





random acts

 OF FLOWERS®

Recycling Flowers... Delivering Smiles

AS FEATURED IN:

People

BRIDES

THE HUFFINGTON POST

TODAY

(SiriusXM)

K-LOVE

floral management

Woman's World

bloomynet



www.RandomActsofFlowers.org

MISSION

Random Acts of Flowers recycles and repurposes flowers by engaging dedicated volunteer teams to deliver beautiful bouquets and moments of kindness in healthcare facilities across the country. As a recycling “green” charity run almost entirely by volunteers, Random Acts of Flowers is committed to nourishing the health of the environment, individuals, and the community.

OVERVIEW

Medical research has shown that a positive attitude quickens healing time and reduces the amount of pain, anxiety and fatigue associated with illness; Random Acts of Flowers’ goal is to serve a small part in the improvement of each patient’s positive mental health. RAF delivers flowers to individuals determined by medical professionals to be in the most need. Our target recipients are those who have been in a facility for an extended period of time, have not had visitors, don’t have a support structure, or just needing a little cheer. Random Acts of Flowers has the honor of fulfilling our mission with every delivery.

“I visit patients each day at three hospitals and see the beautiful flowers you deliver. It brightens their rooms and makes them feel that someone really cares. Thank you for this lovely ministry that means so much to our patients. Love and prayers.” – **Sister Marie**



“My friend is a psychology and nursing student at UT and is a volunteer at UT Medical Center during the summer. She works on the suicide watch floor and sits with patients to keep them company. Last summer, a RAF volunteer came into a room where she was visiting and she said that the woman just broke down in tears when the volunteer left the room. She said, “I can’t believe that someone cared enough and thought of me today.”

– **Hannah A., RAF Volunteer**

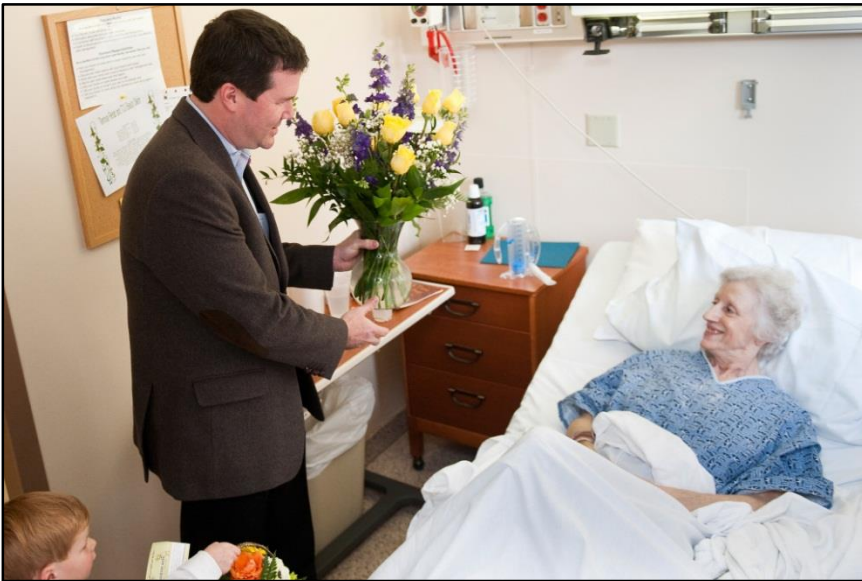
HISTORY

In July 2007, Random Acts of Flowers’ founder, Larsen Jay, was in a near-fatal accident. While confined to his hospital room, the outpouring of support that Larsen received in the form of daily visitors and dozens of floral arrangements immediately aided in his long recovery. When Larsen was capable of leaving his room he noticed how many of his fellow patients did not have visitors or flowers – the very thing that helped him so much in those early and difficult days. Within moments the first “random act of flowers” delivery was made, repurposing his flowers and delivering them to patients in nearby hospital rooms. The memories of how a simple gesture touched his fellow patients compelled Larsen to form Random Act of Flowers in 2008.

IMPACT & FUTURE

Since its inception, Random Acts of Flowers has raised community awareness to the mission, formed partnerships with local businesses, and delivered over 65,000 bouquets to patients in area healthcare facilities and recycled over 80,000 vases nationwide. In a response to tremendous interest, Random Acts of Flowers has begun expanding to cities across the country with a focus on developing into a significant national organization. Branch locations include Tampa Bay, FL, Knoxville, TN, Chicago, IL & Silicon Valley, CA with a national headquarters in Knoxville, TN.





"To the people of Random Acts of Flowers: God bless your good work and everyone connected with this wonderful organization! Imagine our surprise when we received the "Random Acts of Flowers!" They were so lovely and their beauty gave us hope and comfort. Thanks so much for a wonderfully kind deed. My husband, Charlie, is recovering and will be coming home soon."
– Alice Nauris, Recipient Spouse

"Thank you for the lovely flowers my father received while at the hospital. They were beautiful! Unfortunately, the day after he came home my mother had to go into the hospital. We took out the faded blooms and freshened up the arrangement with a few lilies from our garden and took the "new" bouquet to mom's room. So your generous gift helped brighten up two different hospital visits! Thank you!"
– Jennifer S., Recipient Family Member



"I'm not a flower bouquet person. But when I was in the hospital, the fact that someone cared was nice. Thank You."
– Joe M., Recipient at Blount Memorial Hospital





"I am a 24-year-old Cystic Fibrosis patient on the list for a double-lung transplant. I am currently in the hospital for an exacerbation, and today I got a little knock on my hospital door. On the other side was a lovely woman who delivered me such a beautiful, surprise bouquet of flowers. It was so wonderful, and so very unexpected. The thoughtful gift was a ray of sunshine in my day. I hope someday, once I am healthy and with new lungs, to volunteer for this marvelous organization. It is fantastic, and what it does

brightens the lives of so many beautiful souls. Thank you for making my day. Peace and love." – Rosie, Recipient at UT Medical Center



"I never knew this organization existed until I was hit with a 'Random Act of Flowers.' Today marks day 14 of being in the hospital and the walls start to close in on you after that long. I had a knock at my door this morning and was met with a smiling face and some awesome flowers just to bring some sunshine to an otherwise rainy, horrible day. I have never been so overwhelmed with joy! As a young person, I vow to get out of the hospital, get better, and pay it forward! The world needs more joy to be spread just like this. I can't thank everyone enough." – Meagan S., Recipient at Parkwest Medical Center

"My mom, Peggy, has been a resident of Shannondale Health Care Center for a little over two years and has been receiving hospice services for a year. She loves flowers and was thrilled to receive the roses in the cup. Her memory is not so good so every time she entered her room, she marveled at the gift of sweet roses. So, one gift brought numerous instances of delight. Thank you for this ministry."

– Susan Y., Recipient Family Member





Monday (morning)
 Volunteer picks up flowers from the floral donor and transports them to the RAF facility.



Monday (afternoon)
 The flowers are unpacked and deconstructed into core elements. Unusable flowers are composted.



Tuesday (morning)
 The volunteer team of arrangers get to work repurposing the donated flowers into beautiful bouquets.



Once complete, a delivery card is placed on each bouquet which explains our mission, and on the back, we handwrite where/who donated the flowers and the volunteer who created the bouquet.



Tuesday (afternoon)
 The flowers join in the final assembly of over 100 bouquets created out of donated flowers from weddings, memorials, grocery stores, and special events.



Tuesday (afternoon)
 A patient in an area healthcare facility received the bouquet, a smile and well wishes.
Mission complete!

Larsen Jay's Nonprofit Has Delivered Recycled Flowers to 60,000 Hospital Patients

2.8k
SHARES

Share on Facebook Tweet Pin +

SUBSCRIBE NOW



Larsen Jay
RANDOM ACTS OF FLOWERS

BY ALEXANDRA ZASLOW [@alexandrazaslow](#) 01/15/2015 AT 12:50 PM EST

No one ever sent Larsen Jay flowers before he fell off a ladder and ended up in the hospital. Some 22 days later, when he finished his hospital stay, he had more than 50 bouquets – and an idea that would launch more than 60,000 smiles.

On July 29, 2007, Larsen was doing some work on the roof of his "dude oasis," a garage workshop he owns in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he lives with his wife and two children. Losing his balance, he fell about a story and a half off a ladder, slamming onto the concrete floor.

He broke his left arm, left and right wrist, right elbow, right femur and nose. He also fractured his skull in 10 places. He was rushed to the Level 1 trauma center at the [University of Tennessee Hospital](#).

"I was screaming for help for a little while," Larsen says. "I sort of had that 'I'm awake, I'm alive, do something' moment. I eventually got to my phone and battled through the pain and dialed 911."

While recovering, he received multiple flower bouquets from friends and family daily. It got to the point where the florists started to joke that all they were doing was going from their shop to his room.

"It was an amazing outpouring of support from people from all walks of life," Jay tells PEOPLE. "As word spread about my accident, more flowers came and it really helped me focus on recovery and reinforced that I had a lot of support."

By the end of his first week in the hospital, he was getting a bit stir crazy and asked the nurses to take him for a stroll in his wheelchair. It was then that he realized he had just gone from a room that he dubbed "a jungle of joy, happiness and celebration of life" to "stark industrial hospital bleh."

"It was a huge visual contrast," Jay says. "Room after room, there were no flowers, it just looked lifeless."



Larsen Jay
RANDOM ACTS OF FLOWERS

It struck a chord with him and he went back to his jungle of joy to start ripping cards off his bouquets and loading them onto his wheelchair to start delivering them to other patients.

"It just seemed like the right thing to do," Jay says.

The very first delivery went to a woman in full headgear and wires.

"Those desperate eyes you never want to see."

When he handed her the flowers, that sad look disappeared and turned into a big, bright smile, Jay says.

He spent a lot of time in a wheelchair in his room thinking about the interactions he had with people and thought there must be an organization already doing what he was doing on his own. But after doing some research, he found out there wasn't. He thought about all the flowers that are thrown away every day, from weddings to funerals.

Seed of an Idea

That thought gave birth to his nonprofit: [Random Acts of Flowers](#), which recycles used bouquets and delivers them to hospitals across the country.

Working with a network of 600 volunteers, the organization solicits flower donations from wedding venues, funeral homes, grocery stores and florists.

Jay himself spends three to four hours a week delivering flowers personally. Based in Knoxville now, he plans on expanding his charity to five different locations by spring.

During a hospital delivery in July 2010, a nurse came running down the hall to get Jay's attention. She asked him to deliver a bouquet to a 94-year-old patient who wasn't doing well. The patient had been in the hospital for two weeks and hadn't received a single visitor.

When he delivered the flowers to the woman, she burst into tears. "You don't understand, no man has ever given me flowers in my entire life, you have no idea what this means to me," Jay recalls her saying.



Larsen Jay and a recipient of Random Acts of Flowers
RANDOM ACTS OF FLOWERS

"I remember standing in the hall after thinking about how we just changed someone's life after 94 years with someone else's garbage. That's really cool."

Jay fills a void in the healthcare industry by focusing on the emotional side of getting better as opposed to the physical, says Dr. Jim Lewis, a surgical oncologist at the University of Tennessee Hospital and a former board member.

"I often focus on the physical aspect and forget people are hurting in a variety of ways," he says. "It's a pretty humbling feeling as a doctor, to see the patients touched in a different way."

Michelle Grimm is a single mom to three daughters. For the past 15 years, she's been in and out of Parkwest Hospital in Knoxville, Tennessee, fighting three forms of cancer, severe asthma and blood clots. She's usually hospitalized about two to three times a year for two to three weeks at a time.

In February, 2012, she was having a crummy day in the hospital.

"I was having one of those days where I was just kind of feeling lonely and sorry for myself," Grimm tells PEOPLE.

Then, a nurse came in with a gorgeous bouquet of yellow roses and immediately brightened her day.

"It's hard to explain how much something that seems so little could really lift you up when you're staring at walls and not feeling well all day," Grimm says.



Larsen Jay
RANDOM ACTS OF FLOWERS

As for Jay, who with his wife, Adrian, works full-time for his charity after selling their production company in 2010, the joy he gets from delivering flowers helps him manage the aches and pains he still has from that fall.

"There hasn't been a day in seven years that I haven't had some aches, some pains, something hurt somewhere," he says. "I guess you just sort of learn to live with that after a while. I got a second chance at life, so I'll just take it."

random acts OF FLOWERS® CHICAGO!



Random Acts of Flowers Chicago is in full bloom! On Tuesday, January 27, 2015, RAF Chicago officially launched at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and delivered 125 beautiful floral bouquets and smiles to patients in one of Chicagoland's premier medical centers. Now fully open and operational in their facility in Evanston, IL, the Random Acts of Flowers team is regularly serving hospitals, senior care facilities and hospice care centers throughout the city – and growing each month!

The Chicago Tribune reported: "She hugs the vase to her chest, laughing. Sims moved to the center four years ago after breaking her leg and rarely has visitors. *"Oh my God, oh my God!"* she says, letting out another burst of laughter. *"Oh, this is beautiful. I've never seen flowers so pretty."* Nurses and patients wander past the doorway, stopping to take in the scene and inevitably smiling. Mordy Polstein, one of the center's administrators, shakes his head, grinning. *"I keep seeing a lot of smiles and some bewilderment,"* Polstein says."



WGN News exclaimed: *"There's so much you can do to brighten someone's day - with just a bouquet of flowers!"*

To donate, get involved or learn more contact:

Random Acts of Flowers Chicago
www.RAFChicago.org
(847) 430-4751 o
2000 Greenleaf St. / Evanston, IL 60202

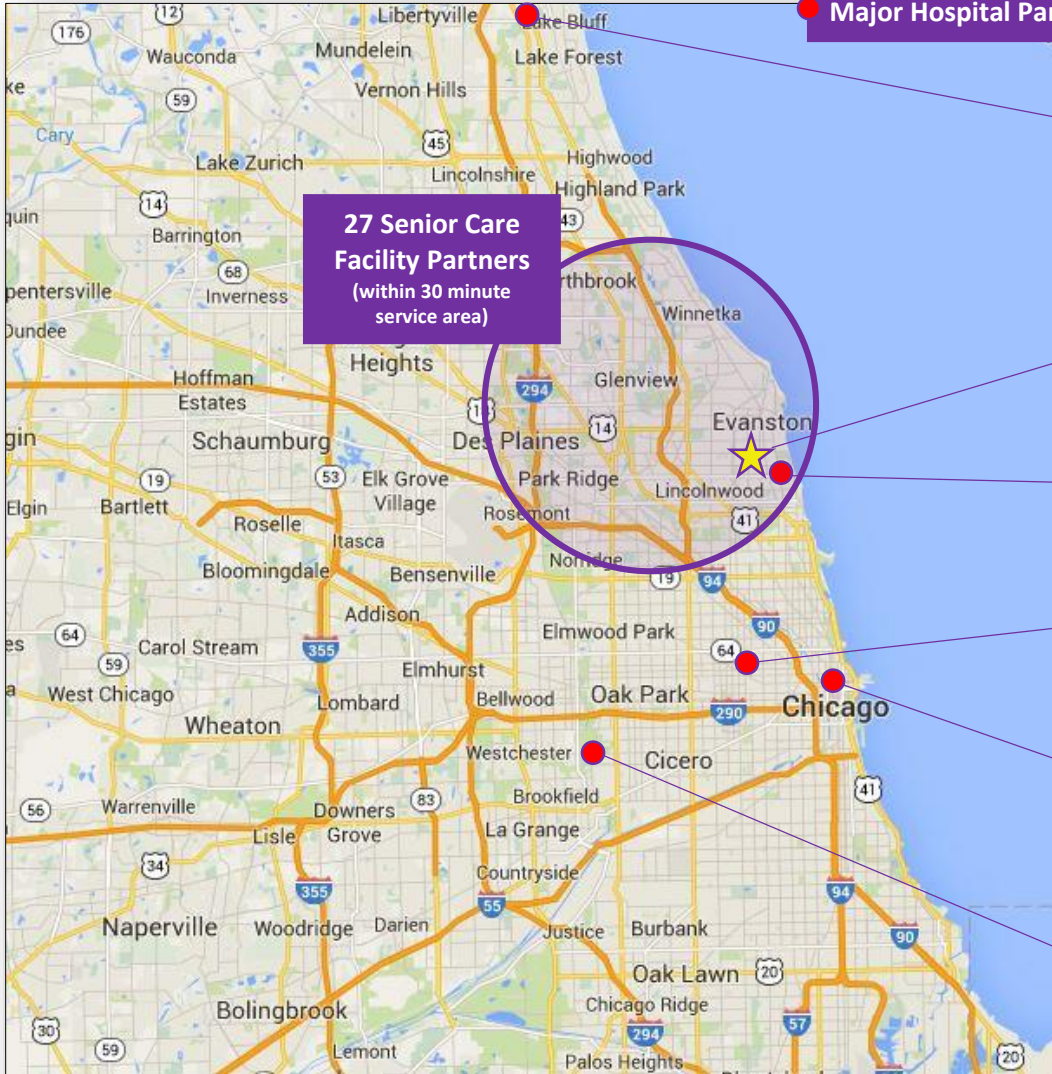


www.facebook.com/RAFChicago



@RAF_Chicago

Major Flower Sourcing Partners:



Major Hospital Partners:



27 Senior Care Facility Partners
(within 30 minute service area)

140+ Dedicated Volunteers



RAF Chicago Staff
(left to right)
Andrea Lutz, Director of Mission Fulfillment
Natalie Berg, Executive Director
Amanda Slone, Office Coordinator



RAF Chicago Board of Directors

Mary Brennan • Avery Keller • Brooke MacLean
Debra Pelech • Anna Siegler