

# Why I Give: Reflections from Russ Hansel

**What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.**

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



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Giving to a good cause, program or charity is a very personal act done for a variety of reasons. The above quote reflects how I view Virtua Health as an organization that is Here for Good and is one reason I choose to support the organization's philanthropic efforts. The other reason I choose to give has to do with reasons of the heart.

When I think of Virtua Health, I see an organization committed to delivering quality patient care and improving the health of the various communities it serves. Virtua Health speaks by taking its financial and in-kind resources and transforming them into compassionate action. This is visible in the capital

investments made in Camden and Mt. Holly, in programs like the Mobile Farmers Market and Mobile Grocery Store, in the innovative medical procedures that have occurred at Virtua Health over years, and more. I am proud of the community programs supported by philanthropy at Virtua. These programs address social determinants of health and play a major part in improving population health and reducing health disparities. I believe that through its philanthropic activity, Virtua Health demonstrates real care for our neighbors in need. I support Give for Good because it is a simple way for me to invest in a community's health, assist Virtua Health in addressing social determinants of health, and assure that the organization's North Star, its mission and raison d'être, remains that of keeping our communities healthy.

On a more personal level, I choose to support Virtua Health because of its person-centered care, commitment to diversity and inclusion and my feeling connected to the organization. Finally, I see philanthropic giving as a moral obligation that also brings me joy simply because I know my donation benefits others.

## • **Person – Centered Care**

My first encounter with Virtua Health occurred back in the spring of 2015. It was an unplanned encounter. I was out riding my bicycle one morning before work when I was unfortunately struck by an SUV. I sustained injury, and subsequently was transported to the Emergency Department in Mount Holly. I cannot remember who assisted me, what was said during the course of my ER visit, or the testing I underwent. What I can remember is how I was made to feel based on a single moment during my stay. Someone simply told me I was going to be okay while gently squeezing both my feet. To this day, I can still feel that reassuring squeeze. This simple act of caring is indelibly etched in my mind and on my heart. Etched in the minds of the communities Virtua Health cares for are the services we provide, services that are person-centered and reflect

our motto of Here for Good. I give and support Virtua Health's philanthropic efforts because of the person-centered care I have received, the person-centered care we provide the community and because person-centered care is at the heart of all Virtua Health services. Collectively, our support of Virtua Health's philanthropy activities helps sustain a culture of caring that exists within our workplace.

- **Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion**

During 2020, the COVID pandemic emotionally stretched many of us in health care. At the same time, the death of George Floyd challenged us as a nation and organization to confront the injustices perpetrated on innocent persons because of racism and other forms of discrimination. In response to George Floyd's death, Virtua Health made a conscious choice to have a candid conversation about racism. This conversation, I believe, was a necessary precursor to successfully expanding our Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (IDE) Program through the creation of colleague community groups for staff who have felt marginalized or excluded within the workforce. These newly formed communities provide staff with a safe space to dialogue on issues important to them. Virtua Health's IDE Program is one example of how this organization continues to support the inherent dignity of all staff. Virtua also demonstrates a commitment to diversity by offering its services to an assorted group of communities and populations. Virtua Health strives to exclude no one, and through its presence in the community demonstrates that all are welcome. I choose to support Virtua Health's philanthropic activities because of our organization's overall approach to diversity and inclusion.

- **Connected to the Work Place and Community**

During the last eighteen months, I have experienced moments of loneliness. I recall many days of driving to work with no one on the road, feeling alone and isolated because I was not able to visit with my friends and family, especially when I contracted COVID. I am sure many staff struggled with periods of loneliness. However, throughout the pandemic, what did help assuage some of my feelings of isolation was connecting to my peers and the health system. I looked forward to receiving Virtua's COVID updates and learning about what was taking place throughout the system. Another way I intentionally connected to the work place was by participating in Give for Good. My donation helped connect me to the larger organization while sustaining some of our valued community-based programs such as the Mobile Farmers Market and the Mobile Grocery Store.

I take part in Give for Good because it helps me look beyond myself, see the world around me a bit differently, and make a difference. When I see lives positively impacted by the services this organization provides, I experience a sense of pride and joy. I encourage every employee to participate in Give for Good. Like me, by participating in Give for Good you will experience a sense of pride and joy knowing that your donation made a difference.



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