

Katy Johnson: Good morning, and welcome to Apple a Day Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness show, where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I'm Katie Johnson, and my guest today is Kyle Richards, the CEO at Lake Region Healthcare, and he joins me this Thanksgiving week to talk about gratitude.

Good morning Kyle.

Kyle Richards: Good morning Katie. Nice to be with everybody today.

Katy Johnson: Well, like I said, it is the season of Thanksgiving, and in healthcare we're often keenly aware of the precious moments of life, so to speak, and the importance of pausing to be grateful for the things that we have. We take this weeks show as an opportunity to do that in the form of Lake Region Healthcare's gratitude list, I'd say, a reflection on the past year, and the things we're grateful for. And this happens to be the first full year that you've been here as CEO, and I thought maybe we could start with just personally as you reflect from Kyle Richards' stand point. What things stand out to you on your what I'm grateful for list?

Kyle Richards: You know, I think from my stand point there's a lot to be grateful for. I'm, obviously, grateful for Lake Region Healthcare, and the surrounding communities. We've been welcomed in as a family so well into the community, my wife and my kids. My kids are so active in the school system. My son being active in the sports of swimming and soccer, and some of those types of things, and my daughter being active in dance and just really getting involved in the school system. My wife being involved in a number of organizations and going around and doing lots of different things with steel drums, and things like that, that she's involved with, and having the community welcome us so deeply into this particular community has been grateful for us and my family.

We've been able to have great neighbors, great individuals coming and welcoming us to the neighborhood when we moved into our first home, and then moving, subsequently, into our new home here in the community. Just wonderful surrounding neighbors, and getting involved in the community and lots of different things from the arts to sports to you name it in the community activities. We love it here. We love all the different vibrant things that are going on in the community, and that's one of the things that had drawn me here, and still drives me here in Fergus Falls and the surrounding communities just to experience it all here.

Katy Johnson: It has been really fun to see your family get so active in so many different diverse aspects of the school and community. So, I can certainly see where that comes from.

Organizationally it takes a lot of effort by a lot of different people to run an effective, efficient, compassionate healthcare organization, and, starting with

the most obvious, it takes a team of dedicated and competent people, of which we have over 900 strong here. Right? So, some gratitude has to go out to them.

Kyle Richards: Oh, 900 strong, and I mean strong folks here doing great work, compassionate work. Really taking people in, because we get people on their most vulnerable times, and having those folks, and having those care givers care for those individuals when they come into our system, whether it's in our oncology area, or whether it's through our emergency, our inpatients, our clinic settings, all those types of things coming together, and really having that strong commitment to our patients and families. The employees here are just so dedicated. I mean, we have people here that have been with the organization 10, 20, 30, 40, and even a 50 year employee here-

Katy Johnson: I know. Isn't that amazing?

Kyle Richards: It's just amazing to me, and the dedication that they show every day doing something different, doing something surprising. I hear stories from patients almost every single day, when I do patient rounds, saying how much they appreciate the care that we give here at Lake Region Healthcare no matter what the setting is. And it's just amazing to me the dedication to our patients and families our employees share with each other in that dedication. And I really value that.

And I think our organization, our boards, our groups of community members coming together, and just saying how much they value our employees and their dedication. They don't have to be at the bed side, but they may be doing something totally different not related to the bed side, but all those folks contribute to the great care that we deliver no matter what it is that they do. So, I appreciate each and every one of those folks coming in and sharing their lives with us, and dedicating their lives towards our mission at Lake Region Healthcare.

Katy Johnson: Really treating everybody that we interact with like family I think is what kind of sets Lake Region Healthcare apart, and the medical staff is a part of that too. We talk about our employees, but we have a great team of over 80 mid-levels and physicians right alongside those staff people doing the same thing.

Kyle Richards: Yes. Exactly.

Our physicians and APP's they come together in providing that care together with our staff. Just amazing. We have ... In our particular community, I can say being in other communities, we have one of the most dedicated loyal group of medical staff professionals here, and collegiality amongst each other. Willing to help each other out. Willing to get together and learn and participate with each other in different things.

I mean, we have our internal medicine group coming together on a Thursday morning at seven o'clock in the morning just having journal club, talking about different things. We have a tumor board that gets together on Monday mornings talking about different cases. Now, multidisciplinary teams can come together and treat an individual. We have people coming together in their individual department meetings saying, "How can we best meet the needs of our patients in our community?" And really that dedication all the way through.

Our emergency department folks. We have now a full complement of emergency department providers here. Our emergency room providers will be getting some advanced practitioners as well, and trying to get people through the emergency department a little bit faster.

Those are the ideas that were brought forth from our physicians, and our medical group, and we have this strong collaboration together trying to treat everybody in our healthcare community with compassion and respect. And so, those dedicated physicians and mid-levels coming together, and really doing a great job for our patients and families have been really good to see in my eyes.

Katy Johnson: They really are an impressive group, and it always somewhat surprises me, but then on the other hand it doesn't, how many times I'll hear a patient say, "The physician actually gave me their cell number. Or they actually called me to ask how I was doing," and that level of personalized attention and care is really special.

We'd be remiss if we didn't mention our board of trustees as well. Many community members give an incredible amount of their personal time and talent to help guide our organization.

Kyle Richards: Yes. Exactly.

I mean, these folks come together on at least a monthly basis, at least probably two, three times a month at minimum, plus all the other things that they're doing together. Trying to advance their skillsets, going to educational classes at the Minnesota Hospital Association. Our board members are dedicated to bringing the healthcare into the community, and whatever they can do to dedicate their time and talent to that, and making sure that we have a lasting healthcare organization here.

They get absolutely no pay for it. They do it out of the goodness of their heart, and out of the dedication to the community coming together every single day trying to help make this particular healthcare entity the greatest it can be. And I am so grateful for them, as my bosses, coming together and saying, "You know what? How can we help you? How can we help Lake Region Healthcare?" Make sure that we have healthcare into the future, and ensuring that we have a dedicated professional staff, ensuring that we have a dedicated physician staff, and those types of other support services around us. They come together and

do that every single day. Learning, growing together, achieving results from our board members. And, again, all without pay, and a simple gratitude of thank you, and knowing that they have done some outstanding work here, and continue to do outstanding work for Lake Region Healthcare.

Katy Johnson: And speaking out of the goodness of their hearts, that reminds that we also have a foundation board, and many, many generous donors who give out of the goodness of their hearts to make sure that we have the financial support as an organization, and a community to improve health. Whether that's comforts at the cancer center that people feel strongly about making sure they're able to have wigs, or adaptive equipment for driver rehab. It's all across the organization the ways that foundation donors are making a difference in healthcare in our community too.

Kyle Richards: Yeah. We just couldn't do it without some of that donations of our financial donors coming together and donating to the foundation. We do so many different things with those dollars that are so critical to patients, so critical to our staff, so critical to our longterm success, and our donors giving out of the goodness of their hearts saying, "You know what? This is a mission that we believe in. This is a mission that we want to stay here in our community." And those donors donating dollars in order for us to, like you said, give those different things like adaptive equipment, or scholarships to somebody that's coming up through the university or our technical schools, and being a part of us some day in the future. Just really warms my heart to see those particular dollars coming towards us, and us having the capacity to do things, like I said, those scholarships and those pieces of equipment, and those capital pieces of equipment that we'll need in the future.

Healthcare is a capital intensive organization, and we're going to need some of those dollars going forward. And we so much appreciate those donors, and those families, and our foundation board coming together and helping us advance that healthcare mission that we have. Those things are so important, and I'm so grateful for this time of year and all throughout the year of what they do for our community.

Katy Johnson: And we also have a group of people who give of their time and talent called our volunteers. A great time to shout out a thank you to them too.

Kyle Richards: Yeah. We couldn't do it without our volunteers as well. There's so many people. Everything from the popcorn person down stairs to those delivering different pieces of mail around, showing people where to go in our organization, volunteering over at the cancer center, just amazing support of volunteers. Baking goods to add to the funds. Doing things like volunteering at our gift shop. You name it, there's just so many volunteers that come together for Lake Region Healthcare making our mission possible, and without those dedicated folks we wouldn't have a lot of the different things that we take for granted here. And so, that's just really important to have those volunteers. And if anybody is willing,

wanting to volunteer a great group of individuals to get together with, and a worthy cause to donate your time and talents to. So, we welcome that as well.

Katy Johnson: Absolutely. And this has been weaved through our comments so far, but truly at the heart of our gratefulness is our community, right? The people who choose to entrust their care, or the care of their family to us at Lake Region Healthcare. And we've just had amazing support from our community, and are so grateful for it, because it what makes it all happen.

Kyle Richards: Yep. Exactly.

Our community is an outstanding community. Coming together, rallying around folks that have had experience of loss, or experience of a tragic event, or anything else in that nature. Healthcare kind of ties that together, and that community coming together and bringing those folks into our community just is really a nice to see. Our community dedicated to this particular facility, choosing us for their care no matter if you go to the clinic, if you go to the cancer center, if you come stay with us in an inpatient stay, if you do any types of surgeries with us, choosing us locally for your healthcare is really important for us to maintain our mission as well.

And we're so grateful for the patients. As I go around, like I said, do patient rounds on the mornings sometimes you just hear those dedicated stories. So, I'm just really grateful for our community and the surrounding communities coming into Lake Region Healthcare, and being dedicated to their services here.

Katy Johnson: It takes a village, and the partnerships that we have to continue the strong tradition of healthcare in our community is truly something to be grateful for.

Kyle thanks for your leadership, thanks for taking some time to just call out and pause to thank those people that make it all possible here.

Kyle Richards: Thank you so much Katie, and it's a truly great time of year. Wonderful blessings to everybody out there. It's truly a time to pause, reflect, and give thanks to all the wonderful things we have here that we take for granted every single day. And just wanted, again, say thanks to everybody that is able to make Lake Region Healthcare the best place, the quality of care here that we have in our community. And thanks to everybody that make it happen.

Katy Johnson: A happy Thanksgiving to you and your family Kyle, and to all of our listeners we are grateful for you and we wish you a blessed and happy Thanksgiving, and a good holiday season to come as well.

Kyle Richards, CEO at Lake Region Healthcare, my guest today on Apple a Day. Kyle and Katie remind you that there is so much to do here stay healthy for it. Have a great day.

