"I have always wanted to use my talents to serve the greater good. That didn’t stop when I got sick,” said Dionne Hardiman, patient at Cherry Health.

Hardiman started her career as the first black teacher at Jackson Park Middle School in Wyoming, Michigan. In the years that followed, she faced a diagnosis that took her from the classroom and from a fulfilling career. Her severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI) changed everything, except her desire to serve.

Her Cherry Health therapist recognized her need to lead and connected her to Sheldon House. This ‘clubhouse’ program offers a structured workday for those recovering from SPMI.

"When donors support access to health care through Cherry Health Foundation, they empower data-powered, outcomes-based progress for patients who are often overlooked in the system. In the ENSEMBLE study, the trust patients had established with our care teams offered them the opportunity to participate in a study to test what we hope will be a powerful tool in the world-wide fight against COVID-19.”

Dr. Eric Achtyes, Director of Research, Cherry Health

In the program, clubhouse members organize and advocate with fellow members, connect socially, and support each other in work and play. Hardiman thrived.

Recently, Hardiman’s doctor at Cherry Health offered her a revolutionary way to lead. Cherry Health was selected as a testing site for the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson’s Phase 3 clinical research study, ENSEMBLE, to evaluate the safety and efficacy of a COVID-19 vaccine. Would she be interested in participating?

“My aunt had just passed away from the coronavirus and Sheldon House was virtual. I was ready to help in any way I could,” she said.
In 2020, Cherry Health Foundation approved funds for two major facility upgrades at our Community Alternatives Program (CAP) site: installing a generator for power outages, and retrofitting a bathroom to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

CAP is a correctional reentry program that assists residents with rebuilding their ties to the community and connecting with resources and support, including family reintegration, health and human services, employment, and more.

Join us on Thursday, May 6 and make us stronger.

Cherry Health Foundation will host its fourth annual, and second virtual, Prescription: Strength event on May 6, 2021, featuring our Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP).

Hosted digitally on an interactive platform, this virtual happy hour event will be free to those attending, but an invitation to give will be a focus of the program.

Consider becoming an Ambassador for this event by inviting friends new to the Cherry Health mission to learn more about these life-fortifying maternal and women’s health programs. For more information on how to attend or host, contact Laura Portko at 616.965.8254 or foundation@cherryhealth.com.

The Cherry Health research division has been an essential partner in saving lives affected by SPMI. When the team was approached to utilize their nationally acclaimed talents to conduct this vaccine study, they were especially interested in the accessibility of a one-dose inoculation. This was the medicine that could be most effective for patients facing barriers to health.

Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson is seeking Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Through the aid of Cherry Health’s research division, the vaccine was shown to be 85% effective overall in preventing severe disease and demonstrated complete protection against COVID-19 related hospitalization and death. In the international study, Cherry Health was one of the top 10 largest recruiting sites in the U.S. for the study.

Dionne Hardiman says that her participation in the study is an extension of her advocacy and community leadership. She is thankful that her connection with Cherry Health has opened doors for her to continue to serve and educate. Because of donor support for programs like Sheldon House and Research, patients like Hardiman will always be lifted, cared for and honored.

Donors Fund Critical Upgrades to Community Alternatives Program Facilities

In 2020, Cherry Health Foundation approved funds for two major facility upgrades at our Community Alternatives Program (CAP) site: installing a generator for power outages, and retrofitting a bathroom to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

CAP is a correctional reentry program that assists residents with rebuilding their ties to the community and connecting with resources and support, including family reintegration, health and human services, employment, and more.

The team at CAP works hard to inspire residents and care for the building environment. Their motivational messages turn bulletin boards into reminders of self-worth, caring community and capacity for personal leadership.

CAP Site Manager Gayle Horn shared about the importance of the facility upgrades:

“Replacing the generator will take away so many worries experienced during power outages. The last time the old generator ran, it smoked up the building and then just stopped working. We promise that people will be cared for when they join our program. Donors did that. They provided safety through their support.

Additionally, donors provided for the rebuild of one bathroom to make it accessible. We can now accept residents with disabilities and in wheelchairs. Without the ADA bathroom, a potential resident would sit longer in prison until a site that is ADA-equipped became available. We are forever grateful that Cherry Health Foundation saw our need as one of great importance.”
Cherry Health improves the health and wellness of individuals by providing comprehensive primary and behavioral health care while encouraging access by those who are underserved.

CHERRY HEALTH FOUNDATION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

India Manns, Chair
Patti Griswold, Vice Chair
Robert Tolbert, Treasurer
Maureen Walsh, Secretary
Richard Gaffin, Immediate Past Chair
Jonathan Barrera Mikulich
Vanessa Flores Giles
Elizabeth Joy Fossel
Max Grover
Armando Herrera
Shelley Irwin

If you do not wish to receive future fundraising requests to support Cherry Health Foundation, please e-mail foundation@cherryhealth.com or call us at 616.965.8254 with a message identifying yourself, your address and that you do not want to receive future Foundation communications.
Why We Give

At Cherry Health, we believe all of our patients deserve the best care and the utmost respect. Through Cherry Health Foundation, our community rallies behind that belief, providing essential financial support for solutions that work.

The Blue Butterfly Fund

“We wanted to find ways to support the people serving communities in need. The challenges that face Cherry Health patient families do not spare the nurses, billers, screeners, hygienists and the many others who work to heal them. Our gift will begin the Blue Butterfly Fund (BBF), anonymously established with Cherry Health Foundation, to aid Cherry Health staff in times of financial hardship. To ‘help the people who are helping the people.’

“We give because good mental and physical health creates an intensely positive ripple effect. By recognizing the humanity of the staff in this gift, we toss in our stone of hope. Good health outcomes for patients will ensue, from caring for the care team. We want to honor the journey we are all walking, together.”

Dr. & Mrs. Michael & Elizabeth Joy Fossel
Donors & Cherry Health Foundation Trustee

“We are honored to support Cherry Health for so many reasons. Not only is Cherry Health an effective, compassionate provider of comprehensive medical, dental, vision and so many other services throughout Michigan, it is on the cutting edge of much needed research and development. As Michael says, ‘Grand Rapids led the way in pertussis vaccine 90 years ago, now we are contributing to the development of an effective COVID-19 vaccine’ thanks to the participation of Cherry Health in the Johnson & Johnson study. Cherry Health, we applaud your efforts. Thank you for letting us be a part of them.”

Find out more about how to join the BBF or any other mission-focused giving opportunities at Cherry Health Foundation by contacting the Foundation team: Anna Goddard (Clifford), Foundation Director, 616.965.8217, Kate Klemp, Annual Giving Manager, 616.965.8267, or Laura Portko, Foundation Coordinator, 616.965.8254.

In March of 2020, our world was forever changed. Together, we set off on a challenging path that we are still traversing one year later. Looking back at all we have accomplished and ahead to those challenges and opportunities that await us, I am inspired by the resilience, tenacity, and compassion of our teams at Cherry Health. I am humbled by the many individuals and organizations in our community who have stepped up to support their neighbors.

In the last year, Cherry Health expanded access to healthcare in new and exciting ways. We rapidly deployed telemedicine where no system had existed before, completing over 66,000 virtual visits and counting. Blood pressure cuffs were sent directly to the homes of hypertensive patients, so they did not have to choose between health and safety. Curbside pharmacy pickup was established so patients could collect their prescriptions with minimal risk. Our COVID-19 testing efforts were one of our largest undertakings. To date, we have administered over 15,000 COVID-19 tests and are excited to share that we are now providing drive-through COVID-19 vaccinations to eligible individuals.

When the world changed, it changed in a way that brought the work of Federally Qualified Health Centers like Cherry Health to the forefront of the national conversation. As COVID-19 caused early devastation to communities of color and those with certain chronic conditions, it threw into relief the critical work of providing comprehensive healthcare to economically and racially diverse populations. We are proud to have served our community for over 30 years engaged in this important work. The past twelve months have seen us adjust, innovate, and evolve to continue serving our patients with quality health care. Thank you for walking alongside us then, now, and always.