Leading in Robotic Surgical Technology

STPH Acquires Third da Vinci Robot; Surgeons Perform 5,000th-Surgery
A Life of Giving
Hospice Volunteer Plans an Additional Gift

Karen Place’s role as a St. Tammany Hospital Hospice volunteer is a gift to patients and families at a difficult stage of life. From simply helping out in the office to spending time in patients’ homes so their caregivers can take time to themselves, Place makes a difference.

The 72-year-old retired nurse recently made an additional gift to hospice: a change in her will that provides a Legacy of Caring Society bequest to the program.

“It feels wonderful to do it,” said Place, whose mother and late husband were hospice patients. “I understand firsthand how the program helps people.”

Volunteers like Place are essential to hospice operations, said Paula Toups, director of home health, hospice and palliative care for St. Tammany Parish Hospital.

“We just can’t do without people like Karen Place,” Toups said. “Their work is invaluable.”

Planned gifts of any kind enable membership in the STPH Foundation’s Legacy of Caring Society and recognition on the Donor Wall of Honor in the hospital lobby, noted Nicole Suhre, foundation executive director.

The foundation works directly with prospective donors to help them determine their best giving options for their own preferences and needs.

“It is truly moving when someone expresses the desire to leave a legacy of support for the hospital that lasts beyond their lifetime,” said Suhre. “It’s a story that needs to be shared.”

For her part, Place said she feels great about her decision.

“It feels good to know I’m giving something to this organization,” Place said.

Honoring
Perpetual
Angels

Angels of Light, the annual fundraiser benefiting St. Tammany Hospital Hospice, will take place at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5 in the St. Tammany Parish Hospital lobby.

This year’s gathering will include live music, refreshments and the traditional lighting of the Hospice Tree for Life decorated with Tribute Angels purchased in honor or memory of loved ones.

In 2018, the purchase of more than 420 angels raised $26,620 for hospice, which serves a growing number of Northshore patients nearing the end of life.

This year’s event will include a celebration of Perpetual Angels, supporters of the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation who performed extraordinary services or acts of generosity during their lives or upon their deaths.

Perpetual Angels named over the past four years are Gilbert J. Hattier III, who left a legacy for pediatric advancement; Richard F. Knight, a founding member of STPH Foundation and longtime contributor of time, funds and works of art; Adrian B. Cairns MD, the first chairman of STFH Foundation Board of Trustees; and Richard P. Kelley, a generous champion of the foundation and hospice services.

This year, the late John “Pizzie” Romano will be named the fifth Perpetual Angel in recognition of his years of loyal support and visionary leadership.

Funds raised through Angels of Light benefit a program of growing importance to the community. Between 2015 through 2019, average days of care was up from 43 to 68 days, noted Paula Toups, director of home health, hospice and palliative care.

That translates into two additional weeks of palliative care and other services to improve quality of life, Toups said.

“The longer we have people in care, the more we can do for them,” Toups said.

To learn more about how to leave a legacy through a planned gift, call Nicole Suhre, 985-898-4171, or visit stthfoundation.plannmygift.org.
Consistent Excellence in Care

Multiple National Recognitions and Accreditations this Year

With its commitment to world-class healthcare, St. Tammany Parish Hospital earned a record number of national honors in the past year for excellence in stroke, heart failure and cancer care, while also completing national accreditations for trauma care, cancer treatment and five other areas.

The string of awards and rigorous accreditation visits reflects longstanding consistency of performance excellence comprising a focus on safety and a commitment to continuous improvement in quality of care.

“Healthcare changes every day, and we continuously adjust to meet those changes,” said Laura Goodey, head of quality and accreditation at STPH.

STPH’s awards and recognition in 2019 included U.S. News & World Report for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and heart failure care plus STPH’s seventh-straight Leapfrog A grade for safety, recognizing measures such as medication-error controls and infection prevention.

With its commitment to world-class healthcare, close to home, so patients do not have to travel far for the very best care,

Patient Tower Taking Shape

Expansion On Track for 2020 Completion

A four-story patient addition, the crowning element of St. Tammany Parish Hospital’s largest expansion in two decades, is taking shape on the hospital campus.

On pace for completion in late 2020, the new building will mark STPH’s transition to all-private patient rooms and add more capacity for surgery, cardiology, neurology and pediatrics.

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Leading the Region in Robotic Surgical Technology

The Northshore’s robotic surgery leader since 2007, St. Tammany Parish Hospital reinforced its pioneering role this year with its latest purchase, a third state-of-the-art da Vinci robotics system.

In the 12-year dominance of the program, STPH has continuously improved its systems, keeping on the forefront of robotic technology with purchase of its second robot in 2017 and upgrades and replacements on its systems throughout the years.

The technology itself isn’t the only remarkable milestone in STPH da Vinci history, however. This summer, highly trained and experienced robotics surgeons at the hospital completed their 5,000th procedure using the revolutionary system.

The combination of surgical expertise with groundbreaking technology bolsters STPH’s place at the helm of da Vinci technology on the Northshore while also expanding patient access to technology being used for a growing number of surgeries, including minimally invasive procedures to treat pelvic and urologic cancers.

“The robot has been a huge advance,” said oncologist Patricia Braly MD, a specialist in gynecological cancers who does about 90 percent of surgeries using the da Vinci system. “This is good for patients.”

Unlike in traditional open surgery, the surgeon’s hands do not enter the patient’s body during robot-assisted surgery. Instead, the surgeon uses a console near the operating table to control a tiny endoscope and surgical instruments that enter the patient’s body through a keyhole incision. A screen gives a magnified, high-definition, three-dimensional view of blood vessels and nearby organs within the surgical site.

Covington urologist Sunil Purohit MD has deep experience with surgical robotics, having completed hundreds of prostate surgeries and other robot-assisted procedures since championing the hospital’s initial launch of its robotics program in 2007.

Dr. Purohit also has firsthand understanding of da Vinci’s expanding role in complex cancer surgeries at STPH, including nephron-sparing procedures to remove kidney tumors while keeping the kidney—and its critical functions—intact.

Yet there is still a sense of wonder in Dr. Purohit’s voice as he shares what enables surgeons using this technology to make procedures safer, faster, easier, less painful and less disruptive to patients’ lives.

“It’s almost like being inside the belly,” Dr. Purohit said. “The instruments can move 360 degrees. The view is absolutely clear and magnified. Everything is more precise, intuitive. That’s the beauty of it and what makes a difference for patients, speeding recovery and improving lives.”

The da Vinci’s wrist-like instruments mimic the motion of surgeons’ hands in real time during the advanced surgery. The instruments’ dexterity and tiny size enhance suturing in confined spaces within the patient’s body and reduce the chance of trauma to nearby organs.

It is difficult to overstate the intricate maneuverability of the tiny robotic instruments. A recent viral internet video showing a da Vinci robot peeling the skin off a grape and then stitching the grape back together speaks volumes to the system’s groundbreaking precision.

The technology’s delicate accuracy provides a host of benefits for surgery patients. In addition to less blood loss and fewer complications, patients experience less scarring, less post-operative pain and less need for pain medication.

“It means people can get back to their normal lives more quickly,” said Nancy Ledet, STPH director of surgical services.

Special da Vinci features are also driving advancements in critical surgeries. For instance, Dr. Braly uses the system’s fluorescent-light feature during pelvic surgery to identify which lymph nodes are at an elevated risk for cancer and should be removed.

“The optics tell us what nodes should be removed so we can avoid unnecessary risk to the patient,” Dr. Braly said. “That is a big benefit for the patient.”
Rotating Gallery Exhibit Celebrates “A Colorful Voyage”

St. Tammany Hospital Foundation’s Healing Arts Initiative hosted its seventh exhibition in the rotating gallery series as part of its continuing focus on the work of local artists. The aptly named “A Colorful Voyage” exhibit featured 109 works of visual art including paintings, photography, mixed media and three-dimensional works from 23 regional artists.

“Our artists share their time and incredible talent to elevate and redefine arts in healthcare,” said Nicole Suhre, executive director of the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation. We are honored to partner with them in our mission.”

Participating artists in the July-September exhibit were: Jan Arrigo, John Bloemer, Brad Budge, Joseph Cannon, Carrie Dupre, Maralyn Goff, Katie Heulin, Ferris Hotard, Jamie Jackson, Elayne Kuehler, Michelle Lance, Joe Levy, Craig McMillin, Enrique Murillo, RaeRae Pertuit, Linda Shelton, Wojciech Sobolewski, Bill Stewart, Nancy Tigert, Julie Porche Wall and Sue Zaunbrecher.

Groundbreaking Healing Arts Initiative is First in Video Series

In its first video in a series highlighting how art improves underserved lives across the state, Louisiana Division of the Arts explores the Healing Arts Initiative at St. Tammany Parish Hospital.

Danny Belanger, director of arts education and accessibility for the arts agency, was struck by the hospital’s embrace of art as a meaningful part of healing.

“There was an understanding that art could provide a respite from stress for patients and others,” said Belanger, who learned about the role of art at STPH from Mary Lee, chairman of the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation’s Healing Arts Committee and also chairman of the Louisiana State Arts Council.

“I was so impressed by the sense of purpose,” Belanger added.

The video captures an array of vantage points on the meaning of the Healing Arts at STPH, including that of hospital CEO Joan Coffman and Chief Medical Officer Patrick Torcson, MD.

Northshore artist Bill Stewart, an engineer who taught himself to paint with his left hand after losing the use of his right hand to a stroke, also shares the role of art in his own healing process.

“The videos underscore the work of so many constituencies in coming together to make the Healing Arts possible,” said Nicole Suhre, the foundation’s executive director. Shot onsite in late 2018, the eight video shorts include footage of arts installations across the hospital campus, sometimes from the point of view of what a patient might see while moving through its corridors.

The STPH Healing Arts videos will be followed by others that explore novel ways art is being used to serve elderly, disabled and incarcerated Louisiana residents.

“We want to raise awareness of what is happening around the state and also show how the arts are making people’s lives better,” Belanger said.

To learn more about the Healing Arts Initiative, visit stthfoundation.org/healingarts.

“Our artists share their time and incredible talent to elevate and redefine arts in healthcare.”

– Nicole Suhre, foundation executive director

Healing Arts Featured in New State Videos
Proper nutrition helps cancer patients cope with treatment side effects, buoys strength and promotes healing.

Financial upheaval that can follow cancer diagnosis means some patients lack access to food, especially food optimal for their well-being. “We hear people tell us they’ve had to choose between food and medicine,” said Hailey Story, St. Tammany Cancer Center clinical dietician.

A first-of-its-kind partnership among St. Tammany Cancer Center, Northshore Food Bank and St. Tammany Hospital Foundation will address patient food insecurity through a new therapeutic food pantry at the cancer center, opening in early November.

Patients will combine food pickup with scheduled treatment or appointments at STCC, so they don’t have to make an additional trip to the Northshore Food Bank’s standard distribution location in downtown Covington. “For many patients, it’s a considerable effort to come to the center for treatment in the first place,” said Colleen Hughes, STCC oncology-certified social worker. “We didn’t want to introduce another barrier.”

In addition to nonperishable items from Northshore Food Bank, Story will also work with local farmers to obtain seasonal produce for patients. Story recommended modifications to the types of items the food bank will supply to the pantry to ensure they meet the special nutritional requirements of cancer patients, noted Terri Turner-Marse, CEO of the Northshore Food Bank. “This is new for us, and we’re excited to be able to impact patients this way,” Turner-Marse said.

We hear people tell us they’ve had to choose between food and medicine. – Hailey Story, cancer center dietician

STPH Employees Give Big to Show They Care

2019 WE Care Campaign Exceeds “Stretch” Target

St. Tammany Parish Hospital employees gave generously to the 2019 WE Care Employee Campaign. Some 850 employee donors pledged $14,618 to support hospital programs, surpassing St. Tammany Hospital Foundation’s stretch goal of $110,000 for the campaign.

The WE Care Employee Campaign provides an annual opportunity for employees to support hospital programs and projects they care about through monetary gifts including payroll deductions. “This is an opportunity for employees to actively invest in the hospital through this campaign,” said Doug Walker, foundation specialist.

The foundation’s expansion initiative is among the projects employee donors choose to support. Funds donated will augment technology for the new patient addition now under construction. The fund’s focus will be to improve patient care with technology such as cleaning robots that reduce infection risk and handheld mobile devices that simplify continuity of care.

Employees may also select other programs such as the longstanding Employee Benevolent Fund, for fellow employees in crisis, the Healing Arts Initiative and the new therapeutic food pantry coming this fall to St. Tammany Cancer Center. “The campaign is a true testament to the dedication and compassion of everyone who works at St. Tammany Parish Hospital,” Walker said.
**Upcoming Events**

As the Northshore's community health network, St. Tammany Parish Hospital hosts events, meetings and opportunities for you to improve and maintain your physical and emotional well-being. We've provided a short sample of the many upcoming events below. Please check the calendar on stph.org or additional learning opportunities for individuals of all ages.

### Giving Tuesday

**TUESDAY, DEC. 3 | 24 HOURS OF GIVING**

Giving Tuesday is an international day of giving. Give back to the community by showing your support to the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation. Visit www.sthfoundation.org/GivingTuesday.htm to make a donation on Dec. 3.

### Angels of Light

**THURSDAY, DEC. 5 | 5:30 P.M.**

**STPH FRONT LOBBY**

Honor a loved one by purchasing a tribute angel on the Tree for Life at the 2019 Angels of Light benefitting St. Tammany Hospital Hospice.

www.sthfoundation.org/angels | 985-898-4141

### Survivor’s Thriver’s & Drivers

**SATURDAY, NOV. 2 | 10 A.M - 4 P.M.**

**STCC PARKING LOT**

Car, Truck and Motorcycle Show celebrating Cancer Survivors. sthfoundation.org/carshow