

# Neighbors

of the Hillsboro Sentry-Enterprise

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## Local children selected as CMN Hospital Heroes

By Nicolette Nauman  
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

For many of us, perhaps the worst childhood injuries or illnesses we experienced may be a broken bone or a particularly potent bout of the flu. Maybe we ended up with a brief stay in the hospital to receive treatment for conditions like tonsillitis or appendicitis, undergoing surgery to remove the offending organs. But through it all, we come out on the other end healthy and healed and ready to resume our lives no worse for the wear.

For some of us, the illnesses or injuries experienced as children are not quite as simple to come back from. Sometimes, things just go wrong for any number of reasons and result in lifelong impacts on our health and wellbeing.

Beginning in 1983, the Children's Miracle Network (CMN) evolved from a telethon fundraiser into a sprawling network of hospitals throughout North America. The network works to fund life-saving treatments for children, along with healthcare services, research, pediatric medical equipment, and financial support for families with children receiving care at a member hospital. You've probably seen their distinctive red-and-yellow hot air balloon logo at stores such as Walmart or Costco, corporations who regularly hold fundraising efforts for the network.

As a CMN partner, Gundersen Health Systems has made families across 25 counties eligible for assistance through the network, even if those families are receiving care outside of the Gundersen Health System. For example, a family living in the Hillsboro area whose child is receiving treatment in Madison can still apply for assistance through CMN—along with assistance through other programs, such as the Ronald McDonald House.



Trey Nowak (front left) and Brynleigh Nowak (front right) have both been selected as CMN Hospital Heroes for 2023, along with Amanda Larsen (front center) of Houston, MN, Charlie Seiger (back left) of Viola, WI, and Eduardo Hernandez (back right) of Onalaska, WI. They will be representing the Children's Miracle Network at Gundersen Health Systems and helping to spread awareness of the program. Contributed photo.

Each year, Gundersen selects a group of five children who have benefited from the CMN to help represent the network and spread awareness of the program. This year, two Hillsboro names were added to the roster.

5-year-old Trey Nowak and his 3-year-old sister Brynleigh were both selected to serve as CMN Hospital Heroes in 2023. The siblings, children of Hillsboro residents Matthew and Elizabeth Nowak, both had a bit of a rough start to life. Trey was born at 24 weeks and five days, a 'micro-preemie,' and his sister later followed suit by entering the world at 27 weeks and six days, also deemed a micro-preemie.

Following their early arrivals into the world, Trey and Brynleigh spent a combined

total of roughly 24 weeks in Gundersen's NICU—neonatal intensive care unit—as they played catch-up to their full-term peers. Thanks to the care they received, both siblings are doing well. Trey has grown up into an active kindergartener, interested in sports like wrestling and basketball and in superheroes. Brynleigh is also doing well, fascinated by ponies like many other kids her age.

While their children were in the NICU, Matthew and Elizabeth were assigned a social worker through Gundersen who informed them about CMN. Through the program, the Nowaks received daily vouchers to help cover meals and monthly gas cards to help cover the trips to and from the hospital. Once Trey and



Despite the rough start to life, siblings Trey and Brynleigh Nowak have both grown into thriving kids thanks to the care they received immediately after birth at Gundersen. Financial support from the Children's Miracle Network helped ensure not only that Gundersen's NICU was well-equipped to help them catch up to their full-term peers, but also that their parents had a few less things to worry about as their children recovered. Contributed photo.

Brynleigh were deemed ready to go home, the Nowaks were able to apply for financial aid in covering their medical bills.

For the Nowaks, the work undertaken by CMN and its member hospitals was something neither had thought much about until they benefited from it. Matthew, for example, had donated to the network for years through Walmart without really thinking too much on it. All donated funds stay local, benefiting children in local member hospitals.

The Nowaks were approached about their children serving as Hospital

Heroes back in September of last year. They received an email detailing what would be expected of their family should they agree, and spoke with a representative from CMN to get more information.

Trey and Brynleigh will be expected to attend a certain number of events throughout the year and tell their stories (with help from Mom and Dad, of course). Some events include the annual Miracle Gala and a Loggers Night, during which a percentage of the proceeds will go to benefit the CMN. Other events are spread out throughout the

region, from a fire department 5K in Onalaska to a camping weekend in West Salem. Area businesses, such as Dairy Queen and Culvers, also host regular events to help raise money for the network.

Area businesses who are interested in signing on to sponsor the network and help support more children like Trey and Brynleigh can inquire about sponsorship forms. These forms are for larger donations, beginning at \$500, but other donation amounts can be made online by visiting [gundersenhealth.org/cmnhospitals](http://gundersenhealth.org/cmnhospitals).

## "An extra few steps" saves life of Union Center resident

By Nicolette Nauman  
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

In his forty years with the UPS, Hillsboro area resident Patrick Shore spends most of his days delivering mail and packages in and around Lake Dalton. He runs what's called a 'bid route,' which is subject to fluctuations here and there. His route covers a majority-rural area, and the days can get rather long.

A few weeks ago, Shore was reaching the end of a long day's work. He had maybe three more stops ahead of him for the day when he pulled up to the Rott residence in

Union Center. As he pulled up and parked his vehicle, Shore thought he heard a cry for help. He paused, trying to listen closer, but when he didn't hear the cry again, he figured he must have been hearing things and continued on with his work.

He pulled out the package marked for delivery to the address and got out to make his delivery—and he heard the sound again. Convinced he'd heard something, Shore walked around, trying to see if he could find the source. But his search yielded nothing at first.

"For some reason, I took an

extra few steps," says Shore.

Those extra few steps meant the difference between life and death for Union Center resident Mariann Rott. Rott had been going out to dispose of some trash when she'd lost her balance on a small footbridge and fell into a creek cutting through her backyard.

Rott had managed to crawl out of the creek, but spent roughly forty-five minutes to an hour stuck in the snow and ice, dripping wet. Those few extra steps allowed Shore to spot Rott, and he immediately went over to help.

He was able to get her fully out of the creek and into a

seated position. When Rott confirmed that she was unable to walk, her legs and feet numbed from the cold, Shore was able to carry her up to the garage. At one point, he removed her coat to help get her across a patch of ice in the backyard.

Rott's husband, Randy Rott, had possibly been outside between her fall and Shore finding her, but had not spotted her and believed she was in the house. Shore found Rott's husband and asked him to contact emergency responders before taking Rott into her

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UPS delivery driver Patrick Shore (right) came across Union Center resident Mariann Rott (left) after hearing her cries for help, finding her freezing in the snow and ice. His quick thinking helped ensure that Rott received immediate medical treatment that saved her life. Contributed photo.

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