



submitted photos

The Parkview flight program consists of two Samaritan helicopters. Pictured here is Samaritan II which is based in Rochester, so it can be called to trauma scenes and hospitals within a 100 miles radius of the Rochester airport. Rural trauma is a major focus for the Parkview Level II Trauma Center. **BELOW:** Parkview Samaritan flight nurse, Staci Gilbert, RN, cares for a patient.

It is said, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" but in the case of Parkview Hospital's Good Samaritan helicopter airlift program a bird in the air is a **GIVER OF LIFE, HOPE AND PROMISE**

By **Connie Gorrell**
for Fort Wayne Newspapers



MORE INFO:

The Samaritan program launched in 1989.

More than 10,000 patients have been airlifted.

There are two helicopters in use at this time. One is located in Fort Wayne; the other Rochester.

Each helicopter can transport two adults or three small children.

On Nov. 18, 1989, Parkview Hospital launched an emergency flight program with a helicopter perched atop the hospital's fourth floor heliport. They christened it "Samaritan." Today, more than 10,000 patient flights later, there are two green and white adorned helicopters in the skies of northeastern Indiana with the addition of Samaritan II, placed in Rochester in February 1999. Between the two French made N2-Dauphin helicopters with twin jet engines and maximum cruising speeds of 185 m.p.h., patients in crisis situations are able to get speedy help within a 100-mile radius of both Fort Wayne and Rochester.

Along with the experience that comes with 10,000 flights with patients on board, Cathy Harris, director of flight, trauma and EMS, speaks frankly about the safety record of Samaritan I and II. Recently quoted in Parkview Hospital's publication "Insights" Harris states, "The Parkview Samaritan helicopters are

two of the safest aircraft in the medical industry. This is evident by the completion of our 10,000 patient flights, all accident free." According to www.parkview.com the Samaritan Flight Program is the only Instrumental Flight Rules (IFR) certified program in Indiana. IFR certification enables the specially trained pilots to fly guided by instruments in inclement weather conditions. Samaritan's experienced pilots have each documented an average of more than 5,600 hours of flight.

During its 14-year history the Samaritan Flight Program has safely landed the airborne emergency rooms collectively at more than 2,000 accident scenes providing rapid access to emergency care thus exercising the "every minute counts" philosophy. Thanksgiving morning of 1999 was no exception.

The standard crew consisting of pilot, registered nurse and paramedic, were standing by when called by local EMS to the site of a tragic accident on Highway 33 on the city's northwest side. A young man lay

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critically wounded and unconscious, the victim of a single car crash. Nicholas Gorrell, 20, was transported to Parkview Hospital's Level II Trauma Center within minutes of Samaritan's arrival to the scene. Though the massive injuries eventually claimed his life, quick initial responses by ground EMS and the Samaritan crew enabled Nick's family to be by his side and to offer gifts of life to others in need by means of organ donation. "He would not have made it to the hospital alive by ground transportation," said his father, Brent Gorrell of Woodburn. "We would never have been able to hold him again, nor give his gifts of life to others. Nick would have wanted to give of himself.

"We were able to do that for him."

Summoning the helicopters to the scene of an accident whether vehicular, farming or other catastrophe is invaluable to the flight crew as well as improving the outlook for the patient involved. Says Harris, "Included in our 10,000 patient flight milestone are the unsung heroes who have the ability to see beyond the chaos of the moment to get patients to the appropriate facility."

Physicians, nurses, emergency medical personnel, police and fire officials are among those authorized to summon a Samaritan.

Thanksgiving morning of 1999 reminds us that tragedy can strike any family, at any time ... and the best you can hope for is a Good Samaritan on the scene.