



JANUARY 7, 2021

AM Meeting: Thursdays at 7 AM — Muddy Waters, New London
Lunch Meeting: Thursdays at 12:15 PM — La Luna/Holiday Inn, New London

TODAY'S PROGRAM

Krystal Ambrozaitis
The Salvation Army

**PLEASE NOTE:
NEW ZOOM INFO**
Weekly Zoom Meeting

Please join us for our weekly Rotary meeting via Zoom. It's very convenient and all you need is a decent shirt/top/blouse/sweater (pants optional). Go to [ZOOM.COM](https://zoom.us) and click "JOIN A MEETING" and enter the info below.

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BIRTHDAYS:

January 5 Mark Spinnato

ANNIVERSARIES:

January 1 Mark & Nancy Spinnato

*"Once you replace
negative thoughts with
positive ones, you'll start
having positive results."*

— Willie Nelson

Report for Club Meeting, December 17, 2020

by Bruce MacDonald

Joseph Lawrence could only imagine what the Joseph Lawrence Free Hospital he funded has grown to in the 109 years of his existence.

This hospital opened in 1912 with a \$500,000 bequest from the city resident who made a fortune in the whaling industry. It started with 30 beds and a range of "modern conveniences" plus a maternity ward. Along the way Mr. Lawrence's hospital outlasted several others and merged with yet another. More recently it acquired another name, L+M Health Care, when it became an important part of Yale New Haven Health, Connecticut's largest such network.

Today, L+M serves hundreds of thousands of patients in a network of 14 ambulatory sites throughout the region including nearby Westerly. L+M itself has almost ten times as many beds as Mr. Lawrence's hospital, and employs some 3,000 through its system. The Visiting Nurse Association of Southeastern CT falls within its organizational umbrella, as does Westerly (RI) Hospital.

It is nothing short of being the lifeblood of the region's healthcare system.

President and CEO Patrick Green

At our Dec. 17 meeting Patrick Green, its current president and a top official at Yale New Haven Health, picked up the story from there.

He outlined a core strategy for the hospital that focuses on providing quality care and a significant community involvement. "We don't just want to be a hospital setting within four walls on Montauk Avenue," he said. "We believe we have a commitment, an obligation to serve the community." The strategy includes an emphasis on local hiring, workforce development and making purchases in the local economy, among other things.

Covid response is robust

He outlined other aspects of the hospital's operation, and gave an overview of the hospital's involvement in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The hospital, he reported, has seen close to 500 Covid patients and another 130 at Westerly.




The unfortunate thing is that the hospital is seeing more patients in the second wave of infections now underway than it did during the first last spring. Despite that, the hospital physicians and staff are addressing the situation. "They are the true heroes," Green said.

The hospital is continuing to see non-Covid patients and as a result is at 105 percent capacity. "We don't want people to delay their (non-Covid) care because that could cause additional issues healthwise."

He could offer no timetable for the distribution of the forthcoming vaccine, but said L+M is part of the planning network, working closely with state health officials working on the plan. Basically, he advised, stay tuned and as soon as the plan is completed L+M will be in a position to pass along the details. In the meantime, staff vaccination has begun and there is a sense of hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel in the battle against this terrible disease.

Big construction project will add lasting value

As if that weren't enough, the hospital is undertaking an \$82 million construction project to significantly enhance its emergency department operation and add an updated backup power system, a critical need for some time, he said.

The
ROTARY


ANCHOR


A Bulletin of the Rotary Club of New London

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