Communication & Coordination

Multidisciplinary Team Approach to Breast Cancer Treatment
Rotating Gallery Series Showcases Art, Promotes Healing

Exhibit Highlights Regional Talent

St. Tammany Hospital Foundation showcases the work of regional artists in a series of rotating art galleries. As an element of the foundation’s Healing Arts Initiative, works selected for the rotating gallery series convey a sense of calm and beauty to promote wellbeing among patients, visitors and employees.

Heal through the Arts

More information on Healing Arts and giving opportunities by contacting Nicole Suhre at 985-898-4171 or nsuhre@stph.org

Their work was displayed in the education hallway off the main hospital lobby, 1 North bridge and patient hallways. The series’ winter installation will begin in February 2017 and last eight weeks. The upcoming exhibit will again stress themes of serenity and peace, in keeping with the program’s focus on art as an element of the healing process.

“Healing Arts is a unique and powerful message for those in need,” said Mary Lee, chairman of the Healing Arts Initiative. “We are excited and proud to collaborate with community leaders and artists to bring joy and peace to patients in need of respite and calm and those facing great challenges.”

ANGELS OF LIGHT

A Tradition to Support StTPH Hospice

The 2016 Angels of Light fundraiser will bring lights and music to the St. Tammany Parish Hospital lobby from 5:10 to 6:30 p.m. on Thursday Dec. 8. This beloved holiday tradition supports St. Tammany Hospital through an evening that honors and celebrates loved ones, living and deceased.

The ceremonial lighting of the Hospice Tree for Life, decorated with Tribute Angels, will highlight the event, which will include holiday music and refreshments.

Each Tribute Angel on the Tree for Life represents an individual, living or deceased, being honored or memorialized by a friend or family member. Tribute Angels will go on sale in November and can be purchased in the Guild gift shop or through the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation. Tribute Angels will begin in February 2017 and may be displayed in the hospital as an element of the healing process.

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More information is available by contacting Melanie Byrd at 985-898-4141, mburdy@stph.org or by visiting stfoundation.org/angels.
Improving Communication & Coordination Means Optimal Care

Multidisciplinary Team Approach to Breast Cancer Treatment

Charo Arnold was 16 weeks pregnant when the 38-year-old Mandeville mom and neonatal nurse was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer at the Women’s Pavilion.

A multidisciplinary team of specialists at Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center at St. Tammany Parish Hospital quickly developed a treatment plan for Arnold, who began 12 treatments over 18 weeks of chemotherapy within days of diagnosis.

“They were there!” Arnold said of the team.

“I knew I had a whole team of experts working to decide how best to treat my cancer, and that was helpful and reassuring for me.”

The multidisciplinary team approach is an increasingly important element of breast cancer treatment at the cancer center.

Twice a month, board-certified physician specialists in medical oncology, radiation oncology, pathology, general surgery and plastic surgery gather with key nursing and ancillary support staff to discuss complex cases like Arnold’s. The team’s goal: to create a unified treatment plan built on the combined clinical expertise of each team member that reflects the individual needs of each patient.

Each member of the team has access to patients’ full medical records, allowing for a fully informed discussion of treatment options. Large monitors in the team meeting room give participants detailed views of radiology, pathology and other test results.

The team can meet to discuss and review treatment options at any point in the treatment spectrum, from diagnosis to post-surgery recovery.

“Communication and coordination of care is improved because everyone is in the same room with the same information focused on the same patient at the same time,” said Jack Khashou, cancer center administrator. “The multidisciplinary team is an important example of planning and work that happen behind the scenes to make sure patients get the best care.”

The same physicians and ancillary staff are also part of the breast cancer leadership team, which meets routinely to ensure that the center’s practices and procedures reflect evidence-based national standards of care.

The cancer center leadership team also meets monthly to review standards of care in treatment and examine the center’s practices and procedures.

In Arnold’s case, treatment took place before and after the birth of her daughter, Mila Grace, in December 2015. Surgeons removed Arnold’s tumor a week after the baby’s arrival. Her treatment team recommended an additional 12 treatments over 12 weeks of chemotherapy after pathology results showed residual tumor after surgery. Throughout treatment, Arnold had access to oncology certified nurse navigators and infusion nurses, an oncology certified social worker and dietician.

Arnold also underwent a double mastectomy, hysterectomy and breast reconstruction over the spring and summer.

The cancer center staff and nurse navigator were important sources of support for Arnold, who previously worked in STPH’s neonatal intensive care unit. Despite the many experts involved in her treatment, Arnold always felt confident and clear about each component of the plan, she said.

“I know it is cancer, but the fact is you feel surrounded by love during the whole process,” she said. “From the start, they made me feel like I was their only patient, which was an awesome experience.”

The team approach reflects an additional way in which STPH’s leadership reflects evidence-based national standards of care and procedures.

“Everyone is in the same room with the same information focused on the same patient at the same time.”

– Jack Khashou, Cancer Center Administrator

Champions of Giving

Employees Donate More than $90,000 for STPH Initiatives

St. Tammany Parish Hospital employees gave more than $90,000 combined for patient care and quality of life initiatives during the 2016 WE Care employee campaign.

Their gifts to STPH will support a variety of initiatives, including the hospital’s Healing Arts Initiative, Employee Benevolent Fund and endowment.

Employees share their dedication to the hospital by the work they do every single day,” said Colleen Bonvillain, foundation associate. “During the WE Care employee campaign, they take it one step further and make personal donations to causes and projects that will enhance the services we provide here at the hospital. It’s heartwarming to see how much they truly care about the people in our community.”

More than 680 employees gave to this year’s sports-themed We Are The Champions campaign, a participation rate of 60 percent. In addition, 31 departments achieved 100 percent participation, with all eligible employees supporting the campaign with a contribution.

While employees could designate their gift to any fund of their choosing, the featured fund for 2016 was Prehabilitation for Cancer Patients.

More than 175 donors contributed to this fund, which will support rehabilitation services and support for cancer patients after a diagnosis but before treatment has started. Such programs improve quality of life for patients with any type of cancer at any stage while also decreasing morbidity rates, research shown.

Since 2004, STPH employees have raised more than $1.1 million to support the programs of St Tammany Parish Hospital.

“It’s heartwarming to see how much employees truly care about the people in our community.”

– Colleen Bonvillain, Foundation Associate

Vol 12 No. 4 Fall 2016
Raoul Joseph Laurent Jr. wore his Navy hat as he traveled the world. The retired Navy petty officer hung the Navy flag alongside the American one in his Ponchatoula yard. He affixed a Navy license plate to every car he owned.

Undoubtedly Laurent would have been pleased by what took place at St. Tammany Parish Hospital in the wee hours of May 26 when he passed away at 80 after declining health that included pulmonary fibrosis and pneumonia.

At 3:30 a.m., the hospital operator announced “Attention please, Honor Red White and Blue.” STPH physicians, nurses and employees gathered along the first-floor hallway with Laurent’s family.

Laurent’s gurney, draped with the American flag, was rolled through the hall, passing briefly in the corridor for STPH Chaplain Zac Ritchie to share a ritual of remembrance, including details of Laurent’s life and his 25 years with the Navy.

Some hospital staff, themselves veterans, gave a final salute. Other employees pressed their hands together at their chest to honor Laurent’s life and service.

Ritchie later met in the chapel with Laurent’s family to present them with the formally folded flag and say final words of thanks.

“It was such a memorial to my father,” said daughter Suzanne Grayson. “As it was happening, I kept thinking to myself, ‘Hospitals do this?’ We were amazed.”

When Grayson described the tribute days later in a Facebook post, she learned something unexpected: the hospital’s Honor Red, White and Blue initiative honoring veterans was deeply meaningful to thousands of strangers who read about it. Her Facebook post drew more than 6,000 reactions, 600 comments and was shared with users of the social media website nearly 2,000 times.

“It was overwhelming, and it helped us as we started to heal,” Grayson said.

STPH’s Honor Red, White and Blue program recognizes the military service of patients as well as that of hospital physicians, volunteers and employees who are veterans or active military.

STPH intensive care nurse Susan Aultman brought to the Patient Experience Task Force the idea that the hospital honor veterans.

“I thought, ‘Why don’t we honor our vets when they die? And why would we want to wait until they die to show our thanks?’ Aultman said.

The resulting program from the Patient Experience Task Force has three elements.

STPH employees, volunteers and physicians are recognized for their service. They receive distinctive blue badge holders with American flags to highlight their service and are offered a free meal in the cafeteria when they work on Veterans Day.

Patients are asked at admission if they are veterans and if hospital staff may recognize them for their service. If they agree, a flag icon is placed outside their room and in their electronic record. Hospital employees are encouraged to ask about their service and thank them as they come and go.

The hospital’s tribute to recently deceased veterans like Laurent is perhaps the best-known aspect of the program. Like the other two elements of Honor Red, White and Blue, it is strictly voluntary. Families can choose to have their loved one recognized with the formal “Honor Red, White and Blue” announcement, as Laurent’s family did, or a private tribute with the chaplain in the patient’s room.

STPH Chaplain Jeff Sims, a U.S. Air Force veteran, has received calls about the hospital’s tribute from as far away as Indiana and California.

“Some other hospitals around the country honor vets, but the way we do it is unique to us,” Sims said.

Over the past three years, about 70 veterans have been honored through the program. Flags are provided by the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation and service organization Woodmen of the World.

Honor Red, White and Blue has been recognized by the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the American Legion and other organizations for its support of veterans and active military members.

The program also has inspired similar efforts at fellow Ochsner Health Network hospitals, Terrebonne General Medical Center, Slidell Memorial Hospital and Christus Health, and other regional hospitals, including Our Lady of the Angels in Bogalusa, where Aultman and STPH CEO Patti Ellish presented the first flag for its tribute ceremony.

“It’s a communal celebration in a lot of ways,” said Chaplain Ritchie. “The family has lost a loved one, but it is also a chance to show respect and thanks for someone whose service is important to all of us.”

“It was such a memorial to my father. As it was happening, I kept thinking to myself: ‘Hospitals do this?’ We were amazed.”

– Suzanne Grayson
Peace of Mind after a Baby’s Early Arrival

NICU Nurses Offer Love, Support to Parents

Adam Morris recalls meeting his son for the first time in the NICU as his wife, Nicole, who works as a nurse in STPH’s intensive care unit, recovered from delivery. NICU nurse Monique Chiasson clearly explained the lines and tubes attached to Jude for the first-time father, taking the time to make sure Morris understood each one before moving on to the next.

“There were probably 10 things attached to him, but she explained the benefit and purpose of each one,” he said. “She was very helpful.”

Careful explanation and reassurance from NICU nurses became an important source of comfort and support to the couple after 44 days, and weighed 14 pounds by late summer.

The couple, exhausted and overwhelmed in the early days, grew steadily more confident as Jude grew stronger. They credit the NICU nurses for the change.

Helping parents understand their baby’s care while in the NICU is essential to their peace of mind, Chiasson explained. It also makes leaving their baby in the NICU to go home or to work less stressful for new parents.

“When they walk in and see the most precious gift they’ve been given hooked up to lines everywhere, they are frightened,” Chiasson said. “When they understand how those lines are helping their baby in specific ways, it is not as scary. Educating the parents is an important part of what we do.”

Although he was born with Down syndrome, Jude did not have heart problems and did not experience any serious infections, as many babies with Down syndrome do. He weighed 4.5 pounds when he went home with his parents after 44 days, and weighed 14 pounds by late summer.

“He’s very healthy,” said Nicole Morris. Her husband, the associate pastor at Bogue Falaya Baptist Church in Folsom, described his son leaving the NICU as heartwarming.

“It was, of course, a happy time because he was going home with us, but it was sad leaving the NICU, a place that had come to mean so much to us.” — Adam Morris

Northshore painter Ferris Hotard has unusual insight into the power of art to heal. The 60-year-old owner of a Covington studio was placed by STPH surgeons days later.

“We had a 50% chance of survival,” Hotard said. “When they walked in and saw the most precious gift they’ve been given, they were frightened.”

Hotard then experienced a new role at STPH. He recently became a participant in the Healing Arts Initiative, St. Tammany Hospital Foundation’s long-running program to harness art’s healing power with art installations throughout the STPH campuses.

“Rehab helped me get back to art and to good health,” he said. “I was weak emotionally and physically when I began, and without a doubt it made me stronger in both those ways. Rehab made a big difference to me, and I hope the painting helps to show that.”

One painting shows flying geese and another shows flowers, images in keeping with themes of serenity and natural beauty that shape much of Hotard’s work.

“Rehab helps me get back to art and to good health,” he said. “I was weak emotionally and physically when I began, and without a doubt it made me stronger in both those ways. Rehab made a big difference to me, and I hope the painting helps to show that.”

Ferris exhibited seven pieces in the rotating gallery series and donated two pieces to the foundation for Healing Arts, including a piece he specifically asked be displayed in the cardiac rehab unit.

“Improve blood flow throughout his body from the stents in his heart that grows stronger during rehab,” Hotard said. “Their humor and support helped me regain a level of emotional comfort that I had lost.”

“Cardiac rehab work to get your heart stronger, but it is not just your heart that grows stronger during rehab. Their humor and support helped me regain a level of emotional comfort that I had lost.”

— Ferris Hotard

More information on the Healing Arts and opportunities to support the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation are available at stthfoundation.org or by calling Nicole Suhre at 985-898-4171.
Of PRIMARY Importance
The Essential Role of Primary Care In Good Health

Primary care is an essential element of healthcare and the first point of contact for most patients with a health concern. Comprising care from immunizations for children and physicals for young athletes to diabetes management and discussions about dementia and end-of-life care, primary care’s focus is the health of the individual patient throughout their lifetime.

The ongoing relationship between patient and primary care physician provides important continuity in a complex healthcare system.

“Coordinating care with specialists is increasingly important,” said Ralph Millet MD, a board-certified internal medicine specialist with St. Tammany Physicians Network who has practiced in Covington for more than 40 years.

“We navigate our patients through every element of care in a way that promotes quality and safety,” said Dr. Millet, who sees patients from teens to more than 90-year-old.

Primary care also offers the opportunity for patients and their doctors to discuss family health history and screenings or lifestyle changes to minimize potential inherited risks, Dr. Millet said.

“We get to know our patients both when they are sick and when they are well. That offers the opportunity to build trust, which makes it easier for patients to share information that may be vital to making a diagnosis and treating them effectively.”

– Ralph Millet MD

Patient education is another crucial aspect of primary care, especially during wellness visits. “It gives us an opportunity to discuss smoking cessation or the importance of exercise and a healthy weight,” Dr. Millet said. “We also remind patients about the importance of eye exams for patients 40 or older, screenings such as colonoscopies for adults over 50 and screenings that are important for patients with a family history of cancer or other disease.”

Primary care physicians also are often the first point of contact for patients with mental or emotional problems, or the first person a family member contacts about such concerns. They can prescribe medication for depression or anxiety and help connect patients with grief support groups or mental health professionals.

Coordination of care with specialists is another important role of primary care.

Medical specialties in general practice, pediatrics and family medicine also fall under the umbrella of primary care. Disease prevention, health maintenance, treatment and diagnosis of both acute and chronic conditions are common to each area of specialization.

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Shane Hodgson doesn’t hesitate when asked the No. 1 concern he hears from first-time dads-to-be.

“They worry they’ll break the baby,” said Hodgson, a Northshore father of two teenagers and trained facilitator for men-only workshops for expectant dads by St. Tammany Parish Hospital Parenting Center.

Hodgson and fellow facilitators, Eric Suhre and Kyle Bebbabin offer practical, hands-on information and down-to-earth insight to prepare men for their new role as father by giving them the skills and confidence to care for newborn babies and new moms.

The 110 Saturday-morning Boot Camp for New Dads class is held every other month through the Parenting Center.

Participants learn how to prepare for labor and delivery, soothe a crying baby, change a diaper, keep their baby safe and other fundamentals of newborn care. They learn how best to support a new mother, how to recognize post-partum depression and tips for limiting visits by well-meaning relatives and family members in the first, sleepless days after mom and baby return home.

“Being a gatekeeper in the early days is another new role they get a chance to learn and practice,” Hodgson said. “The focus of every aspect of the workshop is on the value of the parents working as a team, and how they can best support each other as they become parents.”

Hodgson said frank talk in a supportive ‘locker room’ atmosphere helps participants feel comfortable asking questions they might not pose to friends or relatives.

“They are encouraged to ask or express anything that is on their minds,” Hodgson said. The all-male environment likewise puts expectant dads at ease, added Lori Cegi, Parenting Center executive director.

“It’s men-only unless you are a baby, so the dads can ask guy-to-guy questions on any topic and not feel embarrassed,” Cegi said.

Critical real-world insight comes from veteran dads who visit the workshop with their new babies to give the dads-to-be a chance to ask questions, watch a new dad interact with his infant and often hold a baby for the first time.

The nationally acclaimed workshop is validated by research and offered in more than 250 U.S. communities, as well as by the U.S. Navy, Air Force and Army. STPH is the only hospital in Louisiana to offer the program, and has done so for 18 years.

Getting Ready for the Role of a Lifetime
Boot Camp Gives Dads-To-Be Real World Skills

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New Family Center Tours
1st and 3rd Saturdays | 10 a.m. to noon
STPH New Family Center | Free
Learn about our private birthing suites, 
rooming in, skin-to-skin program and more.
985-898-4436

Prepared Childbirth
Tuesdays, December 12 and 19 | 7–9 p.m.
STPH Conference Room | Free
Learn physical and emotional changes, how
your baby develops, signs and stages of
labor, what to expect in childbirth, and
breathing and relaxation techniques used
during labor. Anesthesia options will be
discussed. 985-898-4083

Baby Care Basics
Tuesdays, October 25, November 29,
and December 6 | 7–9 p.m.
STPH Conference Room | Free
ksupan@stph.org or 985-898-4435

Art of Breastfeeding
November 7 and 14 | 6:30–8:30 p.m.
STPH Parenting Center | Free
Discuss benefits of breastfeeding as well as
common concerns of the early breastfeeding
period to create a positive and successful
breastfeeding experience. 985-898-4083

New Baby Support Group
Every Thursday | 11:15 a.m. to noon
STPH Parenting Center | Free
Join other mothers and their little ones to
discuss child development and parenting
tips with professionals as well as other
parents. ksupan@stph.org or 985-898-4435

For the Kids

Play and Learn
Tuesdays, November 1, 8 and 15 and
December 6 and 13 | 9:30-10:15 a.m.
STPH Parenting Center | $15/members, 
$24/nonmembers
Parents and their children, 16 months
to 4 years, play and learn together
through music and movement, arts and
crafts, and storytime. ksupan@stph.org or
985-898-4435

Ballet
Wednesdays, November 2, 9
and 16 | 9:15-10 a.m.
STPH Parenting Center
$21/members, $30/nonmembers
Kristen Zomman teaches ballet for motor
skills in young children ages 2 and up.
ksupan@stph.org or 985-898-4435

Cuddle Buddies
Thursdays, November 3, 10 and 17;
December 8 and 15 | 10:30-11 a.m.
STPH Parenting Center
$6/members, $12/nonmembers
Learning and support opportunity for
parents and social time for babies with
songs, stories and playtime. ksupan@stph.org or 985-898-4435

Toddling Time
November 2, 9 and 16
STPH Parenting Center
$15/per child
Parents and their children are invited to play
and learn together through music and
movement, arts and crafts and storytime.
ksupan@stph.org 985-898-4435

For the Grown-Ups

Living Tobacco Free
Wednesdays, November 2–December 14
Noon to 1 p.m. or 5:30-6:30 p.m.
STPH Conference Room
Free
Gain the tools and resources you
need to quit smoking for good.
985-898-4468

Sister Survivors
Support Group
1st Tuesday or each month
7 p.m.
Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center at
St. Tammany Parish Hospital | Free
Support group open to any female
cancer survivor, whether currently
receiving treatment or has completed
treatment for any cancer diagnosis.
jfreudenberger@marybird.com or
985-276-6832

Grief Support Group
1st Wednesday of each month
3 p.m.
STPH Madisonville
Conference Room
For adults who have suffered loss.
dvanek@stph.org

1 in 4 St. Tammany
2nd Tuesday of each month
6 p.m.
STPH Women’s Pavillion
Conference Room
Supports mothers, fathers and their families
that have experienced a pregnancy or infant
loss. jsims@stph.org

Angels of Light
Thursday, December 8
5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | STPH Front Lobby
Honor a loved one by purchasing a
tribute angel for the Tree for Life at
the 2016 Angels of Light benefitting
St. Tammany Hospital Hospice.
Visit sthfoundation.org/angels or
985-898-4141

#GivingTuesday
Tuesday, November 29
24 hours of giving
#GivingTuesday is an international day
of giving. Give back to the community
by showing your support to St. Tammany
Hospital Foundation.
Visit sthfoundation.org/GivingTuesday
to make a donation on Nov. 29.