

# THEATER OF GENEROSITY **TOOL #1**

## IMAGINE

This tool describes a new **GENEROSITY EXPERIENCE** through the eyes of a patient. It is designed for leaders beginning to vision more broadly.



**IMAGINE** you are a patient.

You enter a hospital or clinic and realize every wall and corridor tells a story. The art is not just for aesthetics—it celebrates the people who create this place. Each time you turn a corner you learn about a nurse, physician, or generosity partner.

One piece portrays a physician who provides care to the homeless in the evenings. Another describes an employee who adopted a special-needs child. Just past that is the story of an 11-year-old girl raising money to pay for care for those who have no resources. You feel intrigue about the people you are about to meet. Clearly generosity is a way of life for them.

As you walk, you notice volunteers who have come from the community to give of their time and make someone else's day a little easier. One massages the hands and neck of a woman who is anxious about her husband. Across the room, a teenager shows a person how to use a biofeedback game. Down the hallway, an artist creates a piece for a cancer patient symbolizing the gifts of his healing journey. And in the distance you hear a harpist. It reminds you of the vitality and beauty of a spa or healing sanctuary.

There is also something deeper and even more unusual—the connectedness and appreciation people hold for each other. Often when you thank caregivers,

they acknowledge the generosity of someone else who made their work possible. They appear to support each other in the same way they do patients. Perhaps this is why this place escaped the divisions that so often tear organizations apart. Even economic decisions are made out of consideration for the impact to the whole.

In many of the treatment areas there are displays and little cards describing the generosity that funded particular innovations. These catch your attention because they relate directly to the care you are now receiving. A few invite you to learn about the next generation of innovations waiting to be birthed. Generosity is still creating the future.



Later in the day someone gives you a small storybook. It is about a patient with a devastating injury who learned to both give and receive in new ways as part of her own healing. It is at once humorous and powerful, ordinary and heroic. And it causes you to think about that phrase you see everywhere, *generosity heals*.

On your way out of the unit, you see a gratitude wall. Several people cluster around it, leaving small symbols, writing blessings, or reading the inspiration of others. In the center is a tree of abundance. It's a fitting symbol. Seeds of generosity took root in some way for each person. Now they want to return it again—to share and let it flow through them.

Generosity gives rise to gratitude. And gratitude returns again as generosity.

## About the AUTHOR:

Leanne Kaiser Carlson is a healthcare futurist and thought leader for innovators engaging philanthropists in new ways. She helps organizations discover the healing power of generosity and advises CEOs, foundations, and philanthropists. Leanne is one of three founders of the Kaiser Institute and directs the Program in Philanthropy. She can be reached at 303.659.8815 or [info@kaiser.net](mailto:info@kaiser.net).

Kaiser Institute Program in Philanthropy

## ABOUT THIS TOOL

This tool is part of a series designed to help change the way people experience generosity.

Often when patients enter a hospital or clinic, they don't consciously think about generosity. They know little about the people who have given to make a particular service possible. They rarely learn about the remarkable ways the people caring for them—from physicians to housekeepers—live generously. And there is nothing that creatively describes the generosity of the organization itself. No wonder so many people perceive hospitals and clinics as profit-centered institutions.

Generosity heals. We are only just beginning to discover its power to transform our culture and relationships, enhance the patient experience, connect the community, and even alter clinical outcomes. It's not just about fundraising. As we think differently, we discover greater potentials.

[www.generosityheals.net](http://www.generosityheals.net)