

Spirit of Health

FALL 2024

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



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As a 24-year member of the CHI Saint Joseph Health family, it is my honor to greet you from the pages of this issue of *Spirit of Health*. I am privileged to be serving as the interim market

president and to be introducing you to this issue of our community magazine.

In this issue, we share incredible advancements in neurosciences, particularly in the care of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Early diagnosis can open doors to additional treatment that can prevent rapid progression. As one of our neurologists, Dr. Fred Odago, says, the earlier patients are diagnosed, the more likely they are to benefit from newer medications that may prevent a sudden decline.

There has been rapid advancement in neuroscience over the past few years, and Saint Joseph continues to be a leader in the treatment of neurological conditions. Dr. R. Christopher Spears, a neurosurgeon and medical director for stroke services at Saint Joseph Hospital, shares insights on neuroscience and the focus on individual patient care at Saint Joseph.

Our neurologists treat a wide range of neurological conditions and remain on the cutting edge of treatment for conditions ranging from headaches and migraines to epilepsy and strokes. Do you know the signs of a stroke? We

are proud to serve our communities with hospitals certified as Primary and Advanced Primary Stroke Centers by The Joint Commission, which indicates swift, high-quality care. Following treatment, rehabilitation is often necessary to help patients achieve their goals and return to living their lives.

As always, we are thankful for the work of the CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations and their work to help fund projects and patient care that align with our vision of a healthier future for all, especially those who are vulnerable. In this issue, we share how the WHAS Crusade for Children has benefited countless children throughout the communities we serve.

Finally, it is my pleasure to introduce you to three of our caregivers who truly are humankindness in action. Felicia Hairston, Jenni Hughes and Irina Dulina all play different roles in our ministry, but they have each found ways to impact the lives of others in different ways.

We are proud to have many dedicated caregivers sharing their talents and humankindness throughout our communities. Thank you for entrusting us with your health care needs.

Christy Spitzer
Interim Market President
CHI Saint Joseph Health

On the Cover:

Fred Odago, MD, neurologist at CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group – Neurology in Lexington
Photo by Shaun Ring

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Children's Lives

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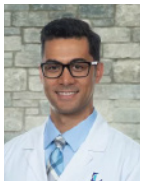
Mary Branham
Director, Marketing & Communications

Get to Know Neuroscience

The only constant about caring for diseases of the nervous system is that the field is always evolving. That's exciting for both practitioners and patients.



In health care, neuroscience encompasses two main types of specialists: neurologists and neurosurgeons. Both treat conditions of the brain, spinal cord and nerves. The main difference between the specialists is that neurosurgeons perform surgery, whereas neurologists offer nonsurgical treatments.



R. Christopher Spears, MD

Today, science is revealing new links between these specialties.

"There's growing overlap between neurology and psychiatry," said **R. Christopher Spears, MD**, neurosurgeon and medical director for stroke services at Saint Joseph Hospital. "That's because we're learning about new biological causes for psychiatric diseases."

Advancing Fast

The study and treatment of nervous system conditions has a long history, but recent years have seen rapid advancement in neuroscience.

"Just during my seven-year training, which took place within the past decade, we started performing surgeries for conditions we hadn't previously treated surgically," Dr. Spears said. "New medications are developed every couple of years. It's a rapidly changing field that requires us to keep up with new literature and research."

Innovation in Practice

The changing nature of neuroscience is on display every day at Saint Joseph Hospital, where specialists treat brain tumors, strokes, compression of the spinal cord and nerve roots, demyelinating diseases, such as multiple sclerosis, and more. The hospital was the first in Kentucky to use intraoperative CT for navigation during surgeries for brain and spinal tumors. This allows neurosurgeons to track procedures in real time.

Neurosurgeons at Saint Joseph Hospital perform many spine procedures using minimally invasive techniques, which allow patients to recover faster and with less pain. The most common minimally invasive procedure Dr. Spears performs is to treat a herniated disc — a damaged disc pressing against the spinal cord or nerve roots and causing pain.

"Disc herniation is a relatively common but extraordinarily painful problem," Dr. Spears said. "Many patients can't function because of the pain. Traditionally, we performed herniated disc surgery through open incisions in the back. More and more, however, we're taking a minimally invasive approach to this surgery. We reach the disc by placing a slender tube through a small incision, and we use a microscope to perform the surgery."

Has your primary care provider recommended seeing a neurologist or neurosurgeon? To find the specialist you need, visit [CHISaintJosephHealth.org/find-a-provider](https://www.chisaintjosephhealth.org/find-a-provider).

“ Compared with teams at extremely large centers, our neurologists and neurosurgeons are much more focused on individual patient care. Our patients can pick whom they want to see, and all our physicians are deeply involved in their patients' care. I often talk with patients by phone to give test results or discuss imaging or treatments after seeing them in clinic.”

— R. Christopher Spears, MD, neurosurgeon and medical director for stroke services at Saint Joseph Hospital

Expert Care for Aging Brains

Specialists at CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group – Neurology evaluate patients for cognitive decline and look for signs that memory issues could be symptoms of another problem.



Photo by Shaun Ring

Aging-related cognitive changes do not typically impact your daily life. Forgetting a person's name or facts about them, misplacing your reading glasses, not remembering a conversation your spouse said happened last year or having trouble recalling significant dates or passwords are normal signs of an aging brain.

"Multiple things can contribute to cognitive issues, such as medications," said **Fred Odago, MD**, neurologist at CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group – Neurology. "However, Alzheimer's is the most common cause of memory loss in the elderly."



Alam Khan, MD

Factors of Forgetfulness

Around 40% of people experience some memory loss after they turn 65. Others may live to their 90s with strong memories of events both recent and long ago.

"It's estimated we lose 7 cubic centimeters of brain tissue every year after age 65," said **Alam Khan, MD**, neurologist at CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group –

Neurology. "You also lose a percentage of cerebral blood flow, which contributes to cell death. And all of this is normal aging — it's how God made us."

This type of forgetfulness is frustrating but not a sign of possible dementia. However, a specialist should evaluate more significant changes to your memory.

"Family members will report a patient forgetting things that were just said or repeating questions they had already asked," Dr. Odago said. "Maybe a patient is starting to struggle with executive function at work and can no longer complete tasks on time."

"A person with Alzheimer's will also struggle with completing complex tasks, such as balancing a checkbook," Dr. Khan added. "They may get lost in familiar places or have trouble finding the correct words when speaking, instead of simply forgetting names."

Behavioral changes such as mood swings or increased aggression can also suggest dementia.

The Next Level of Concern

If you suspect failing memory or cognitive changes in yourself or a loved one, it's important to seek a prompt assessment.

"Alzheimer's disease is not reversible, but the goal with treatment is to prevent a rapid progression," Dr. Odago said. "When patients



Fred Odago, MD, neurologist at CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group – Neurology in Lexington

have a stroke, we talk about how, 'Time is brain.' This approach should be the same with regard to memory loss. The earlier patients are diagnosed, the more likely they are to benefit from newer medications that may prevent a sudden decline."

Finding the Right Treatment

The specialists at CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group – Neurology endeavor to provide leading-edge treatment for Alzheimer's disease and other conditions, such as mild cognitive impairment (MCI), vascular cognitive impairment, Lewy body dementia and Parkinson's disease.

"We go above and beyond many clinics with the latest medication therapies and research," Dr. Odago said. "We also treat the patient as a whole instead of just treating the disease. We will always listen to you and try to address your concerns."

There's another crucial reason not to delay seeing a neurologist for memory or personality changes. Some causes of dementia or cognitive problems are reversible and may be treatable.

"Pseudo-dementia caused by depression can be very common in older people who are socially isolated," Dr. Khan said. "We have

Early Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease

- Aggression
- Confusion or memory loss that disrupts daily activities
- Forgetting dates or locations
- Getting lost
- Misplacing things
- Personality or mood changes
- Poor hygiene
- Poor judgment
- Problems handling money
- Repeating questions
- Trouble with daily tasks

8 Tips for Better Brain Health

You can't stop getting older, but you can take steps for better cognitive health as you age.

1. Eat a healthy diet.
2. Get enough sleep every night.
3. Keep your brain active.
4. Limit or avoid alcohol.
5. Maintain healthy blood pressure and blood sugar levels.
6. Quit smoking.
7. Stay physically active.
8. Stay social and engaged in your community.

Your CHI Saint Joseph Health primary care provider can offer more tips for better brain health.

a neuropsychologist in our practice who specializes in detecting neurodegenerative dementias versus dementia triggered by depression or other mental health issues."

Reduce Your Risk

"Brain health is often equal to our general physical health," Dr. Khan said. "If you have untreated risk factors for poor health, such as depression, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, smoking or an alcohol use disorder, you are at greater risk for cognitive decline and dementia."

"We tell our patients that there are lifestyle modifications that can help limit their risk of dementia," Dr. Odago said. "Eating a healthy diet and getting plenty of exercise is number one. Adequate sleep is number two. Plenty of social engagement is number three. Number four is mental engagement, such as reading books or working puzzles — using that mind you have, so you will be less likely to lose it."

If you are concerned about memory loss or other concerning symptoms, contact CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group – Neurology at 859.296.1922.



Help for Headaches and Migraine

New treatment options for people with troublesome headaches and other symptoms.



Warren Chumley, MD

Headache pain is common with many causes but varies person to person, striking once or twice a year to every other day. Migraine is an often chronic condition that affects 12% of Americans with women three times as likely to have them as men. Migraine causes debilitating symptoms, such as vertigo and nausea in addition to an aching head.

“Severe, ongoing headaches are not a normal condition and need evaluation,” said **Warren Chumley, MD**, neurologist, CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group – Neurology. “Conservative treatment options can help reduce symptoms for people with migraine, and new medication options are game-changers.”

Treatment Has Changed

If you haven’t had treatment for migraine in years, new preventive and acute treatment options work better than ever before.

“I think these new medications for migraine live up to the hype,” Dr. Chumley said. “People can expect a reasonably increased quality of life, with 40% to 80% improvement in symptoms.”

The new class of medications has very few side effects, with less fatigue, weight gain and cognitive changes than the older medications. They also do not cause medication overuse headaches, and there is no known risk of stroke or heart attack, unlike with triptans.

“Migraine is a serious disabling condition,” Dr. Chumley said. “If treatment hasn’t been successful before, don’t give up. We can help you.”

If migraine or other types of headaches are impacting your life, a CHI Saint Joseph Health provider can help. Visit CHISaintJosephHealth.org/find-a-provider.

The Facts About Epilepsy

The common condition may not look like what you imagine.



Toufic Fakhoury, MD

Epilepsy, a brain disorder that causes seizures, affects around 3.5 million children and adults in the U.S. Epileptic seizures can look very different from person to person, which makes proper diagnosis essential.

“There are different types of seizures, and not all seizures are caused by epilepsy,” said

Toufic Fakhoury, MD, neurologist, Epilepsy Program, Saint Joseph Hospital. “There are also certain conditions that mimic seizures but are not brain disorders. The gold standard for making that differentiation is video EEG monitoring. At Saint Joseph Hospital, we provide that service in a specialized epilepsy monitoring unit.”

The Level 3 Difference

Up to 30% of patients seen at epilepsy centers for drug-resistant seizures actually do not have epilepsy. As a Level 3 epilepsy center, Saint Joseph Hospital offers advanced diagnostic and treatment options for all patients.

“As a Level 3 center, we provide detailed evaluation for patients with seizures,” Dr. Fakhoury said. “We have an outpatient clinic, an epilepsy monitoring unit, and neurodiagnostic imaging and testing.”

The epilepsy center also offers medication and some surgical treatment for seizures, including neurostimulation implants, which act like pacemakers for the brain.

“Epilepsy is the third most common neurological disorder in adults,” Dr. Fakhoury said. “We strive to reduce the stigma around this condition and provide successful treatment.”

Learn more about epilepsy treatment at CHI Saint Joseph Hospital at CHISaintJosephHealth.org/saint-joseph-hospital.



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.

Helping others has been a lifelong passion for Felicia Hairston, communications operator at Saint Joseph Hospital in Lexington. From a childhood dream of being a nurse to a career as an educator, Felicia now enjoys retirement, where she can volunteer full time.

Read her story on page 8.

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



Photo by Mahan Multimedia

A Passion to Help Others



Photo by Mahan Multimedia

“I don’t have any problem talking with people,” said Felicia Hairston, communications operator at Saint Joseph Hospital in Lexington, seriously understating her talents. “I just do a little bit of everything — whatever I can do to help a patient, that is what I do in this hospital. I’m just a very passionate person.”

Among her duties at the information desk she has staffed with a smile for the past two decades are helping visitors with patient room numbers, fielding phone calls with the hospital’s other operators, and even taking people to the various departments if they need assistance finding them.

“Whatever someone asks me to do, I’ll do it,” she said, “but then there’s other things I’ll just do on my own, because it’s just my personality.”

Called to Serve

Felicia worked at a bank for 17 years, then spent 24 as a paraeducator and paraprofessional at a Fayette County middle school. Her work at Saint Joseph Hospital began during the school summer breaks, then moved to full time once she retired from the school system.

“Those two jobs — kids and hospital — have always been my passion,” she said.

Growing up in West Virginia at the eastern Kentucky border, Felicia wanted to be a nurse but instead got married. Her brother is an obstetrician/gynecologist, and her mother is a nurse.

“I’m not a nurse, but I’m here to do my job, to fulfill what I’ve always wanted to do,” Felicia said.

At the information desk, she often encounters people who are stressed, fearful or anxious.

“I try to comfort them,” she said. “Sometimes you have to take a deep breath and you have to listen. That is the key: Listening to them, I can go from there and help them. I will hug them, and I’ll pray with them if I have to. That is how we were raised coming up in the Appalachian Mountains of Williamson, West Virginia and Pike County.”

Leading by Example

When Felicia worked in the middle school classrooms, while helping students, she made sure to work alongside them, to be an example.

“My language arts skills and my math are the bomb,” she said. “I did everything they did. That’s how you get the rapport with your kids. They have to see you doing things.”

She also coached the dance team and kept stats for the girls and boys basketball teams. Before she could work for the school district, she had to take a math class and then later earned her paraprofessional certificate through Bluegrass Community and Technical College.

“I was the oldest one in class — and I did it online,” she said proudly.

Felicia also has worked in patient experience at Saint Joseph Hospital, and is a familiar face in Spirit activities. For two weeks before Christmas, you’ll find her wearing a different seasonal costume each day. When Easter rolls around, the information desk is staffed by the Easter Bunny.

Just Keep Going

Her life has been marked by tragedy — her only grandson, Berkley, was killed by gunfire at 17. She and her daughter, Alisia Hairston, have established Berkley’s It Really Does Matter charity in his honor and to benefit children impacted by gun violence.

“What gives me comfort is knowing he’s in a better place,” Felicia said. “I know he’s looking on at everything we do.”

She is involved in Three Shades Pink, a fledgling business supporting breast cancer patients founded by her daughter and named after three sisters (Felicia’s mother and two aunts).

Felicia, who turned 75 in June, also attends church and participates in water aerobics and other exercise.

“I just try to keep myself busy,” she said. “I’m not ready to retire yet. I really believe it’s because I love my job, and I’m doing what I enjoy.”

Divine Intervention

In the right place at the right time, off-duty London nurse Jenni Hughes saved a baby's life. She didn't find out until afterward that it was kind of a family affair.

Jenni, operating room nursing supervisor at Saint Joseph London, was in the drive-thru lane at a local fast-food chain in May when the driver in front of her got out of her car and screamed that her baby was choking.

Identifying herself as a nurse, Jenni did the Heimlich maneuver on the toddler, and out popped a sucker that had broken off the stick and lodged in the child's airway. When the mom tearfully embraced Jenni and asked where she worked, she cried even harder.

It turns out Saint Joseph London had saved the mom's life when she began hemorrhaging after childbirth — with the same baby that Jenni had just helped.

But that's not all, Jenni said. She had gotten off work early that day, a rarity for her, with a sick daughter at home who had asked for a soda from the restaurant.

"I feel like that was absolutely divine intervention, that God just intended me to be there that day," Jenni said. "Right before Mother's Day, I was very thankful the baby was OK."

These kinds of connections are among the benefits of a community hospital like Saint Joseph London.

"Being in a small town," Jenni said, "you take care of your community, and you take care of each other."

Since 2021, she has supervised a staff of about 30 with seven operating rooms and is the board runner, sorting out doctors and rooms.

"The job can be stressful and challenging," Jenni said, "but it is rewarding knowing that you're helping people."

Before her current position, Jenni spent 14 years at Saint Joseph London as an emergency on-call nurse for endoscopy. She said she didn't mind being on call seven days a week: "I always felt like if I was called in, it's because someone needed me."

It's the same attitude that permeates her whole department.

"Everyone works together as a team," Jenni said. "There's been many a time when people are walking out the door, the day is over, and they call with a trauma or emergency case ... and everybody just turns right around and comes right back to the OR. Our No. 1 priority is that patient."

Jenni, who was Employee of the Month and nominated for Leader of the Year this year, along with receiving a DAISY Award, holds an associate degree in nursing and plans to return to school this year for a bachelor's degree. This is her 20th year in health care. She and her husband, Ricky, live in Corbin and have two children. She describes

them as busy with their work but "homebodies" in their spare time.

Jenni said she appreciates the Saint Joseph values and points to a practice followed by her department that exemplifies humankindness.

"We pray for our patients every morning when we have our morning huddle," she said. "I think that's important, and everybody will pray with their patients, if that's what they want."



Photo by Mahan Multimedia

Caring for Kids



Photo by Shaun Ring

Bubble wands, toy cars and fashion dolls are not something you associate with an emergency room — unless you are a pediatric patient at Saint Joseph Jessamine. There, ER technician Irina Dulina heads the Toy Chest project, created to bring comfort to scared kids who are there for treatment.

While her job duties range from rooming patients to assisting other staff, Irina shops for toys and other items to comfort kids in the Saint Joseph Jessamine ER. Nurse Tammy Goni founded the Toy Chest, receiving a DAISY Award for it, and Irina later took the helm. She often shops with her own funds; toys also are donated.

“A large number of our patients are children,” Irina explained, “and anyone who’s ever worked in a clinical setting knows it can be a scary experience for a child. Tammy and I recognized this and sought out ways to create a better patient experience for the little ones.”

Inside the Toy Chest

What started with the purchase of two tablet computers, on which kids could stream children’s programs, has grown to become the Toy Chest — large, handled bins filled with toys, tablets, stickers, coloring books and other items. A supply closet is filled with goodies.

“One of the organization’s values is compassion and helping those who are vulnerable,” Irina said. “Who could be in a more vulnerable state than somebody who’s experiencing a medical emergency they weren’t prepared for? So we try to comfort those in need of healing and display our care by listening and treating and just showing compassion daily. It is mesmerizing to see how a small act of kindness

as simple as providing a small toy to a child can change the entire patient experience.”

She also is involved within her community on behalf of Saint Joseph Jessamine, raising awareness of the hospital by participating at local events like the Kentucky Wine & Vine Festival, county fair and Kids Safety Day.

“I feel like having a good standing in the community is so important — one of our missions is to fight for the vulnerable and show compassion and show integrity. I feel like being out there and making ourselves known is how we do that,” she said.

Doing More for Others

Irina also volunteers with her church at a local food bank and has gone on mission trips in Central America aimed at helping children. As the oldest of seven in her large family, working with kids is a role that comes naturally.

Immigrating from Ukraine as a child, Irina moved to Kentucky in 2018 from California, where she was a volunteer at the University of California Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center, organizing events for pediatric cancer patients and their families. The experience “is what really drew me into health care,” Irina said. She’s been working at Saint Joseph Jessamine since 2022.

Besides being a CNA, Irina is certified as a phlebotomist and medical assistant. Because she always wants to do more for patients, she has applied to the nursing program at Bluegrass Community and Technical College.

Why Stroke Symptoms Can't Wait

When stroke symptoms start, so does a ticking clock.



A stroke robs the brain of what it needs most: oxygen-rich blood.

"The most common cause of a stroke is a blood clot forms and interrupts blood flow by clogging an artery in the brain," said **Nicole Everman, MD, FAAN**, neurologist at CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group – Neurology. "When this happens,

brain cells in the affected area die due to sudden loss of oxygen."

Without oxygen, brain cells take only minutes to die. Seeking help quickly at the first sign of stroke symptoms may limit long-term damage.

Serious Signs

Clues a stroke may be occurring include:

- Confusion
- Difficulty seeing
- Difficulty walking
- Slurred speech
- Sudden severe headache
- Numbness on one side of the face or body
- Weakness in one arm that makes it difficult to raise

Call 911 as soon as stroke symptoms appear.

"Some patients make the mistake of waiting to see if symptoms will improve," Dr. Everman said.

"It's important to go to the ER as soon as possible so clinicians can give medications to break up blood clots early in a stroke and minimize damage to the brain. We have to give these medications within four and a half hours after symptoms appear."

Many CHI Saint Joseph Health hospitals are certified as Primary and Advanced Primary Stroke Centers by The Joint Commission — indications of swift, high-quality care. To find an ER near you, visit [CHISaintJosephHealth.org](#), select "Services" and choose "Emergency Care."

Guiding Patients to Their Goals



Occupational therapists help patients affected by stroke and other neurological disorders achieve the goals that mean the most to them.



When a stroke, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis or another neurological condition causes functional deficits, understanding how to overcome them can be difficult. Occupational therapists show the way, using patients' goals as a compass.

"We orient much of our work in occupational therapy around what patients want to accomplish," said Kayla Robinson, OTR/L, occupational therapist at CHI Saint Joseph Health – Physical Therapy in Lexington, C.M. Gatton Beaumont YMCA and Saint Joseph Mount Sterling. "If, for example, patients want to be able to put on a shirt, tie their shoes, or get in and out of a tub, we change our plan to focus on their goals."

Dual Achievements

During outpatient therapy, occupational therapists — often in coordination with physical therapists — help patients overcome weakness, poor balance and decreased motor skills to achieve greater independence. Sometimes, therapy involves working with special tools, such as weighted vests to boost balance, weights to simulate objects patients might need to lift at home and reflex training equipment.

"Even if a deficit is small, you can work on improving it and becoming more successful in your everyday life," Robinson said. "I love to see patients improve. Every gain for them is a gain for me."

Are you recovering from or living with a neurological disorder? Ask your primary care provider for a referral for rehabilitation services at a CHI Saint Joseph Health location near you.

How We Serve



BEST PLACES TO WORK: Five hospitals and the clinically integrated network for CHI Saint Joseph Health were recognized as Best Places to Work in Kentucky by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and Kentucky Society for Human Resource Management. Teams from Continuing Care Hospital, Saint Joseph Berea, Saint Joseph Hospital, Saint Joseph London and Saint Joseph Health Partners celebrated along with other Kentucky organizations during the ceremony, sponsored by CHI Saint Joseph Health.



MORE IN COMMON STEM AND HEALTH CAREERS ACADEMY: CHI Saint Joseph Health and the More in Common Alliance, in partnership with the Morehouse School of Medicine and Kentucky State University, presented the More in Common STEM and Health Careers Academy for Kentucky middle school, high school and college students in late July/early August at Kentucky State University. The event concluded with a celebration where students shared what they learned and were recognized for their hard work.



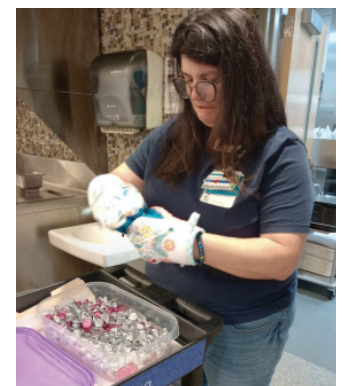
RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE: The CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations' Humankindness Gala, held in April, recognized the importance of arts in the healing process. The Gala serves as a vital fundraiser, with proceeds directly supporting patients and families in the communities served by CHI Saint Joseph Health. The Gala also recognized 35 physicians, employees, leaders and advanced practice providers in those communities.



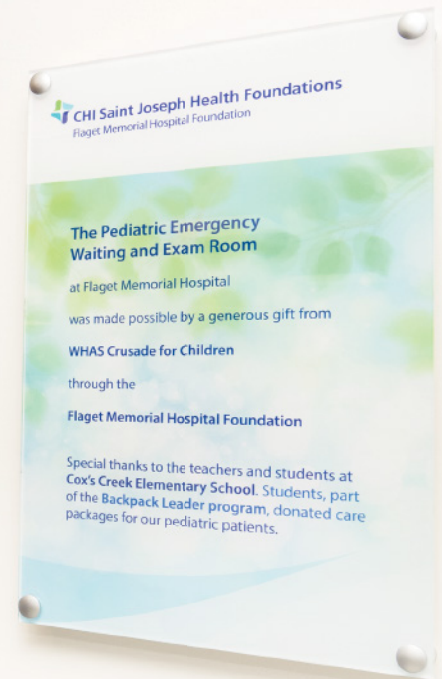
LMU Grand Opening at Saint Joseph Office Park: Lincoln Memorial University-Caylor School of Nursing and CHI Saint Joseph Health held a ribbon-cutting celebration for the new, state-of-the-art nursing education facility in July at the CHI Saint Joseph Health Keeneland Health Education Center. The new facility is designed to provide local nursing students with the latest in medical technology and educational resources, ensuring they receive top-notch training and are well-prepared to meet the demands of the health care industry. Key features of the new nursing education facility in the Saint Joseph Office Park include advanced simulation labs, interactive classrooms with the latest audio-visual technology and collaborative spaces for student interaction and group study.



HEART WALK: CHI Saint Joseph Health is a proud sponsor of the American Heart Association. Several teams from CHI Saint Joseph Health participated in the Central Kentucky Heart Walk on May 11 at Keeneland. The goal was to help raise awareness and funds for the American Heart Association and its important outreach causes.



HEALTH CARE WEEK: Each May, we celebrate our caregivers with various activities throughout Health Care Week. This year, the theme and activities centered around the Olympics, with "events" similar to the activities in the Games.



On a Mission to Change Children's Lives

WHAS Crusade for Children has helped CHI Saint Joseph Health improve the lives of countless children.

An annual telethon established by Louisville's WHAS-TV in 1954, WHAS Crusade for Children has raised more than \$217 million for children with special needs in Kentucky and Indiana. The CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations are grateful and proud to be frequent recipients of grants from the organization that can help unlock more outside funding.

"One of the most significant contributions from WHAS Crusade for Children was their gift of \$100,000 to the Saint Joseph London Foundation in support of our \$1.4 million campaign to establish a Level II neonatal intensive care unit," said K. Delaine Thiel, CFRE, vice president of philanthropy at CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations. "This seed funding ensured we met the match eligibility requirements to receive a \$990,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission."

Other projects funded by WHAS Crusade for Children, at Saint Joseph Berea and Flaget Memorial Hospital, stand out for their impact on young patients and their families.

Sensory Opportunities

The world can be a confusing place for children who struggle to process sensory information or build developmental skills. A new space at Saint Joseph Berea helps with these tasks — and a second

room for children with sensory processing issues is on the way.

In 2023, WHAS Crusade for Children awarded the Saint Joseph Berea Foundation a \$35,000 grant to create a sensory gym where children with autism spectrum disorder, sensory processing disorder and others can work with outpatient rehabilitation therapists on building muscle strength and honing developmental skills. Complete with a slide, climbing wall, swings and padded floors, the sensory gym looks like an indoor playground, a similarity not lost on eager patients.

"Having a space in the hospital that looks fun and engaging decreases children's and parents' anxiety about therapy," said Raylee Kirkland, MA, CCC-SLP, CIMI-2, speech-language pathologist and supervisor of rehabilitation services at Saint Joseph Berea, who helped secure the grant for the sensory gym. "Kids walk in, see the gym and can't wait to explore it."

Earlier this year, the Saint Joseph Berea Foundation received a \$40,000 grant from WHAS Crusade for Children, breaking the previous year's record amount. With this funding, the hospital plans to open a sensory room with bubble towers, light tables and other advanced equipment to help calm overstimulated children and reduce negative behaviors. The room is slated to open in early 2025.

"WHAS Crusade for Children is uplifting," Kirkland said. "They allow



therapists in small communities and rural areas like ours to give kids the same opportunities and level of care they would receive in a large city.”

Creating a More Kid-Friendly Emergency Room

At Flaget Memorial Hospital, around 15% of patients who visit the emergency room (ER) are children. For many of them, the visit can spark fear and anxiety. Funding from WHAS Crusade for Children — and the vision of a thoughtful group of students — helped make the ER a more welcoming place for young patients and visitors.

In 2021, Flaget Memorial Hospital partnered with Cox’s Creek Elementary School on the Backpack Program, which allowed fourth-grade students to learn about the hospital and identify ways to make it more kid-friendly.

“The students talked about creating a pediatric exam room in the ER and a nook in the department waiting room that was just for kids,” said Jennifer Nolan, president of Flaget Memorial Hospital and interim president of Saint Joseph East. “They told us coming to the hospital could be scary and stressful for kids, and they felt like they could make a difference for the youngest patients.”

A project was born. The students were involved in every aspect,

from planning to budgeting. A more than \$21,000 grant from WHAS Crusade for Children to the Flaget Memorial Hospital Foundation helped bring the project to fruition. Now, children who visit the ER waiting room find an area with kid-sized furniture, hands-on activities and a TV to enjoy.

“It’s important that kids have their own space that’s comfortable and can provide distraction while they and their families wait,” said Maggie Smith, MSN, RN, OCN, vice president of patient care services at Flaget Memorial Hospital. “In addition, the department now has a dedicated exam room for pediatric patients with fun wall wraps and colorful, peaceful ceiling tiles.”

Delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the children who planned the project returned as middle school students to see the fruits of their labor.

“Making the ER more kid-friendly wasn’t something those of us at the hospital had thought of, but when we heard the students’ idea, we knew it should be a priority,” Nolan said. “We appreciated WHAS Crusade for Children’s generosity in helping us make the project happen sooner rather than later.”

Feling inspired to support local health care? To make a gift to the CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations, visit SupportCHISaintJosephHealth.org.

“ We’re immensely grateful to WHAS Crusade for Children for their support over the years. During the past six years, the organization has provided more than \$1.5 million in funding to our health care system. They’re a key partner for us. Their support has allowed us to grow our service lines and increase the number of patients we serve in every community, from Mount Sterling to London, Bardstown to Berea, and Lexington.”

— K. Delaine Thiel, CFRE, vice president of philanthropy at CHI Saint Joseph Health Foundations

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