

Edgerton Hospital's Healing Garden is hidden gem

By Sunny Bowditch of Edgerton Hospital and Health Services

Tucked away behind the community's local hospital lays a serene setting with sounds and colors of nature. It's a place of peaceful contemplation, where wildlife often gather for a drink from the pond, visitors can be found strolling the extra-wide pathways while enjoying the sweet aroma from the many flowering plants and all those who enter find an atmosphere that soothes the body and spirit.

This is the Edgerton Hospital Healing Garden, and it is available for the entire community to enjoy.

As part of Edgerton Hospital's Healthy Village concept, the Healing Garden offers walking pathways, a calming pond, water features, a pavilion, blooming plants and a pergola with benches for relaxing. Hiking trails are located adjacent to the garden, and there is even an area for exercise, and during warm months, it's

not uncommon for a yoga class, Zumba class or hospital sponsored walking group to move outdoors.

The Healing Garden and hiking trails are both part of a multipronged approach to healthy living, including diet, exercise and something intangible – a person's soul.

In the past, the American health care system focused on disease-based care, but now hospitals are beginning to recognize the importance that healing the mind, body and spirit plays in a person's overall wellness. When developing the Healing Garden, Edgerton Hospital's goal was to create a healing environment that would greatly contribute to the wellbeing of patients who were managing chronic diseases, completing rehab to regain strength or recovering from an illness, as well as helping healthy community members to maintain their good health.

Studies have shown that after a stressful event, images of nature

quickly produce a calming effect. Within a few minutes of viewing nature scenes, blood pressure, respiration rate, brain activity and the production of stress hormones all decrease and mood improves.

Healing Garden Benefits

- Promotion of exercise: Even mild exercise elevates mood.

- Stimulation of all senses: Motor, smell, auditory, visual and verbal.

- Promotion of serenity and wellbeing

- Social interaction: This enhances immune functions, promotes better moods and reduces pain medication.

- An enhanced sense of control: We all need to feel that we have choices about what we can do, but hospitals can sometimes remove much of that. Patients are generally less physically capable and their normal life, work and social support are disrupted. Gardens can offer a break from the hospital environment, which in itself offers the patient the

opportunity to recapture a sense of control.

Another charming feature of the Healing Garden is the various honorary and memorial pieces scattered throughout. The garden offers a place to remember or honor a loved one by displaying their name on a brick, bench, path marker or tree marker. Blooming flower beds can also be named on a seasonal basis.

Volunteers are also needed to keep the garden weed-free and looking its best. If you love gardening, consider donating your time.

For more information on naming opportunities in the Healing Garden or volunteer opportunities, contact Foundation Director, Bonnie Robinson, at 608-884-1401.

If you haven't had a chance to visit Edgerton's Healing Garden, put it on your summer bucket list. The Healing Garden is located at 11101 N. Sherman Rd., Edgerton.

For more info, visit www.edgertonhospital.com.



Some of the serene surroundings found in Edgerton's Healing Garden. (Photos courtesy Edgerton Hospital and Health Services)



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*Press Ganey, Jan-Dec, 2016

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