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Wisconsin Nurses
Honor Guard
Newsletter
January 2026



Celebrating 10 Years of Honor — Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard Turns 10! 🎉

In 2026, the Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard proudly celebrates a huge milestone — **our 10th Anniversary!** What began as a simple but powerful idea has grown into something truly extraordinary: a statewide network of nurses honoring nurses with dignity, gratitude, and tradition.

Over the past decade, WNHG has provided **hundreds of services across Wisconsin**, ensuring that nurses are recognized not only for how they cared for others, but for the legacy they leave behind. From quiet moments at the end of life to heartfelt tributes surrounded by family, each ceremony is a reminder of the deep respect the nursing profession deserves.

This anniversary isn't just about the number of years — it's about **the incredible volunteers who make this mission possible**. Every rose presented, every pledge spoken, every tribute performed represents service, compassion, and unity among nurses.

As we celebrate 10 years, we're also looking ahead with excitement — continuing to grow, welcoming new volunteers, strengthening regional teams, and expanding awareness so that no nurse's legacy goes unrecognized.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Here's to 10 amazing years — and to the many more still to come! 💙

Stronger Together in 2026: Supporting Volunteers + Managing Our Growth

As we step into a new year, the Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard is moving forward with purpose and gratitude. Every tribute we provide is made possible by the dedication of our volunteers — and as our organization continues to grow, we're committed to ensuring that growth is sustainable, supportive, and organized.

2026 Focus #1: Strengthen Volunteer Support & Readiness

Our volunteers are the heart of WNHG, and 2026 will be about making the experience of serving even smoother and more supported. We will continue developing **Schedulers and Lead Nurses as strong regional mentors**, helping new members gain confidence and supporting experienced members with leadership and guidance.

To keep things consistent statewide, we'll also be implementing a more robust orientation for new members. In addition, we'll offer **quarterly Zoom Orientation sessions** and simple refreshers throughout the year on ceremonial protocol and scheduling communication — because confidence comes from preparation, and our tributes deserve excellence.

To help us grow stronger internally, we are also planning to expand involvement through **committees made up of board members and at-large members**. These groups will help shape volunteer engagement and support marketing/outreach plans — giving more members an opportunity to contribute even if they aren't able to attend services regularly.

Lastly (and importantly), we will develop a **touch-base method** for connecting with members who have been active in the past but haven't participated recently. Sometimes life simply gets busy, and a friendly check-in can make all the difference.

2026 Focus #2: Sustainably Manage Growth

WNHG continues to see increased service requests — and with that comes the responsibility to manage coverage in a way that protects the wellbeing of volunteers and ensures our ability to meet service requests. This year we will

continue to monitor for **reasonable service coverage** for regions to help prevent burnout while still meeting the needs of families. You can help us with coverage by encouraging other nurses to join and by spreading the word if your region is not seeing enough requests for services. We want our volunteers to be active!

We will also continue emphasizing **online service request forms only**, which helps streamline scheduling, ensures accuracy, and allows our coordinators to respond quickly and efficiently. Volunteers should direct anyone requesting a service to our website.

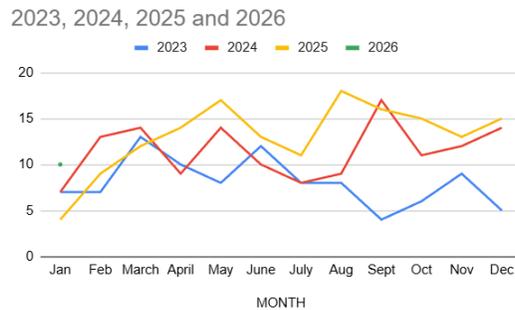
Finally, we will use our **SignUpGenius data and service trends** to identify regions that need additional leadership support. This allows us to be proactive—building strength where it's needed most.

Moving Forward with Heart

Our mission remains the same: honoring nurses with dignity, tradition, and gratitude. But how we support our volunteers and manage our growth will shape the strength of WNHG for years to come.

Thank you for all you do — whether you attend services, serve as a lead, help coordinate scheduling, mentor others, or support behind the scenes. In 2026, we move forward **stronger together**.

Growth and Stats!



Year End Data!

It was a great year of growth! We've seen an overall growth of 61% since 2023. Here's where we ended 2025.

Service Overview

Total Services Completed: 157

Services by Region

- Southeast: 88
- Northeast: 26
- Central: 24
- Southwest: 11
- Northwest: 9
- Rochester, MN: Completed their *first* service in September—congratulations!

Membership Update

Total Members: 378 (members inactive for 2 years were removed)

Members Who Participated in a Service in 2025: 180 🌟 (Record number!)

Members by Region

- Southeast: 145
- Northeast: 82
- Central: 56
- Southwest: 42
- Northwest: 45
- Minnesota: 7

Outreach and Marketing Committee

Marketing in your region! We need your help!

We are developing a Marketing/Outreach Committee that will focus on spreading "the word" about our organization in each region based on the regions needs. We will be looking for an individual or two from each area of the State and Rochester to sit on this committee and organize efforts in their area.

The way we grow is by primarily three methods:

1. Word of mouth
2. Connecting with referral sources
3. Social Media/State-Wide Marketing

The emphasis for this year will be to connect with local funeral homes, hospice organizations, and to connect with local media.

If you are interested in being a part of this important committee, please email us at info@winurseshonorguard.com

SignUpGenius = Our Lifeline (Please Use It!)

SignUpGenius is essential to how the Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard coordinates tributes across the state. It helps our schedulers and Lead Nurses know **who is attending**, communicate day-of details, and ensure each service is properly covered and organized.

👉 **If you plan to attend a tribute, you must sign up first.**

Showing up without signing up can create confusion, disrupt planning, and adds stress for the Lead Nurse and scheduling team.

Quick Reminders

- ✓ Attending? **Sign up.**
- ✓ Not attending? **No action needed.**
- ✓ Can't attend after signing up? **Contact the Lead Nurse or Scheduler ASAP.**

Thank you for helping WNHG remain professional, organized, and strong as we continue to grow. 💙



** REPEAT Information**

BIO - Pledge, Poem, or Both - Changes!

At our Pewaukee Summit, we discussed a few simple updates that will greatly improve consistency and make it easier for the **Lead Nurse** to prepare.

Updated Bio Format (Schedulers)

When creating a bio, schedulers will add this info at the very top:

- Nurse's name and title
- Service location and date
- Who receives the gift
- Readings to use: **Pledge, Poem, or Both**

Example:

Nancy L. Nurse, RN
Neenah – Monday, Oct 27
Gift to: Daughter, Lisa Hildebrand
Use: Pledge + Poem

Readings Clarification (Schedulers Decide)

To ensure consistency and honor family wishes, **Schedulers** will select the reading(s):

- If the bio is long: choose **one** reading
- If service is small / we are only presenters: **both** may be used
- If many nurses or time is limited: **Pledge only** may be best

The **Lead Nurse** may adjust on-site if circumstances change (ex: poem already being read by someone else).

We're Looking for Help: Scheduling Services



The Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard continues to grow, and with that growth comes an increased need for help behind the scenes. One of the most important roles in ensuring every service runs smoothly is **Scheduling** — and we are currently looking for a few additional volunteers to join our scheduling team.

Schedulers play a vital role in making sure each nurse tribute is organized with care, compassion, and clear communication. This is a meaningful way to serve — and it can be done from home.

★ **This is also a wonderful role for members who may be unable to attend many services in person, but still feel called to serve our mission in an important and impactful way.**

What a Scheduler Does

Schedulers help coordinate honor guard services by:

- Responding to scheduling email requests. You pick which ones you work on.
- Speaking with families to gather service details and honor their wishes
- Communicating with **funeral directors, clergy, hospice teams, and facilities as needed**
- Coordinating dates/times and setting up invitations on SignUp Genius.
- Monitoring for coverage before the service
- Helping prepare the information needed for the Lead Nurse and attending members
- Posting the tribute after the service on Facebook

You just need a kind heart, attention to detail, fair computer skills, and good communication skills. We will offer one-on-one training (virtual) on how to schedule.

What You'll Need

To volunteer as a scheduler, you should:

- ✔ Be comfortable using **email** and willing to monitor it consistently for scheduling opportunities
- ✔ Have a **Facebook account** (used for internal communication with regional teams and posting final tributes)
- ✔ Feel comfortable speaking on the phone with families, clergy, and funeral professionals
- ✔ Be reliable, (most important).when you take it, you see it through to the end. (Of course there is support for you too. We understand things come up.)

Why This Role Matters

Scheduling is often the *first point of contact* for a family requesting honors. Your role helps set the tone — offering calm support and guidance during a difficult time. You help ensure that each nurse receives the tribute they deserve, and that families feel cared for every step of the way.

Interested?

If you'd like to learn more or volunteer as a scheduler, please reach out to us. Training and support are provided, and you'll never be doing it alone — you'll be part of a team.

Email: info@winurseshonorguard.com

Thank you for considering this special way to honor nurses — even behind the scenes.

A Small Gesture That Means So Much: Sympathy Cards at Services

A member shared an idea with us that we thought was a good one...

Consider bringing a sympathy card to the service for everyone to sign. This is a simple way we can continue to show compassion and support to families. The card can be given to the family, or placed in the card box as a meaningful reminder that the nursing community stands with them during a difficult time. Even a short message and a few signatures can provide comfort long after the service ends.

Please Consider:

- ✔ **Bringing a sympathy card** to services whenever possible
- ✔ **Passing it around for members to sign** before or after the tribute
- ✔ **Include a Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard business card** inside the sympathy card

Including a business card helps families know who we are, how to learn more about WNHG, and how to request a tribute for another nurse in the future.

Thank you for helping us add this thoughtful touch — it's a small act of kindness that makes a lasting impact. 💙

Phone Numbers on Sign-Ups: A Must, Please!

With Wisconsin weather, illnesses, and last-minute changes, it's essential that we can reach one another quickly. When you sign up for a tribute, **please always include your phone number on either the section that says phone, or in the comment section** so schedulers and Lead Nurses can contact you if needed.

A phone number helps us communicate urgent updates such as:

- schedule or location changes
- weather-related adjustments
- time-sensitive service details

Scheduler Reminder

Please update the SignUpGenius comment sign-up field by:

- ✓ changing the **comment section label to "PHONE"**
- ✓ making the **PHONE field required**

Thank you for helping WNHG stay organized, responsive, and safe. 💙



Behind the Scenes: Creating a New Informational Video for WNHG

Recently, members of the Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard gathered at **Blaney Funeral Home in Green Bay** to perform a **mock honor service** as part of creating a new informational video for our statewide marketing campaign. This video will help the public better understand the dignified tribute we provide and will also serve as a helpful resource for **funeral homes, clergy, and nurses** who want to learn more about incorporating the Honor Guard into services—or joining our mission.

You can and should share this video with other nurses, funeral directors, friends, random strangers...you get the picture...

<https://youtu.be/B76NhZwOpuo>

A heartfelt thank you to **Charlotte Gillis and Blaney Funeral Home** for their support and hospitality, and to our dedicated volunteers who assisted with this project: **Kathy Vater, Carolyn Aderman, Jill Lauritsen, Lynette Whitlock, Michele Schelble, Pattie Brusky, Deborah Solberg, Kristine Mrotek, Linda Pond, and Mary Jo Ross**. We are grateful for your time and commitment to honoring nurses across Wisconsin.

Watch the Video Here!



WNHG Featured on Spectrum 1 News!

The Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard was honored to recently welcome **Spectrum 1 News reporter Megan** as she filmed a special feature on our organization for their segment **"Hometown Heroes."** This story highlights who we are, why we serve, and the meaningful tributes we provide to honor nurses across Wisconsin.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who **signed up and attended** to support this opportunity — your presence and dedication truly made the day a success. We're excited to share that the story is airing today, **January 20th**, and we can't wait for Wisconsin to learn more about our mission: *nurses honoring nurses*. Watch by clicking the button below!

We also extend a very special thank-you to **Piasecki Funeral Home in Kenosha** for generously opening their beautiful facility for filming. Your hospitality and support helped make this project possible, and we are truly grateful.

Stay tuned — and thank you for helping WNHG continue to grow awareness, expand our reach, and honor the legacy of nurses throughout our state. Use the button below to view and be sure to share our Facebook post about this!

[Spectrum 1 News Story](#)



New Anniversary Design in our WNHG Store!



Celebrate 10 years of caring with some new casual apparel!

We have a new design in our "Swag" store. We have a new logo celebrating our 10th anniversary with loads of choices in casual wear and other items. Our traditional logo is also available in a variety of choices.

These are perfect for community events, outreach, travel, or simply showing your support in everyday life. Items are shipped directly to you, making it convenient to order what you love, when you want it.

From T-shirts and hoodies to hats, bags, and more, our shop gives members and supporters a stylish way to showcase the dignity and spirit of the Honor Guard. Every purchase also helps promote awareness of our mission and the legacy we work to preserve.

(Note: These items are not to be worn as part of the uniform, but collared polos could be used for marketing.)

Press the button below to explore our shop!

20% off 1/20-1/25!

WNHG Swag Shop

STAY CONNECTED AND CONTACT US

Contact us: via email:

info@winurseshonorguard.com

Follow us on Facebook!

Public Page to see tributes: <https://www.facebook.com/winurseshonorguard>

Members ONLY Facebook Pages—Join as many as you wish!

Request to join: Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard Southeastern Region

Members Only: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/501745937852095>

Request to join: WNHG Northern WI Members:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/288817412590825>

Request to join: Wisconsin Nurses Honor Guard Central/Southwest Region

Members only:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/4418688331525351>

Feel free to post anything of interest on the Member's Only pages! It can be fun things, interesting tidbits, uniform parts you are selling, questions, etc. This page is a place to socially connect!

Your Board of Directors:

Jon Krueger—Treasurer/Vice President

Kelly Gronli— President, Southeast Representative

Kay Kissinger-Wolf— Director, Northwest Representative

Mary Jo Ross-Secretary/Volunteer Coordinator, Northeast Rep

Jane Hansen— Central Representative

Kristine Wineland— Northeast Representative

Kim Thurk-Southwest Representative

All board members can be contacted by emailing

info@winurseshonorguard.com