

# Heart to Heart

Vol 15: No 4 Fall 2019

## Leading in Robotic Surgical Technology

*STPH Acquires Third da Vinci Robot;  
Surgeons Perform 5,000th-Surgery*

ANGELS OF LIGHT 2019 P.3  
NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED EXCELLENCE P.4  
HEALING ARTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT P.8  
THERAPUTIC FOOD PANTRY P.10



# A Life of Giving

## Hospice Volunteer Plans an Additional Gift

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

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

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

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

"We just can't do without people like Karen Place," Toups said. "Their work is invaluable."

Charitable gift annuities and insurance policies are additional planned-giving options to support specific STPH programs through St. Tammany Hospital Foundation.

**"I understand firsthand how the program helps people."**

—Karen Place, hospice volunteer

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

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

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

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

"It feels good to know I'm giving something to this organization," Place said.

To learn more about how to leave a legacy through a planned gift, call Nicole Suhre, 985-898-4171, or visit [sthfoundation.planmygift.org](http://sthfoundation.planmygift.org)



# Honoring Perpetual Angels

## Angels of Light 2019: A Holiday Tradition in Support of Hospice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### MAKE A TRIBUTE

To purchase a Tribute Angel or for more information on Angels of Light, contact Melanie Rudolph at 985-898-4141 or [mrudolph@stph.org](mailto:mrudolph@stph.org).

# Consistent Excellence in Care

Multiple National Recognitions and Accreditations this Year

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

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

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

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

**“Healthcare changes every day, and we continuously adjust to meet those changes.”**

— Laura Goodey, head of quality and accreditation at STPH

Healthgrades, which has recognized STPH for excellence every year since 2009, awarded five-star rankings for overall patient safety excellence, outstanding patient experience, and specialty recognitions in colon surgery, diabetes care, heart care, infection prevention, neurosurgery and stroke care.

CareChex ranked STPH in a detailed list of 68 exceptional performance areas, highlighted with top 10% in U.S. for medical, hospital and surgical care and number one in Louisiana for cardiac, pneumonia and vascular care.

The hospital also earned Women’s Choice Awards as top 100 for breast health, cancer, heart, stroke, obstetrics and orthopedics, as well as overall patient experience and patient safety.

Accreditation, certifications and regulatory reviews help to establish the level of excellence and safety at STPH. Within the past 12 months, the hospital has excelled in eight separate inspections from major programs or agencies including surveys for baby friendly, cancer, chest pain, trauma plus The Joint Commission (the gold standard in accreditation) for the hospital, clinics, home health, hospice, lab, stroke and the Mandeville Emergency Department.

“Accreditation is our opportunity to excel,” Laura Goodey said. “Having these national, regional and state organizations come see us firsthand and put their seal on our processes, pushes us to hardwire best practices. By implementing evidence-based



practices and protocols, we strive to provide safety patients can count on.”

Goodey further identified the hospital staff’s broad commitment to safety and quality to explain established excellence and consistent recognition for more than a decade.

“Hospital leadership and staff understand how important sharp focus on quality and safety is to patient care. They know these accreditations are recognition of that,” she said. “There is buy-in at every level, and that is how we earn national awards and accreditations consistently year after year.”

In the end, all the accreditations and national recognitions St. Tammany Parish Hospital earns exemplify the promise of world-class health care, close to home, so patients do not have to travel far for the very best care.

The new building’s completion will mark STPH’s transition to all-private patient rooms and add more capacity for surgery, cardiology, neurology and pediatrics.



## Patient Tower Taking Shape

Expansion On Track for 2020 Completion

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

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

The overall 36-month project also will create more space for obstetrics and includes an expanded neonatal intensive care unit.

For now, the new tower’s steel beams provide the most visible sign of progress for a project that will support anticipated growth over the next five to 15 years at a hospital already operating at 80% to 85% capacity.

“You can see the building starting to take shape,” said Sharon Toups, STPH chief operating officer. “You can see the progress.”

About half of the structural beams were in place by late summer, with the remainder done in early fall, said project manager Randy Willett.

The project team aims to have the tower fully enclosed by the end of 2019, with interior work set to begin in early 2020, Willett said.

Hospital officials, architects and designers are already discussing the logistics for integrating arts installations into the new construction, in keeping with STPH’s Healing Arts Initiative.

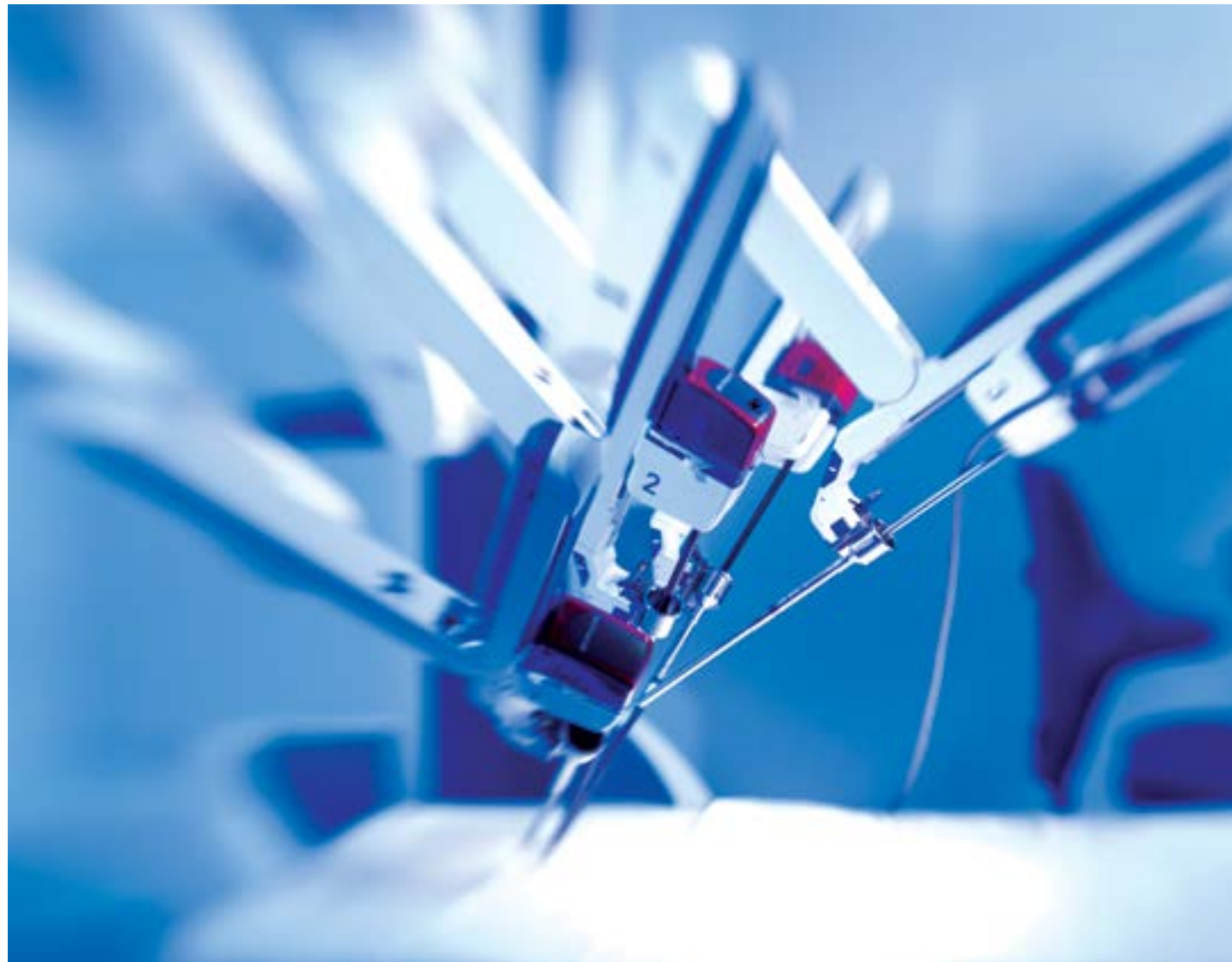
Rising demand for care at STPH is propelled in part by an uptick in visits to the STPH Emergency Department, which rose 4% during 2018.

The increase in emergency visits translates into additional hospital admissions: Some 24% of patients who visit the Emergency Department are admitted as either inpatient or observation patients.

Meanwhile, admitted patients at STPH are generally sicker than in the past and require longer hospital stays, as many procedures that required hospitalization in the past are now done on an outpatient basis, Toups explained.

# Leading the Region in Robotic Surgical Technology

STPH ACQUIRES THIRD DA VINCI ROBOT AS  
SURGEONS PERFORM 5,000TH-SURGERY



In the 12-year dominance of the program, STPH has continuously improved its systems, keeping on the forefront of robotic technology.

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

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

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

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

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

Unlike in traditional open surgery, the surgeon's hands do not enter the patient's body during robot-assisted surgery.

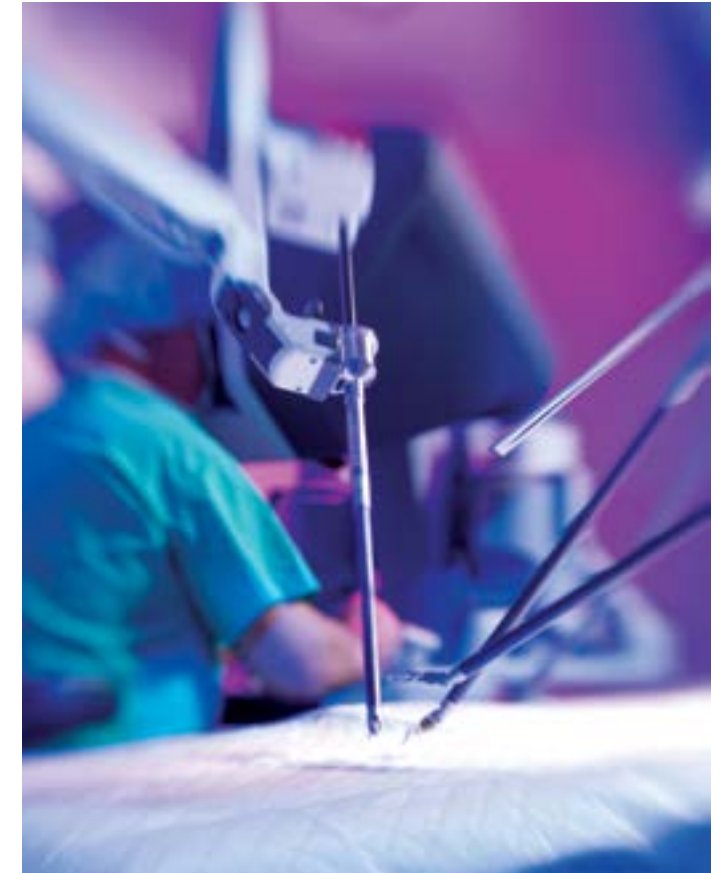
Instead, the surgeon uses a console near the operating table to control a tiny endoscope and surgical instruments that enter the patient's body through a keyhole incision. A screen gives a magnified, high-definition, three-dimensional view of blood vessels and nearby organs within the surgical site.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

"The optics tell us what nodes should be removed so we can avoid unnecessary risk to the patient," Dr. Braly said. "That is a big benefit for the patient."



# Healing Arts Featured in New State Videos

Groundbreaking Healing Arts Initiative is First in Video Series

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

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

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

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

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

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

The state agency, the hospital and the foundation will all share

**"There was an understanding that art could provide a respite from stress for patients and others."**

– Danny Belanger, director of arts education and accessibility for the Louisiana Division of the Arts

the video via digital, web and social media channels.

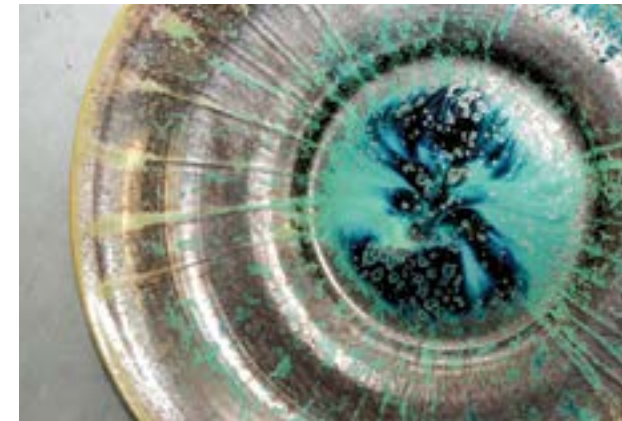
"The videos underscore the work of so many constituencies in coming together to make the Healing Arts possible," said Nicole Suhre, the foundation's executive director.

Shot onsite in late 2018, the eight video shorts include footage of arts installations across the hospital campus, sometimes from the point of view of what a patient might see while moving through its corridors.

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

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

To learn more about the Healing Arts Initiative, visit [sthfoundation.org/healingarts](http://sthfoundation.org/healingarts).



**"Our artists share their time and incredible talent to elevate and redefine arts in healthcare."**

– Nicole Suhre, foundation executive director

## Rotating Gallery Exhibit Celebrates "A Colorful Voyage"

St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's Healing Arts Initiative hosted its seventh exhibition in the rotating gallery series as part of its continuing focus on the work of local artists.

The aptly named "A Colorful Voyage" exhibit featured 109 works of visual art including paintings, photography, mixed media and three-dimensional works from 23 regional artists.

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

with them in our mission."

Participating artists in the July-September exhibit were Jan Arrigo, John Bloemer, Brad Budge, Joseph Cannon, Georgie Dussouy, Wess Foreman, Stephen Fritch, Madalyn Goff, Katie Helluin, Ferris Hotard, Jamie Jackson, Elayne Kuehler, Michelle Lance, Jae Levy, Craig McMillin, Enrique Murillo, RaeRae Pertuit, Linda Shelton, Wojciech Sobolewski, Bill Stewart, Nancy Tigert, Julie Porche Wall and Sue Zaunbrecher.



# Therapeutic Food Pantry to Serve Cancer Patients

Innovative Remedy for Food Insecurity for Patients



Proper nutrition helps cancer patients cope with treatment side effects, buoys strength and promotes healing.

Financial upheaval that can follow cancer diagnosis means some patients lack access to food, especially food optimal for their well-being.

“We hear people tell us they’ve had to choose between food and medicine,” said Hailey Story, St. Tammany Cancer Center clinical dietician.

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

**“We hear people tell us they’ve had to choose between food and medicine.”**

— Hailey Story, cancer center dietician

A \$10,000 gift from a community member, a \$10,000 grant from the foundation and a \$1,200 grant from Baptist Community Ministries initially funded the pantry.

Patients from multi-member households with limited access to proper nutrition will receive food boxes based on household size, and those living alone will select items from the client choice food pantry.

“From the get-go, we wanted to collaborate with the Northshore Food Bank,” Nicole Suhre, foundation executive director, said, “relying on existing community experts, with each agency playing its part to promote health and well-being for our patients.”

**Pictured Below**

Back Row: Colleen Hughes, STCC social worker; Jeremy Shalett, Northshore Food Bank; St. Tammany Cancer Center leaders Mike Miranda (MBPCC), Paula Day (STPH) and Sandy Martin (OHS)  
Front Row: Hailey Story, STCC clinical dietician; Nicole Suhre, St. Tammany Hospital Foundation; Jamie Andrepont, Northshore Food Bank



Patients will combine food pickup with scheduled treatment or appointments at STCC, so they don’t have to make an additional trip to the Northshore Food Bank’s standard distribution location in downtown Covington.

“For many patients, it’s a considerable effort to come to the center for treatment in the first place,” said Colleen Hughes, STCC oncology-certified social worker.

“We didn’t want to introduce another barrier.”

In addition to nonperishable items from Northshore Food Bank, Story will also work with local farmers to obtain seasonal produce for patients.

Story recommended modifications to the types of items the food bank will supply to the pantry to ensure they meet the special nutritional requirements of cancer patients, noted Terri Turner-Marse, CEO of the Northshore Food Bank.

“This is new for us, and we’re excited to be able to impact patients this way,” Turner-Marse said.

# STPH Employees Give Big to Show They Care

2019 WE Care Campaign Exceeds “Stretch” Target

St. Tammany Parish Hospital employees gave generously to the 2019 WE Care Employee Campaign. Some 850 employee donors pledged \$114,618 to support hospital programs, surpassing St. Tammany Hospital Foundation’s stretch goal of \$110,000 for the campaign.

The WE Care Employee Campaign provides an annual opportunity for employees to support hospital programs and projects they care about through monetary gifts including payroll deductions.

“This is an opportunity for employees to actively invest in the hospital through this campaign,” said Doug Walker, foundation specialist.

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

Employees may also select other programs such as the longstanding Employee Benevolent Fund, for fellow employees in crisis, the Healing Arts Initiative and the new therapeutic food pantry coming this fall to St. Tammany Cancer Center.

“The campaign is a true testament to the dedication and compassion of everyone who works at St. Tammany Parish Hospital,” Walker said.





**OUR MISSION**

A full-service acute care facility committed to providing world-class healthcare and the latest technology, St. Tammany Parish Hospital delivers today's life-improving procedures with the utmost care to area residents with emphasis on wellness, preventive care and disease management close to home. STPH is recognized for quality, safety and the patient experience by CareChex, Leapfrog, Healthgrades, Hospital Compare, Women's Choice and US News & World Report. St. Tammany Parish Hospital is an independent service district in a clinically integrated partnership with Ochsner Health System. Together, the two organizations focus on aligning their healthcare offerings to best serve patients and families in west St. Tammany and surrounding areas. Under their agreement, the two organizations retain their autonomy; neither partner manages nor owns the other. STPH is a self-supporting not-for-profit community hospital; it receives no tax funding. Learn more at stph.org.

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STPH complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. STPH does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. STPH provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us. If you need these services, contact the Patient Relations Department at 985-898-4669.



**OUR MISSION**

The St. Tammany Hospital Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established to sustain the healing work of the physicians and staff of St. Tammany Parish Hospital.

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St. Tammany Parish Hospital | 985-898-4000 | stph.org  
St. Tammany Hospital Foundation | 985-898-4171 | sthfoundation.org  
1202 S.Tyler St., Covington, LA 70433



# Upcoming Events

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

## Giving Tuesday

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

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

## Angels of Light

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

**STPH FRONT LOBBY**

Honor a loved one by purchasing a tribute angel on the Tree for Life at the 2019 Angels of Light benefitting St. Tammany Hospital Hospice. [www.sthfoundation.org/angels](http://www.sthfoundation.org/angels) | 985-898-4141



## Survivor's Thriver's & Drivers

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

**STCC PARKING LOT**

Car, Truck and Motorcycle Show celebrating Cancer Survivors. [sthfoundation.org/carshow](http://sthfoundation.org/carshow)