

Spirit of Health

SPRING 2024

A CHI Saint Joseph Health publication focused on building healthier communities.

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Dear Spirit of Health readers,



Each May, we celebrate our nurses for National Nurses Day on May 6, and throughout National Nurses Week, which culminates on Florence Nightingale's birthday on May 12. You may remember that Florence Nightingale is the founder of modern nursing. We celebrate all of our caregivers during that same time frame for Health Care Week.

In this issue of *Spirit of Health*, we continue that celebration, with a special focus on our patient care teams and the innovations they are leading within our hospitals and clinics to enhance the high quality care provided to our patients.

Technology offers new ways to care for patients and free up our teams to be able to spend more time with them. In addition to virtually integrated care at Saint Joseph Hospital, we are providing virtual sitters to be with patients who might be at risk of falling and off-site telemetry monitoring to allow our bedside nursing more time to spend with patients.

We recognize that our care teams go beyond our nurses and have focused on elevating patient care through continued education for our patient care assistants through a State Registered Nurse Aide (SRNA) program at Bluegrass Community and Technical College after they join our ministry. We are also investing in the aides who provide care in our clinics by providing scholarships for the CMA program through Mercy College of Health

Sciences. We've expanded the role paramedics play in our emergency department, recognizing their abilities to care for patients who need immediate care.

We also have established programs to support new nurses, with a new nurse residency program and a nurse extern program while they are finishing their degrees. That support continues for all of our caregivers through continuing education and tuition reimbursement, as well as scholarships through our Foundation.

To address the chronic nursing shortage across the country, we have partnered with several colleges and universities to educate the next generation of caregivers. Our latest partnership is with Lincoln Memorial University, which will begin offering an RN to BSN program in Lexington this fall.

Finally, we're proud to introduce you to three dedicated caregivers at various points in their nursing careers — Connie Charles, Lee Stamper and Katie Mattingly. They represent humankindness each and every day as they live our values focused on our mission to improve the health of our communities.

At CHI Saint Joseph Health, we are committed to extending humankindness in every encounter because we believe that human connection and humanity holds the power to heal. Thank you for allowing us to provide that connection in your health care journey.

Anthony (Tony) A. Houston, EdD, FACHE
Market President
CHI Saint Joseph Health

On the Cover:

Kami Poole-Warder, MBA, RN, CCM, NE-BC, vice president of patient care services at Saint Joseph East, market education and professional practice

Photo by Shaun Ring

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Spirit of Health Spring 2024

Mary Branham
Senior Director, Marketing & Communications

Chris Schmitt
Marketing Director



Centralized Heart Monitoring

Trained telemetry technicians help protect the hearts of hospitalized patients at Saint Joseph Hospital from more than 1,000 miles away.

Until last spring, members of the medical staff at Saint Joseph Hospital were responsible for monitoring patients' telemetry — a steady flow of information about heart function transmitted by a machine at the bedside — from the nurses' station, a busy environment with plenty of potential for distraction. Now, our on-site team has off-site help.

In April 2023, Saint Joseph Hospital began using a central monitoring unit (CMU) located in Phoenix, Arizona, to track telemetry. Telemetry technicians in the CMU focus solely on detecting problems with patients' hearts.

Heart Help

The CMU team in Phoenix keeps a close eye on patients' cardiac information.

"Patients requiring continuous monitoring of their heart rate and rhythm are candidates to be monitored remotely from the CMU," said Connie Charles, MSN, RN, CCRN, director of nursing at Saint Joseph Hospital. "Technicians in the CMU are trained to recognize cardiac arrhythmias that cause the heart to beat too fast, too slow or irregularly."

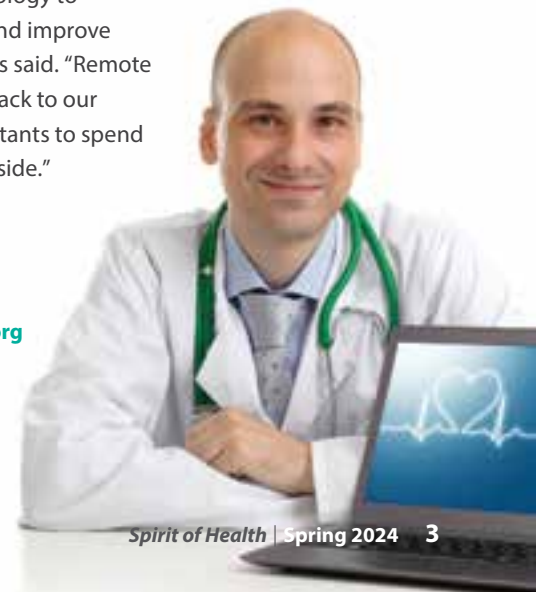


Connie Charles, MSN, RN, CCRN

When a technician detects a heart rhythm abnormality, they notify the nursing team at the hospital.

"The CMU uses technology to keep our patients safe and improve communication," Charles said. "Remote monitoring gives time back to our nurses and nursing assistants to spend with patients at the bedside."

For information about the patient experience in the hospital, visit [CHISaintJosephHealth.org](https://www.chisaintjosephhealth.org) and select "Patients & Guests."



Side by Side for Safety

At Saint Joseph Hospital, patients at risk of falling aren't alone, even when no one else is in the room. A virtual companion helps them stay safe.

While hospitalized, some patients with a high fall score — an indicator of vulnerability to falling — or who are prone to confusion share their room with a virtual companion. Provided by a virtual care company, the virtual companion is a tall, wheeled device equipped with a camera and microphone. Attendants at a central monitoring hub in Phoenix, Arizona, observe patients 24/7 to ensure they don't get into potentially dangerous situations.

"Imagine an invisible safety perimeter around a patient's bed," said Cathy Lowe, DNP, MBA, RN, CEN, vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer at Saint Joseph Hospital. "If, for example, the virtual attendant sees the patient place their foot outside the perimeter, they can remind the patient through the virtual companion to put their leg back in bed."



Cathy Lowe, DNP, MBA, RN, CEN

Reducing Falls

If a patient doesn't follow instructions, the virtual attendant can activate an alarm that prompts hospital staff to visit the room. The unit's camera is inactive during sensitive times, such as when staff are helping a patient with personal hygiene.

"Our 12 units have helped reduce preventable falls," Lowe said. "These devices provide another layer of safety for patients."

Visit [CHISaintJosephHealth.org](https://www.chisaintjosephhealth.org) and choose "Patients & Guests" then "Patient Safety" for more information about how we keep patients safe at our ministries.



Fostering a Commitment to Nursing

At CHI Saint Joseph Health, we hire great nurses. Then we help them continuously improve.

During the pandemic, 100,000 nurses left the profession. For nurses looking to develop their careers, CHI Saint Joseph Health offers the opportunity to learn from experienced nurses who stayed.

“Nurses are motivated to serve and succeed in their professional careers,” said Andrea Holecek, EdD, MSN, MBA, RN, NE-BC, CENP, FACHE, vice president of patient care services at Saint Joseph Berea, Saint Joseph London and Saint Joseph Mount Sterling. “If we don’t encourage and support nurses, they’ll move on to other organizations that will.”

Here are a few ways we’re helping our nurses thrive, so you receive the best care.



Andrea Holecek, EdD, MSN, MBA, RN, NE-BC, CENP, FACHE

A Supported Transition

In May 2023, CHI Saint Joseph Health launched a new nurse residency program. This program targets all nurses who have less than a year of hospital-based experience.

Following a week-long orientation, nurses take assessments to ensure they have basic essential skills. They also attend classes, such as:

- Heart rhythm
- Telemetry (real-time patient monitoring)
- Workplace violence

With these fundamentals in place, new nurses head to their hospital units. There, from day 1, they work alongside an assigned preceptor. These preceptors mentor new nurses, answer questions and act as a sounding board.

Nurses work alongside their preceptors for 18 to 24 weeks. During that time, nurses in the program attend a four-hour class each week to learn more about patient care within their specific departments.

"Whether the nurse is coming straight out of nursing school or from a nonhospital environment, the transition to hospital care is unique," said Kami Poole-Warder, MBA, RN, CCM, NE-BC, vice president of patient care services at Saint Joseph East, market education and professional practice. "The nurse residency program supports nurses through that transition, helping them gain confidence and skills to provide the best possible patient care."

Education Encouraged

Along with in-house education, we support nurses seeking to enhance their knowledge through advanced degrees and certifications. Such support has wide-reaching benefits.

"The more educated a health care organization is overall, the better the outcomes for the patients, employees and company," Holecsek said. "By helping our nurses develop professionally, we're serving our community."

Earning advanced degrees and certifications is more than an investment in time. To lighten the financial load, CHI Saint Joseph Health provides reimbursement in the following amounts:

- **\$500 for professional maintenance.** This annual reimbursement can go toward professional organization fees, continuing education credits and other activities that help nurses maintain certification. Part-time nurses can receive up to \$250 annually.
- **\$5,250 of tuition reimbursement.** Through our affiliation with various colleges and universities, nurses enjoy discounted tuition programs. Additionally, our foundations provide scholarship opportunities to make it easier to earn career-advancing degrees.

Portfolio of Professionalism

We do our best to recognize nurses who push themselves to excellence. To keep up with their efforts, we encourage nurses to submit a portfolio of their ongoing professional and academic efforts. A team reviews their portfolios and awards monetary bonuses based on the nurses' efforts.

Everything in the portfolio should demonstrate a commitment to the nursing profession, as well as the nurse's community and patients. Items that fit into these portfolios include:

- Attainment of academic degrees and certifications
- Peer teaching and mentoring
- Projects to improve patient care quality
- Volunteer hours
- Written and published articles

"We want our nurses to be aware of the latest practices and policies and feel empowered to provide the best possible care," Poole-Warder said. "This support helps our nurses feel valued. When they feel valued, they stay here for years to come, growing their careers and caring for their community."

The Clinical Command Center

If you're admitted to a CHI Saint Joseph Health facility, getting to the right bed should be no problem. Thanks to the clinical command center, it's a seamless process.

"The main goal of the clinical command center is to put the right patient at the right place at the right time," said Megan Murrey, AGACNP-BC, FNP-BC, market director of patient access and logistics at CHI Saint Joseph Health. "It's really a game changer."



Megan Murrey,
AGACNP-BC,
FNP-BC

Central Intelligence

When patients need care at one of our seven hospitals, your provider calls the clinical command center. All day every day, as many as six nurses provide the following services:

- Matching patient needs to the right facility and proper room
- Language services for patients whose first language is not English
- Telehealth/virtual care to perform medical examinations remotely

In late 2022, CHI Saint Joseph Health shifted leadership of the clinical command center. It is now run by a nurse practitioner and supported by a staff of nurses, most with more than 30 years of bedside experience.

Nurses with such a high level of expertise field calls for the hospitalist team, which allows our hospital-based providers to focus on their patients.

Fast Service, More Care

Thanks to the innovation of the clinical command center, more patients get where they need to be, faster than ever. In 2023, CHI Saint Joseph Health facilities served twice as many patients as the year before.

"Our nurses are calm and smart and help connect patients with the right providers and facilities," Murrey said. "They have a wealth of knowledge they use to serve patients and providers every day."

Not just for nurses, CHI Saint Joseph Health has growth opportunities for patient care technicians and experts in the pharmacy, imaging and beyond.



Are you interested in joining our team? Scan the QR code to learn about our open positions.

Investing in Your Future

CHI Saint Joseph Health is dedicated to helping current and aspiring nurses reach their full potential.

With hospitals across Kentucky facing nursing shortages, connecting nursing students to needed resources has never been more important. At CHI Saint Joseph Health, we offer a variety of opportunities for aspiring nurses.

"If you are considering enrolling in school as a new or returning student, we want you to know there are opportunities available," said Melanie Jackson, DNP, MA, RN, CNEcl, academic placement liaison, system clinical education at CHI Saint Joseph Health. "We are invested in giving you the opportunity to succeed in your academic pursuits."



Melanie Jackson, DNP, MA, RN, CNEcl

Understanding the Options

A range of opportunities is available for both current CHI Saint Joseph Health employees who are interested in furthering their careers as well as nursing students. Options include:

- Tuition reimbursement — Full-time employees are eligible for up to \$5,250 per calendar year toward nursing or other work-related courses.
- Scholarships — Multiple scholarships are available to aspiring nurses through CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations.
- Partnerships with universities — We have partnered with many academic institutions to offer our employees special opportunities, including an academic-practice partnership with Lincoln Memorial University. Starting this fall, 48 seats will be available in the accelerated Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) program in Lexington.

"We are forward-thinking," Jackson said. "We're looking to see how we can better serve our community in everything we do."

For more information, contact Melanie Jackson at melanie.jackson900@commonspirit.org.



A Head Start on Hands-On Care

Nursing students put their knowledge into practice at CHI Saint Joseph Health.

The CHI Saint Joseph Health paid externship program allows licensed practical nurse (LPN) and registered nurse (RN) students who are actively enrolled and are in good standing to enrich their studies with on-the-job training and experience.

"Once nursing students have completed their fundamentals class, we can hire them to work alongside an experienced nurse," said Kami Poole-Warder, MBA, RN, CCM, NE-BC, vice president of patient care services at Saint Joseph East, market education and professional practice. "Then, we can help them find a position within CHI Saint Joseph Health upon graduation."



Kami Poole-Warder, MBA, RN, CCM, NE-BC

Originally a summer program, the externship program is now available year-round. Additionally, the program allows busy nursing students to base their work schedule on their course load.

Finding the Right Fit

Although a high level of skill is needed for all areas of nursing, positions are varied. For example, providing care in the emergency room differs from working in cancer care. As a part of the CHI Saint Joseph Health externship program, nursing students have the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of several areas of care, helping them discover their ideal nursing role before they graduate.

"We're dedicated to making sure nursing students have the opportunity for additional hands-on practice and support," Poole-Warder said. "Nurses are special to our organization. We're here to support them and their professional growth throughout their career."

To get started, visit CHISaintJosephHealth.org/Nurse-Externship.



Our Spirit of Service

At CHI Saint Joseph Health, each caregiver leads as an embodiment of our values and faith. Many of our caregivers, including those featured here, answer the call to serve with compassion, integrity and humankindness.

From working the family farm in Beattyville to being a nurse in open-heart surgery recovery, Connie Charles MSN, RN, CCRN, director of nursing at Saint Joseph Hospital, has always enjoyed helping others. Now, she makes decisions that impact all aspects of patient care.

Read her story on page 8.

Interested in joining our team? **Scan the QR code to learn about our open positions.**



Sharing Knowledge, Helping Others

Connie Charles, MSN, RN, CCRN, director of nursing at Saint Joseph Hospital, grew up in Beattyville, where helping her father care for sick animals on the family farm kindled her interest in science and medicine. Those experiences helped lead her to a career in nursing.

“I decided to become a nurse because I wanted to help people in their most vulnerable and unexpected moments,” Charles said. “The nursing profession is gratifying to me because the care I provide can make a patient feel safe and comfortable during otherwise scary times when health issues arise.”

Caring With an Open Heart and Mind

A member of the Saint Joseph Hospital team for 17 years, Charles has served in a variety of patient care and leadership roles. Her background is in cardiothoracic vascular intensive care, and she spent much of her career caring for patients recovering from open-heart surgery and other procedures or conditions in the intensive care unit.

“My favorite type of nursing is open-heart surgery recovery,” Charles said. “I love to learn and challenge my knowledge base, and open-heart surgery recovery requires constant learning. I also love being a nursing leader and sharing my knowledge with those around me so they, too, can learn and grow.”

Leading With ‘the Human Connection’

Before becoming director of nursing in 2022, Charles served in other leadership roles, including charge nurse, supervisor and nursing manager. She credits her experiences in both the bedside and administrative sides of nursing for preparing her for her current position.

Charles makes decisions that affect nearly all aspects of patient care. She hires new team members, develops business plans and goals for her departments, and implements new policies and procedures, while ensuring patients receive safe, high-quality services.

“As a leader, my vision for nursing at Saint Joseph Hospital is to advocate for delivering the right care at the right time, and continue practicing human caring when the world around us seems to be wandering away from the human connection,” Charles said. “May we continue listening to our

For Connie Charles, the path to a leadership role in nursing began during her childhood on an eastern Kentucky farm.

patients and their families as we place them at the center of our medical planning and decision-making.”

Despite her busy life, Charles remains close to her roots. In her spare hours, when she’s not spending time with loved ones, hiking in the Red River Gorge or volunteering with a nonprofit that provides free, pop-up health care clinics, she enjoys working on her family farm. Her path has come full circle.

“**What I most value about working at Saint Joseph Hospital is our grounding in faith-based principles. My faith is very important to me and my source of strength on the hard days.**”

— Connie Charles, MSN, RN, CCRN, director of nursing at Saint Joseph Hospital



Nurse Extern to ER Nurse

Lee Stamper, RN, turned midlife malaise into a new career.

For 20 years, Lee Stamper, RN, had worked with money.

“My wife, her mother, my mother and I were partners in an income tax preparation business until we sold it in 2018,” Stamper said. “I was tired of everything financial, and I wanted a career where I wasn’t stuck in an office. I knew something had to change.”

The native Kentuckian and Somerset resident was weighing his career options when two things happened: His mother got sick, and the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

“I decided to go back to school, and I knew I wanted a career where I could help people,” Stamper said. “I met a lot of wonderful people caring for my mom as her health was failing, and that inspired me to pursue a career in nursing.”

College to CHI Saint Joseph Health

Stamper enrolled in Somerset Community College’s nursing program.

“I chose the Laurel campus in London so I could graduate six months earlier, and we did a lot of our clinicals at Saint Joseph London,” Stamper said. “That’s where I fell in love with the facility.”

Stamper joined the nurse externship program at CHI Saint Joseph Health as a float nurse in the summer of 2023. This chance to work alongside an experienced nurse while still in school helps nurses like Stamper find their path.

“I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to do when I graduated,” Stamper said. “Everyone I worked with was wonderful, but I fell in love with the ER.”

This past January, Stamper started a full-time job as an RN at Saint Joseph London. Stamper said the hands-on eight-week externship program cemented his desire to be a nurse, even as a much older student at 45.

“I didn’t have any background in clinical or hospital work, and others did, and I felt like I was a bit behind,” Stamper said. “The externship program helped bring me up to speed. Everyone I worked with was very encouraging and supportive.”

Off the Clock

When he’s not helping patients, Stamper is usually spending time with his wife and three children.



Photo by Mahan Multimedia

“I like to build gaming PCs with my youngest son,” Stamper said. “My family is my main hobby, so anything that they’re into, I’m into.”

Stamper also hopes his new, second career will last a long time.

“I’m looking forward to the future,” Stamper said. “I would encourage people to go after the career you want. It’s very rewarding.”

Interested in learning more about our nurse externship program?

Visit CHISaintJosephHealth.org/Nurse-Externship.

“ I enjoy the hustle and bustle and unpredictability of the ER.

I also love how everyone works as a team.”

— Lee Stamper, RN, Saint Joseph London

Taking Nursing to the Next Level

Katie Mattingly, BSN, RN, inpatient nursing supervisor at Flaget Memorial Hospital, is committed to serving patients and supporting patient care.

For Katie Mattingly, BSN, RN, the call to pursue nursing — and leadership — was simply in her blood.

“A family member and her husband were both nurses, and they helped guide me to the career path,” Mattingly said. “Once I got into the field, I kept getting placed in positions of leadership, such as being a charge nurse. Mentoring felt natural.”

A Professional Evolution

Mattingly launched her nursing career in 2011, when she began work as an LPN. One year later, with additional training, she moved into an RN role, steadily working her way up the nursing ranks at local health care facilities.

Throughout Mattingly’s nursing journey, one principle has remained consistent: She has always considered being an educator part of her job description.

“As nurses, we’re meeting patients and their families at different points in their lives —they have different backgrounds and different

education levels,” Mattingly said. “When patients don’t understand something, nurses are really great about bringing things to their level so they can understand.”

By 2016, Mattingly’s professional dedication had caught the attention of a neighboring health care facility, who reached out to her with an opportunity to become their director of nursing.

“After taking that position, my career snowballed into me being in other director, supervisory roles,” Mattingly said. “I’ve been doing that kind of work ever since.”

Leading by Example

In 2023, Mattingly joined the Flaget Memorial Hospital team, overseeing the intensive care unit (ICU), transitional care unit (TCU) and med-surg areas. In her role as inpatient nursing supervisor, she is responsible for ensuring that details such as bed placements and patient transitions are running smoothly. However, she also relishes the chance to roll up her sleeves at the bedside when needed.

“I like that I get to go on the floor and do hands-on tasks with the nurses, aides and patients. It goes a long way as a leader to show that you are willing to get in the trenches with your team,” Mattingly said. “I still get to utilize my skills and also have the ability to step back and do the managerial aspect of my work and make a positive impact on the unit as a whole.”

During Her Downtime

When she is not working, Mattingly enjoys spending time with her husband and two children, ages 4 and 7. In addition to engaging with her kids’ activities, Mattingly enjoys gardening, canning, and reading adventure and mystery novels.

“ For our patients to get the best care possible, we as leadership must take into account everything that our employees need to do their jobs well.”

— Katie Mattingly, BSN, RN, inpatient nursing supervisor at Flaget Memorial Hospital



Photo by Mahan Multimedia

Fast Track Your Success

If you want to work in health care, CHI Saint Joseph Health can help you get started.

Patient care technicians are essential caregivers who assist patients with daily care needs, such as bathing or feeding, to support healing, safety and wellness. The new State Registered Nurse Aide (SRNA) program at Saint Joseph Hospital helps current and newly hired patient care technicians advance their skills and careers.

“With the SRNA program, patient care technicians gain more in-depth knowledge,” said Kami Poole-Warder, MBA, RN, CCM, NE-BC, vice president of patient care services at Saint Joseph East, market education and professional practice. “This extra support and training enhances patient experience and the experience of our patient care technicians, as well.”

Opening Doors to Care

The SRNA program offers an exciting opportunity to start a health care career without the barriers of cost or time that come with a traditional educational path. In the program, training hours are paid and completed during regularly scheduled work hours.

At Saint Joseph Hospital, new and seasoned patient care technicians without a certification can enroll in the nursing assistant course at Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC). After completing the course, they’re ready to take the exam and hands-on skills test to become a certified SRNA and advance their career to the next level.

Explore careers with CHI Saint Joseph Health at CHISaintJosephHealth.org/careers.



Going Above and Beyond in an Emergency

At CHI Saint Joseph Health, critical care paramedics provide integrated emergency care.

At most places, paramedics are health care professionals who act as first responders. At Saint Joseph Hospital, critical care paramedics have an expanded role within the emergency department of the hospital.

“By valuing our paramedics’ abilities within our emergency rooms, we recognize that they are a multi-utility resource with a wide variety of expertise and knowledge,” said Austin Roush, market director of paramedicine and EMS liaison at CHI Saint Joseph Health. “This approach has led to a strong team of clinicians and cultivated a community approach to the patients we serve.”



Austin Roush

Forging New Bonds

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, the team at Saint Joseph Hospital knew changes needed to be made.

“To figure out how to navigate through this challenging time, we began reimagining the health care workforce, while ensuring that we didn’t compromise the high level of care being provided,” Roush said. “This led us to explore ways to elevate our paramedics by providing an educational path to become critical care paramedics endorsed by the state.”

Paramedics with this certification can provide an array of critical care services within the hospital’s emergency department.

“This has brought a multidisciplinary approach that we can’t imagine our emergency departments without,” Roush said. “We will continue to make a difference in the lives we serve.”

To learn more about emergency services at CHI Saint Joseph Health, visit CHISaintJosephHealth.org/Emergency-Care.



How We Serve



TREE OF REMEMBRANCE:
In December, Saint Joseph Mount Sterling held a tree dedication ceremony for family members in memory of Pam Molton, a caregiver who worked in Respiratory Services.



WEAR RED DAY: Teams across CHI Saint Joseph Health, including Saint Joseph London, Saint Joseph Berea and the Saint Joseph Medical Group, celebrated Wear Red Day in February to raise awareness about heart health for women.



TEAM-BUILDING THROUGH GIVING:
CHI Saint Joseph Health's clinical informatics team delivered holiday cheer to students at Russell Cave Elementary School in December. The team made holiday cards and goody bags for every student as part of a team building event.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE:
In November, the team at Saint Joseph London celebrated its report card of an "A" grade for safety from The Leapfrog Group.



NEW NUCLEAR MEDICINE CAMERA: Also in November, Saint Joseph Berea hosted a press conference for Congressman Andy Barr during which he officially announced the awarding of \$350,000 to fund a new cardiac-focused nuclear medicine camera to provide patients with high quality cardiac imaging for Saint Joseph Berea. Congressman Barr secured the funding from the FY 2023 Community Project Funding process for the hospital.





GIVING BACK: Across Kentucky, CHI Saint Joseph Health awarded more than \$355,000 through the CommonSpirit Health Community Health Improvement Grants program, which was open to nonprofit organizations that address the following priorities — substance use disorders, mental health and mental disorders, and weight status, physical activity and nutrition — through projects planned for the next calendar year. Organizations receiving grants are Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest and St. Vincent de Paul Outreach Ministries from Flaget Memorial Hospital; Berea Home Village from Saint Joseph Berea; Kentucky Communities Economic Opportunity Council (KCEOC) Community Action Partnership at Knox County Public Schools from Saint Joseph London; DuBois Community Center and the Gateway Regional Arts Center from Saint Joseph Mount Sterling; Centro de San Juan Diego, Community Inspired Lexington, the Hope Center, LexArts, Refuge for Women and YMCA of Central Kentucky from Saint Joseph Hospital and Saint Joseph East.



CHRISTMAS GIVING: Caregivers from across CHI Saint Joseph Health adopted families to provide a merry Christmas for members of the communities we serve.



CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations have been providing scholarships for caregivers across the ministry for years. Pictured are some of the Saint Joseph Hospital caregivers who have received funds to continue their education.

A Foundation for Growth

CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations support more than new programs and buildings. They support health professionals' dreams.

Every day, health care moves forward. Staying on top of innovations takes hard work and ongoing education. To make the process more affordable, CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations provide scholarships to employees eager to grow their knowledge and careers.

Applicants receive scholarships based on their commitment to CHI Saint Joseph Health, priority of staffing needs, recommendation letters and strength of application. Between 35 and 50 team members receive scholarships every year.

"For decades, we've awarded scholarships to employees who wish to obtain a degree, certification or advanced credential," said Delaine Thiel, CFRE, vice president of philanthropy for CHI Saint Joseph Health. "Our program allows employees to grow their careers, while ensuring we provide the highest level of patient care."

Since launching more than 40 years ago, the scholarship program has helped hundreds advance their health careers and improve the care offered to you. Here's how these scholarships have helped three recipients better serve you.

Ready-to-Use Degree

Originally from northwest Ohio, Sara Thompson, RN, earned her nursing degree in 2002. She then provided emergency care, served in pulmonary rehabilitation and managed an intensive care unit before coming to Flaget Memorial Hospital in 2019.

Soon after coming onboard, she felt a need to continue her education. So, she applied to Western Governors University to earn her master's in health care leadership.

Initially, she was unsure how she would afford her education. She heard of scholarship opportunities through the Flaget Memorial Hospital Foundation but didn't know she would receive financial help. Committed to the process, she hunted for creative ways to afford tuition. Then she learned that the Foundation awarded her a \$3,000 scholarship.

"It was a huge relief," she said. "It really laid the groundwork for me to continue and complete my degree."

Thompson completed her degree in July 2022. She's now director of nursing over the birth center, float team and house managers.

Throughout her program, she gained knowledge with real-world application. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, part of her coursework involved developing action plans for a global pandemic. Additionally, her coursework taught her how to transition to new electronic medical records (EMR) systems. This knowledge was soon put to use, as Flaget Memorial Hospital was in the process of adopting a new EMR system.

"The scholarship was a true blessing," Thompson said. "Without those extra funds, I might not have been able to complete my schooling as quickly. My scholarship had an immediate effect on my staff and the patients we serve."

Born for Health Care

Joshua Holland, BSN, RN, manager of the emergency department and outpatient services at Saint Joseph London, was destined to work in the family business: health care. His mother, father and aunts were all nurses or EMTs. Their influence sparked his passion for health care and commitment to serving others.

"I've always felt a deep desire to make a tangible impact on people's lives," said the Kentucky native.

Saint Joseph London helped him begin fulfilling that desire in 2019. While finishing nursing school, Holland completed an externship in the hospital's emergency department (ED). Soon after, he began his nursing career in the ED.

Eager to learn more, he earned his bachelor's degree in 2022. Then he set his sights on receiving his master's degree as a family nurse practitioner. The degree will provide increased autonomy and salary. Both appeal to this married father of two.

While he looks forward to the future benefits, making it through school is no easy task. He's balancing a full-time master's program with managing the ED and taking time for his family.

"I just take one day at a time and remind myself how blessed I am," Holland said. "I feel honored and grateful to have been selected as a recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship from the Saint Joseph London Foundation. Advancing in the medical field comes with student debt,

but this scholarship has truly lightened my burden, so I can focus on the most important aspect of my education: learning."

Caring Like Mom

Austie Stewart, RN, couldn't wait to start her health care career. Inspired by her mother, Stewart became a certified nurse assistant or CNA as a teenager.

"My mom was an RN, and everything about her job interested me," Stewart said. "Seeing her put on her scrubs and making a difference was awesome."

After getting her associate degree, Stewart became a pharmacy technician. A decade later, she still dreamed of becoming a nurse. She applied to Morehead State University's nursing program and was accepted in 2022. At the same time, she came on board the pharmacy team at Saint Joseph Mount Sterling.

While pursuing her RN degree, Stewart worked and studied full time. Her leader in the pharmacy encouraged her along the way and worked around her schedule. As soon as she graduated in December 2023, she took a position as an ICU nurse.

Now, she interacts with patients every day. She has the same positive effect on patients as her mother, providing quality nursing care and offering help in the pharmacy when needed. Her journey required a lot of hard work. Receiving nearly \$7,000 in scholarships made the path a little bit smoother.

"There aren't many places that support their staff like this, and I couldn't have asked for anything better to elevate my career," Stewart said. "I don't know what I would have done without the scholarship."

Contributing to the scholarship fund is one way you can positively impact health care in our community. Visit SupportCHISaintJosephHealth.org or call 859.313.1705 to learn how you can support the CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations scholarship fund.

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Saint Joseph Hospital
One Saint Joseph Drive
Lexington, KY 40504



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