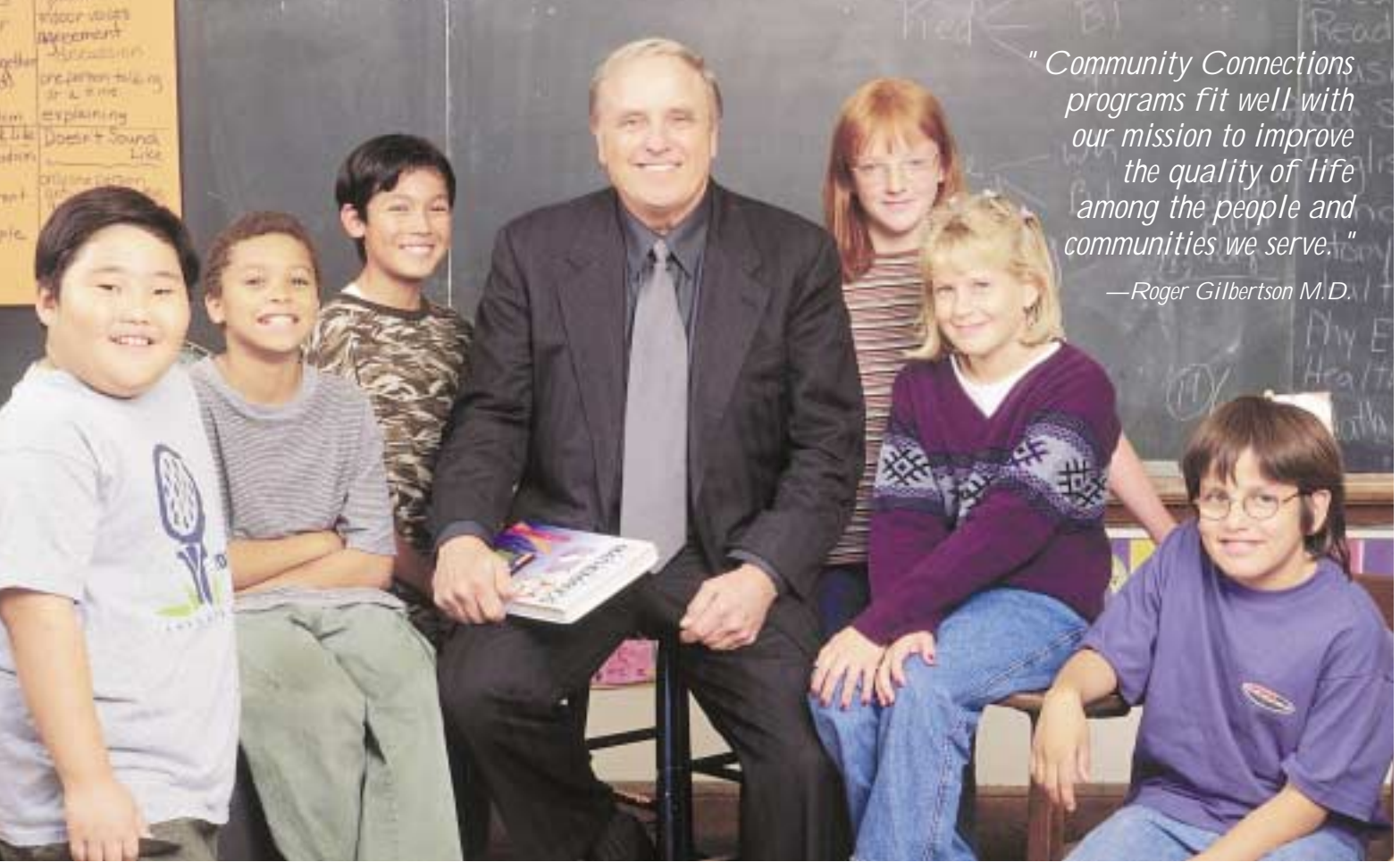


# Planting the seed



**MeritCare**  
**Health System**  
*meritcare.com*

1999 - 2000 Annual Report



*"Community Connections programs fit well with our mission to improve the quality of life among the people and communities we serve."*

*—Roger Gilbertson M.D.*

# Planting the Seed

Anyone who appreciates the wonder of living things can't help but marvel that a tiny seed holds within it the promise of something so grand as a tree, a plant, a flower or a harvestable crop.

At MeritCare, we've taken extra efforts these past couple years to "plant seeds" - seeds that, with care and nurturing, will grow and make a difference in the lives of children, adults, families and ultimately, communities. We call it Community Connections. Community Connections programs fit well with our mission "to improve the quality of life among the people and communities we serve." They also fit well with our 90+ year history of meeting the health needs of people throughout eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota.

Just as seedlings need certain conditions for them to thrive - the right mix of soil, the right balance of moisture, the right amount of sunshine - Community Connections needs certain factors to help it grow and reap results. Chief among them are a well-planned and coordinated effort, a willingness to get involved, and a spirit of cooperation among many - churches, MeritCare associates, individuals and families, community leaders, parishioners, students, parents, teachers and others. As you'll see in the pages that follow, Community Connections is not a "big bucks," flashy program, but it nevertheless has high impact and great potential. Why? Because it's rooted in meaningful ways to meet genuine needs.

If you haven't done so lately, gather your family together and plant a seedling. And know that the simple caring steps you take today can make a world of difference tomorrow.

Sincerely,

*Roger L. Gilbertson, M.D.*

Roger L. Gilbertson, M.D.  
President and C.E.O.  
MeritCare Health System

# Community Connections Branches Out to the Region

and the day-to-day challenges faced by people with chronic health conditions. These topics sparked the three primary projects of Community Connections: Parish Nursing Program, Living Well Workshops for people with chronic conditions and Adopt-A-School. You'll learn more about each of these in the pages to follow.

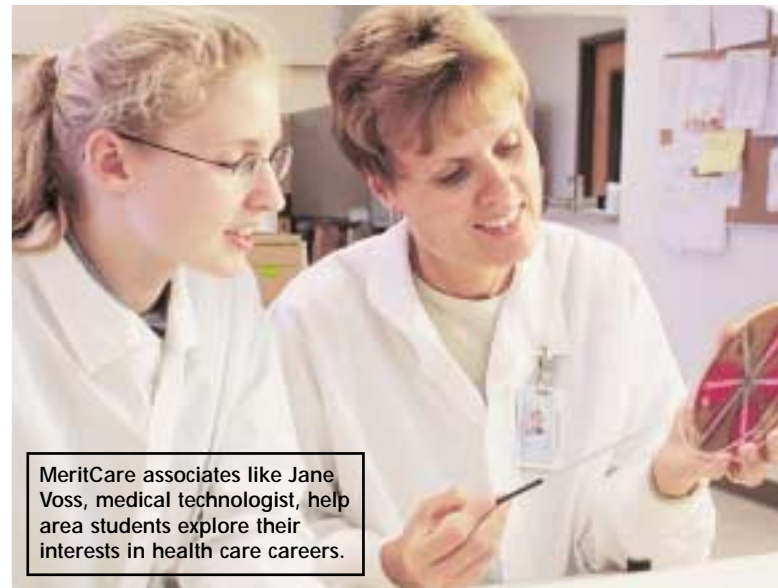
Additional programs that comprise Community Connections include:

- **Youth Medical Experience Program.** This MeritCare-based program opens the door for 9th-12th grade students to explore careers in health care. Better yet, they learn from professionals in the field.
- **Celebrate Kindness.** Begun in the Bemidji area several years ago, Celebrate Kindness today is a widespread effort to promote nonviolent behavior and attitudes in students throughout the region. So far this program has reached approximately 48,000 students in 50 schools in 16 communities.
- **Friends of the Family.** This special fund lends a helping hand to families of patients who are unexpectedly hospitalized at MeritCare. Often the families are from out of town and can't afford a place to stay or meals out.
- **Leadership and participation in community initiatives.** MeritCare employees play a role in several community initiatives including Red River Health Promotion Coalition and the Tobacco Dependence Treatment Center. Employees also participate in the United Way campaign, the annual "Coats for Kids" project with KVLV-TV 11, blood drives and more.

Helping neighborhoods after a natural disaster. Working with others to understand and address community issues. Participating in boards and organizations. Since the early 1900s, when MeritCare began as St. Luke's Hospital, we have been committed to serving the region in these ways and more. We strive to go beyond the medical setting and into communities to meet needs that improve health and quality of life. In 1998, we took that commitment one step further with Community Connections. Today, Community Connections includes several growing and innovative programs.

## Community Connections Programs

What issues face communities? In 1998, MeritCare met with area clergy, service providers, community leaders, educators and business people to learn more. Out of these discussions three topics consistently arose: parish nursing, area youth



MeritCare associates like Jane Voss, medical technologist, help area students explore their interests in health care careers.

*"At MeritCare, we do health care one person at a time. But how do we go beyond the medical setting to improve the health of the greater community? How do we 'go upstream' to positively impact people's health? Community Connections is a terrific start."*

—Susan Bosak  
Coordinator of Community Connections

# Planting the Seed... *of Comfort*

*"What I would love to see happen is this: When people are asked where the healing places of their community are, they'll list not only the medical facilities, but the churches. When that's accomplished, then truly we've made it."*

*— Janet Drechsel  
Parish Nurse Project Leader*

## Parish Nursing Program

When Verlee Heinze's mother died unexpectedly last July, parish nurse Gail Pederson was there, ready to offer support to the family. "Her visits were very comforting," says Verlee, who lives in Valley City, N.D. "In fact my brother still talks about when Gail came to our home and we sat and talked about Mom."

Helping people through difficult times is an important way Gail and other parish nurses in the region-wide Parish Nurse Program serve parishioners. They also

provide health information, visit homebound or hospitalized parishioners, help coordinate necessary medical services, teach classes focused on healthy living, organize health and safety programs and much more. Each church tailors the parish nurse's duties to fit its particular needs.

Much of the success of the Parish Nurse Program can be attributed to the level of comfort that develops between the parish nurse and the parishioners. "Gail knew my mom, she knows our family, she's part of the community. We know her and trust her," says Verlee. "I'm a firm supporter of the Parish Nurse Program - and my mom was, too."

- MeritCare partners with churches throughout the region to support seven parish nurses (registered nurses who have completed parish-nurse training). The parish nurses serve approximately 3,000 parishioners in several eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota communities.
- As a group, the parish nurses average about 300 one-on-one visits per month with parishioners - an estimated reach of 3,600 per year.
- A survey conducted in April of 2000 indicated 85 percent of parishioners would call on the parish nurse for future needs. The survey also indicated that those who had been visited by a parish nurse were well-satisfied with the visit. Parishioners gave parish nurses top ratings in their ability to listen, their caring approach, their relaxed and unhurried manner and their level of knowledge.
- A MeritCare-supported Parish Nurse Resource Fair held in Fargo last October drew 50 parish nurses from throughout the region. More than 20 agencies set up educational booths.



Helping people through difficult times is an important way parish nurses serve people in their communities. Verlee Heinze appreciates the support she receives from parish nurse Gail Pederson.



Becky Frank, lay leader, helps people with chronic conditions take control of their symptoms and their health.

## Living Well with Chronic Conditions Workshop

Chronic health conditions can isolate and bring down even the strongest of people. Just ask Ron DuRand, a 53-year-old Vietnam vet from Fargo. In the past two years, his low back pain has worsened to the point he's unable to work, can't sit for long without standing up for relief and often needs a cane for walking.

"For me, the most challenging part has been trying to accept that this is how it's going to be

and trying to make the best of it," says Ron. "The Living Well Workshop helped. It was informative, motivating and really very good. I'd highly recommend it to anyone who's dealing with a chronic condition."

Ron attended the six-week Living Well Workshop last summer at a church meeting room in West Fargo. He and others with chronic or long-lasting conditions got together on a weekly basis to learn how to problem solve, set realistic goals, manage negative emotions, relax, self-manage their health, partner and communicate more effectively with health care providers and more. Guided by trained leaders and learning from others in the group, they gained the tools necessary to take control of their symptoms and health.

"Sure, you might be able to get the same basic information by sitting at home and reading a book, but it wouldn't be the same," Ron says. "There's something good about being able to toss ideas around with people who have experienced what you've experienced. You can talk openly, and in the end, you learn from each other."

- Offered at various community sites throughout the region, the Living Well Workshop is designed to help adults with any of several chronic health conditions including heart disease, breathing problems, stroke, diabetes, arthritis and high blood pressure. Statistics show that people 60 and older have an average of 2.2 chronic conditions. People from age 20-85 have participated in the workshops.
- Designed by Stanford University, the Living Well Workshop has a proven rate of success. Research studies have shown the workshop is extremely effective in helping people manage their health problems and decrease their health care costs.
- Each workshop is led by two trained leaders from the community. At least one of the leaders lives with a chronic health condition.
- The Living Well Workshop is absolutely free! It also includes a take-home book called "Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions" and a relaxation tape.

# Planting the Seed... of Motivation

*"This workshop helps people in their daily walk, no matter what their chronic condition. It empowers them to live their lives the best they can — in short, to live well."*

— Becky Frank,  
past participant and current lay leader

## Adopt-A-School Project

One week they'll do homework. Another week draw on the blackboard. Another week eat lunch together. And sometimes they'll just sit and talk. But no matter what they do, MeritCare associate Ellen Case and Roosevelt Elementary School third-grader Samantha Schulz appreciate the 40 minutes they spend together each week.

*"MeritCare could give us a check for playground equipment, but it wouldn't begin to accomplish what this youth-mentoring program accomplishes. It's the heart of the Adopt-A-School Project."*

*— Principal Kim Colwell  
Roosevelt Elementary School*

Now in its second year, the program has been a hit all around. "We have fun," says Samantha in a quiet voice. Ellen agrees, adding that it's satisfying to be able to give back. "There were many people who were there for me when I was growing up," she says. "If I can do the same for someone else, that's a real opportunity."

But can 40 minutes once a week really make a difference? Yes, says Jane Spooner, special needs teacher at Roosevelt: "I see it every day. The kids in this program are standing taller, they're paying more attention to their homework, they have a more positive outlook and they're proud of themselves. There's a difference in self-esteem and it shows."

Ellen and Samantha participate in Adopt-A-School, a joint program of MeritCare and Roosevelt Elementary School in Fargo. The school-based program pairs interested MeritCare employees with Roosevelt students who can benefit from a one-on-one, consistent relationship with an adult role model. Their weekly meeting takes place before school, during lunch or after school.

# Planting the Seed... of Stability



- A national impact study indicates children with mentors are 40 percent less likely to use drugs and 53 percent less likely to skip school. Plus, 59 percent of them improve their grades.
- The Adopt-A-School Project was developed and continues to evolve based on input from Roosevelt School staff, parents and students.
- Youth mentoring is the centerpiece of the Adopt-A-School Project, but there are other components, too: safety and wellness programs such as a babysitting safety course, handwashing, bike safety. MeritCare employees also assist with Roosevelt's annual spring field day, one-on-one reading and more.



## 1999-2000 MeritCare Health System Administrative Staff

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John Doherty,  
Senior Executive/C.F.O.

Mike Frankenberger,  
Senior Executive/C.I.O.

Joan Justesen  
Senior Executive

Gregory Post, M.D.  
Senior Executive

Paul Richard,  
Senior Executive/  
General Legal Counsel

Evelyn Quigley  
Senior Executive

Bruce Pitts, M.D.  
Senior Executive

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**Front Row-left to right:** Timothy Monson, M.D.; Nancy Jordheim; Marilyn Heltzer; Steven Clemenson, M.D.; L. Michael Howell, M.D.

**Not Pictured:** Steve Scheel, Treasurer; David Glatt, M.D.

# An Entire Network of Care

### MeritCare Medical Group

- Largest group practice in North Dakota
- 335 physicians
- 70 mid-level practitioners, including physician assistants and nurse practitioners
- 68 specialty areas of medicine
- Over 1.2 million patient visits per year
- 9 locations Fargo/Moorhead/West Fargo
- 13 regional locations in Minnesota
- 12 regional locations in North Dakota
- Service area that spans 250 miles west to east; from Jamestown, N.D., to Bemidji, Minn.

### MeritCare Hospital

- Largest hospital in North Dakota
- 380 adult and pediatric licensed beds
- 40 infant beds
- 24 sub-acute beds
- Children's Hospital with 24 bed Level III Neonatal Intensive Care
- 18,000 admissions per year
- 33,250 yearly visits to the Emergency Center
- Over 40,000 Walk-In Clinic visits
- 1,650 births per year
- Over 5,400 Same Day Surgery procedures
- 7,725 surgical cases per year

### Medical Specialties

Allergy & Immunology  
Anesthesiology  
Audiology (Hearing)  
Cardiac Electrophysiology-Clinical (Pacemakers)  
Cardiology  
Chemical Dependency Services (Addiction)  
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry  
Child & Adolescent Psychology  
Chiropractic  
Clinical Chemistry  
Critical Care  
Cytopathology

Dermatology  
Emergency Medicine  
Endocrinology (Diabetes & Metabolism)  
Family Practice  
Gastroenterology (Digestive System)  
Geriatric Medicine  
Hematology (Blood)  
Infectious Disease  
Internal Medicine  
Microbiology-Medical  
Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine (Premature Infants)

Nephrology (Kidney)  
Neurology (Nervous System)  
Neuropsychology (Brain Disorders)  
Neuroradiology  
Nuclear Medicine  
Obstetrics & Gynecology  
Occupational Medicine  
Oncology-Medical (Cancer)  
Ophthalmology (Eye)  
Optometry (Eye)  
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery (Mouth & Jaw)  
Orthopaedic Surgery (Bones & Joints)

Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose & Throat)  
Pain Management  
Pathology-Anatomic & Clinical  
Pediatric Cardiology (Heart)  
Pediatric Critical Care Medicine  
Pediatric Endocrinology (Diabetes & Metabolism)  
Pediatric Gastroenterology  
Ophthalmology (Eye)  
Pediatric Hematology-Oncology (Cancer)  
Pediatric Immunology-Laboratory & Clinical  
Pediatric Neurology (Nervous System)  
Pediatric Pulmonology (Lungs)  
Pediatrics  
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation  
Plastic Surgery  
Podiatric Medicine & Surgery (Feet)  
Psychiatry  
Psychology  
Pulmonary Disease (Lungs)  
Radiation Oncology (Cancer)  
Radiology-Diagnostic  
Reproductive Endocrinology (Fertility)  
Rheumatology (Arthritis)  
Sleep Medicine  
Sports Medicine  
Surgery  
Surgery-General Vascular (Blood Vessels)  
Surgery-Hand  
Surgery-Head & Neck  
Surgery-Neurological (Brain & Nervous System)  
Surgery-Cardiothoracic  
Surgery-Cardiovascular  
Surgery-Transplant  
Urology (Urinary Systems)

