

Sheri Hamm and the Cypress Woodlands Junior Forum (CWJF) Support the Start of the New Food Pharmacy at TOMAGWA

Sheri Hamm was introduced to TOMAGWA through the Cypress Woodlands Junior Forum (CWJF) in 1998. TOMAGWA was starting an immunization program, addressing the growing need for access to affordable vaccines. It quickly became clear that volunteers would be needed and TOMAGWA knew CWJF could spearhead the immense project. As a new and promising member, CWJF asked Sheri to support staff in developing and chairing the pilot TOMAGWA immunization pilot program. Sheri fondly recalls her dedication to the program, "For three years I didn't go anywhere, for three years I spent every Thursday here [at the immunization clinic]. I didn't travel for work or vacation. After I became involved, I wanted it to work." Three years later, and with the help of other CWJF volunteers, the immunization program was successfully up and running. The now award-winning program provided immunizations to over 300 community members in 2020.

Sheri and the CWJF's incredible dedication to TOMAGWA has not wavered since 1998, as they continue assisting with the immunization program and front desks for the dental and medical clinics at TOMAGWA Tomball - The Ryan Paul Whitaker Memorial Medical Center location.

In 2020, TOMAGWA noticed another growing need in the community for access to healthy food, necessary for patients managing chronic conditions like diabetes and/or hypertension. TOMAGWA and the American Heart Associate partnered to create a food pharmacy that allows qualifying patients to receive boxes of fresh, healthy foods such as vegetables and fruit.

Supporting the start of the food pharmacy pilot program seemed like another complex undertaking, so TOMAGWA immediately called Sheri and the CWJF. Just as they did in 1998, Sheri and CWJF volunteers oversaw and assisted with the logistics of shopping, assembling the boxes, and distribution to patients. Sheri said "[the food pharmacy] was a little challenging at first" but with the knowledge of the mission behind the program, the patients they are serving and the partnership with TOMAGWA staff, they were able to create an incredible program.

Now every Monday, TOMAGWA, Sheri, and CWJF volunteers receive shipments of fresh produce and shop for additional healthy foods. On Thursday, the amazing crew returns to TOMAGWA and distributes the food to patients. The pilot program officially launched in October 2020 and currently serves around 40 patients per month with plans on expanding the number of patients served soon. Thanks to the help of Sheri and CWJF, the programs they have launched and assist in managing, provide TOMAGWA patients with additional resources to help manage their health.