

UW Medicine Gratitude Campaign

To the UW Medicine Community:

I am a terribly impatient person. I've planned, prepared and executed life on timelines of my own creation. And then the pandemic hit. My world went from feeling expansive and global to a narrowed focus on my tiny neighborhood. Time slowed. I ran the same tiny loop through the Washington Arboretum each morning and became friends with the ferns I watched slowly unfurl day by day in the spring. I watched the cherry blossoms burst and fade as the leaves filled out the trees. I laid out on warm grass thankful for the shade in the summer, and then watched as the leaves changed colors this autumn before dropping from their branches. I have lived this pandemic constantly being drawn back to Mary Oliver's "Summer Day" and thinking, "...I don't know exactly what a prayer is. / I do know how to pay attention..." We are in the last season seen with new eyes during this pandemic. I am paying attention to winter, grateful for the occasional calm morning offering a break from the rain. Exploring some new territory, the mountains surrounding us, and embracing precipitation in new forms.

I still consider myself impatient, but the past year has felt like a meditation on paying attention to the things that are always around me that I far too often allow to go unnoticed. As I reflect back on the year that has passed, I am filled with immense gratitude. The shifted reality we were all flung into has helped me to learn patience, to sit with the discomfort of uncertainty in new ways, to recognize the incredible efforts of my family, friends and colleagues to pivot and adapt to the changing world in ways that have supported and sustained themselves and the people around them. This year has made me so incredibly grateful for being a part of UW Medicine and the tremendous efforts of teams across our system to innovate, create, inspire and endure amidst incredible challenges. Several weeks ago, the first vaccines arrived in Seattle and in our hospitals. With them came a profound sense of hope that we will soon see the end of our seasons impacted by navigating our COVID-19 response. And now, I find myself needing to draw on all that I have learned about patience. My guess is that I am several months away from being vaccinated myself, but I feel such gratitude and relief as each member of our

community gets vaccinated, making the environment around us safer for all of us.

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We have a tough couple of months ahead with cases still high and potential surges on the horizon. We know how hard folks across our hospitals and clinics have been working. In partnership with our community, we are restarting our food and nonperishable (socks!) donations to teams. We have worked with our pals in Infection Prevention and ask that all food be picked up at the end of your shift and taken to go to help minimize any risks to our community. We'll be distributing Goodie Bags to break rooms near you, and we will hand out food at exits for Grab 'n' Go meals. Our approved [guidelines for in-kind donations and food distribution can be found here](#).

In addition to finding opportunities for the community to share their thanks with our teams, we also want to give you a chance to reflect on your experiences over the last year and to share your own messages of gratitude with your friends and colleagues. Look for the Walls of Gratitude hanging around your unit or Thank You postcards and share your gratitude with those around you.

As we move into 2021, take a moment to reflect on what we have lost, learned and gained through 2020. While I hope we never have to repeat another year like it, I want to move forward grateful for the lessons in patience and paying attention in new ways. And as always, I am so grateful for all of you.

With gratitude,

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The Summer Day by Mary Oliver

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?