

# Learning and Serving

## Volunteering at Parkwest Helps Two Sets of Brothers Prepare for Healthcare Careers

The volunteer spirit is alive and well at Parkwest Medical Center. While the majority of Parkwest's volunteers are around retirement age, volunteering at the hospital also has proven to be a meaningful experience for college students. This summer, two sets of brothers have served as Parkwest volunteers, and all four are planning careers in healthcare.

### Meaningful Interactions

Cole Boruff is a rising junior at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and has volunteered at Parkwest for two summers. His brother, Connor Boruff, a rising sophomore at the University of Tennessee, began volunteering earlier this year. Each has logged more than 100 hours during the past few months.

In the emergency department, Cole's tasks ranged from helping with patient flow at the registration desk, assisting patients getting in and out of their vehicles and providing warm blankets to patients as requested by staff. Cole also was assigned to the surgery waiting area, where his duties included monitoring the area, answering questions, providing updates to families and assisting staff and patients when needed.

"We escort people to consult rooms, make sure the areas are clean, alert the nurses when patients arrive and help keep the patient's spokesperson updated," says Cole, who notes that working with patients and interacting with people are his favorite parts of volunteering.

After patients' surgeries ended, Connor enjoyed escorting the patients' spokespersons to the consultation room because it gave him a chance to spend a few moments

in conversation, finding out more about their experience at Parkwest.

Volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges, the brothers say. "It feels a little like a sci-fi movie," says Cole, who hopes the current situation is the only pandemic he faces during his medical career. He says it's harder for some people to understand him through his face covering, but he is still smiling behind his mask.

Ethan and Grant Calhoun are identical twin brothers, Knoxville natives and rising seniors at Berry College in Rome, Georgia. Both are studying biochemistry with plans to attend medical school. They have volunteered during their past three summer breaks at Parkwest and whenever they are home visiting Knoxville. The pair has assisted in many areas: emergency department, admitting and registration, outpatient, surgery waiting area, critical care and materials management. Both have logged more than 500 volunteer hours at the hospital.

"In surgery waiting, I keep the families updated about their loved one and try to be that calm person who can answer their questions or just listen," Ethan says. He especially enjoyed working with the ER techs in the emergency department. "I delivered ice water or helped wherever I could."

Grant notes that hospital waiting rooms show "both sides of medicine." He reflects, "You see the family's experience in the waiting room. You understand their frustration if something is taking a long time." He also learned more about the clinical aspects of providing care. "You see the clinical staff



Two sets of brothers volunteered at Parkwest during their college summer break. Left to right: Grant Calhoun, Ethan Calhoun, Cole Boruff and Connor Boruff

following their protocols. You see how the hospital works in all aspects."

He says that each department of the hospital has a life lesson to teach. "We got an understanding of how each role contributes to the system, whether it's the custodian or the physician," he says.

### Confirming Their Commitment to Healthcare

All four students say that Parkwest's staff is like a family, and treats patients like family as well. The students say their volunteer experiences have helped confirm their commitment to healthcare careers.

Ethan says volunteering has taught him to listen, a skill he plans to use the rest of his life. "I can see that being able to listen and talk to a patient makes a huge difference in their care. And I have witnessed that at Park-

west. I have definitely learned this is the path for me."

His brother Grant concurs, saying, "Everyone has a story – you never know what someone's going through, good or bad. I have learned that we can make a difference by being there. Helping people goes along with my passions and lifelong goals. Practicing medicine, you can be a teacher, mentor and helper all in one."

Cole notes, "Volunteering opened my eyes to how a hospital works and I like the setting. I hope to help others experience life to their full potential." Connor describes his experience as "an excellent 'backseat view' of everything. Volunteering at Parkwest has helped me solidify that I want to be in healthcare."



Ethan Calhoun



Grant Calhoun



Cole Boruff



Connor Boruff

## Volunteers – A Priceless Part of Parkwest Medical Center

Becky Boyd, volunteer manager at Parkwest, and Charlene Howard, volunteer coordinator, say they are lucky to work with the medical center's passionate and compassionate volunteers, "including the students, as they are our future in healthcare." Boyd says the students have tackled each assigned task without hesitation and with an eagerness to learn.

Boyd explains that the COVID-19 pandemic forced a pause in volunteering from March until mid-May, when about 25 percent of Parkwest's volunteers returned. "We left it up to the individuals – each volunteer needed to decide what was best for

them and their specific situation," she says.

Volunteers typically are assigned to designated areas in the hospital based on need and the volunteer's interest and skill level. Many have served in different roles during COVID-19. All volunteers undergo the same screening process as hospital employees including a background check, tuberculosis screening and department-specific training. While serving at the hospital, they are expected to wear their proper uniform and ID badge, and in the wake of COVID-19, have their temperatures taken daily and wear appropriate face coverings.

Boyd, who has been manager of volunteers since 2007, says that Parkwest's group of 135 volunteers logged more than 35,000 hours last year. "Volunteers are priceless in helping to provide excellent customer service to our patients, families, visitors and staff," she says.

To learn more about volunteering at Parkwest and Peninsula and find a link to an online application, go to [Treatedwell.com/volunteers](https://Treatedwell.com/volunteers). You may also call Charlene Howard at 865-373-1064 or Becky Boyd at 865-373-1556.



# Can We Count On You to Volunteer?

To learn more about  
the volunteer opportunities  
available at Parkwest and Peninsula,  
visit [TreatedWell.com/volunteers](https://TreatedWell.com/volunteers)  
or call (865) 373-1556.