

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into health care



Carol Keller

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COLUMBUS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

Carol Keller didn't seek out a career in health care. The opportunity came to her.

Keller had spent much of her career in marketing and advertising when she was approached by Columbus Community Hospital board members Anne Hall and Jim Pillen about an open executive director position with the CCH Foundation.

They urged Keller to apply, she did and she became the CCH Foundation executive director in July 2009.

"The career found me," Keller said. **"It was a challenge that I had not previously considered, but one that greatly appealed to me."**

Keller has been in this position ever since.

As executive director of the Foundation, Keller's job is to raise financial support from individuals, businesses and other private entities for hospital facility upgrades, renovations and additions, medical equipment, programming for patients and families, as well as scholarships for students in medical fields. She also helps solicit sponsors for the Foundation's annual Holing Out Fore Health golf outing and helps organize that event.

During her 10 years as executive director, Keller has worked on a variety of fundraising projects that have helped CCH provide services such as post treatment therapy

and support groups for cancer survivors. She's also helped the Foundation raise funds to purchase patient simulation mannequins, 3-D tomosynthesis mammography equipment, the wide bore MRI and therapy equipment for Wiggles and Giggles Therapy for Kids™, and much more.

Most recently, Keller has been helping raise funds to support CCH's \$35 million expansion and renovation project.

Though she hadn't sought out a career in health care, Keller found that many of the skills she learned in marketing and advertising applied to her position with the Foundation.

Before joining the CCH team, Keller had received a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and worked with Ernst Auto Center/Ernst Toyota, The Columbus Telegram, The Omaha World-Herald, The Holland (Michigan) Sentinel and The Daily Nebraskan.

"This work entailed finding creative solutions to retail challenges, writing copy and proposals, working with businesses, developing business relationships, and organizing campaigns and events," Keller said.

Keller has found this previous work in relationship-building particularly useful in her work at the Foundation.

"Fundraising is a process, not an event," Keller said. **"People must learn to trust you and believe that the work that you're doing will help people before they will support your cause."**

For her part, Keller has greatly enjoyed working with the people she has met through her work at the Foundation.

"Through my work in fundraising, I've met many interesting, charitable people, including Hospital staff members, Foundation board members and donors who generously support local health care," she said. **"I'm honored to now call many of these people my friends."**

Keller is thankful for these relationships, as well as the opportunity to positively impact the health of her fellow community members.

"To witness how my work helps to improve the lives and health of patients is very fulfilling," she said. **"It's very rewarding to connect a donor with a project or program that speaks to him or her, while improving health care for people in Columbus and surrounding communities."**

For more information on Keller and how you can support the work of the CCH Foundation, visit the "Foundation" page of www.columbushosp.org.