

# Heart to Heart



## It Takes a Village

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Conversation at STPH Parenting Center*

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# Building for the Future

New Addition's Beams Rising Soon



In the coming weeks patients, visitors and employees will see massive steel beams rise on the St. Tammany Parish Hospital campus as the 160,000-square-foot addition that is the focal point of its biggest expansion in two decades begins to take shape.

Contractors in early 2019 focused on excavation work related to the four-story building that will provide much-needed additional space for critical care, surgery, obstetrics and other services.

Parking upgrades related to the project were also completed. Visitors are encouraged to use the hospital's free valet service for added convenience.

Slated for completion in 2020, the expansion project is designed to make room for anticipated growth in demand for STPH healthcare services in the next five to 15 years.

West St. Tammany Parish is the fastest growing part of what has long been the fastest-growing parish in Louisiana.

Continuing population gains have combined with new healthcare capabilities tied to STPH's strategic partnership with Ochsner Health System to enable the hospital to deliver more care close to home than ever.

"We need to accommodate growing demand for care," explained

**The expansion project is designed to make room for anticipated growth in demand for STPH healthcare services in the next five to 15 years.**

Sharon Toups, STPH chief operating officer.

STPH admissions rose 8.8 percent between 2016-17, for instance, with surgeries and neurosurgeries rising by 14.5 percent and 41.8 percent respectively during that one-year

span. Emergency visits jumped 11.8 percent over the same period.

The addition that is the centerpiece of the expansion will include 30 critical-care private rooms, 40 medical-surgical patient rooms and administrative space. The project will enable STPH to complete the transition to all-private patient rooms. This means the outer structure will include the fourth floor, but its finishes inside will wait until the space is needed.

A fourth floor shell will allow for additional expansion in the future.

Engineering and design planning for work that will follow the expansion's opening in summer 2020 is already under way.

The later work will focus on renovations to several areas of the existing hospital building and construction of a 15- to 18-bed neonatal intensive care unit with all-new technology.

"Planning has started for the next big part of the expansion after the addition," said Randy Willett, construction manager.



## Global Best Practices Promote Mother-Baby Bonding

New Baby-Friendly Designation Is Northshore First



St. Tammany Parish Hospital has been designated a Baby-Friendly hospital in recognition of global best practices to promote mother-baby bonding and breastfeeding success in the first days of a baby's life.

Just one in six U.S. maternity hospitals is designated Baby-Friendly in accordance with best practices identified by the World Health Organization and UNICEF. STPH is the first Northshore hospital to earn the international recognition.

To earn the designation, STPH completed 10 steps identified by Baby-Friendly USA as essential to successful breastfeeding. Preparation for the designation was a three-year process that culminated in late 2018 with an onsite visit to STPH by Baby-Friendly USA.

While breastfeeding is a focus, the Baby-Friendly initiative is broader than that. New mothers in STPH's New Family Center receive education about all feeding options, and nurses support whatever feeding choice they make for their baby, said Cindy Ingram, STPH director of women and children's services.

"This is really about creating a family-centered environment that promotes bonding," Ingram said. "We support our mothers,

whatever feeding decision they make."

Additional best practices promoted by Baby-Friendly include skin-to-skin contact between babies and mothers immediately after birth and allowing mothers and babies to remain together at all times during their hospital stay.

Like other aspects of the Baby-Friendly initiatives, those practices reflect global research on what is best for mothers and babies, said Jan Waddell, STPH lactation-consultant.

Skin-to-skin contact immediately following a baby's birth, for instance, stabilizes both mother and baby and provides other benefits, Waddell said.

Keeping mothers and babies together without interruption in the first days of life also helps mothers learn their babies' feeding cues and nourishes the bond between them, Waddell added. Educating STPH ancillary staff about the importance of the practice was among the steps required to earn the Baby-Friendly designation, Waddell noted.

"It means things like newborn photos and laboratory tests take place in the patient's room so the mother and baby can remain together," Waddell said.





# A Patriotic Tribute to Our Nation's Heroes

New Display Honors Service and Sacrifice

A new wall display at St. Tammany Parish Hospital honors the military service of the hospital's patients, employees, volunteers and physicians who are veterans of the United States' armed forces.

STPH's veterans program, Honor Red, White and Blue, includes a flag tribute ceremony to honor veterans who die while inpatient at the hospital. This new display incorporates a framed American flag used in this tribute manner when the program launched in 2013.

The dedication represents an additional way to recognize the service and sacrifice of military veterans on the STPH campus. On March 12, the sixth anniversary of the first tribute done at STPH, a short ceremony was held to unveil the new installation.

"It is our duty and privilege to be able to honor the men and women of our armed forces for their service to our country," said Melanie Rudolph, STH Foundation specialist.

The artful, aluminum display was funded through a donation to the foundation by the McMath family and its associated companies, including McMath Construction of Mandeville.

McMath Vice President Patrick McMath told the assembled crowd his grandfathers from both families served overseas during World War II, one with the U.S. Army in Europe and the other with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific.

Several of McMath's great uncles lost their lives in the same war.

"I can't think of any sacrifice greater than serving your country," McMath said. "My family jumped at this opportunity to honor that sacrifice."



# It Takes a Village

Grandparents Gather for Coffee, Conversation at The STPH Parenting Center

Jeffrey "Pops" Karas is part of an informal group of grandparents that gathers Tuesday mornings—grandkids in tow—for coffee, conversation and camaraderie at the St. Tammany Parish Hospital Parenting Center.

The 67-year-old Metairie chiropractor and other attendees of the loosely structured "coffee chats" that began last summer often spend a good bit of the weekly gatherings on the floor or the sand pile with the little ones ages one to five.

"We do chat," said Karas, a grandfather of eight and father of four, "but we're usually interacting with the kids at the same time, maybe squatting down on the floor next to them to do a puzzle or sitting on the sand pile with them. So we're usually playing and talking at the same time."

Karas drives to the Northshore on Tuesday and Thursday mornings on his days off to spend most of the day with the three grandchildren he brings to the STPH Parenting Center, three-year-old boy and girl twins and their one-year-old little sister. He spends the afternoons on those days with the two young children of another daughter who lives on the Northshore. Karas grew up with five siblings and takes a relaxed view of his role as what he called "working granddad."

But like the other grandparents who come to the center each week, he wants to be respectful of his adult children's approach to raising their children and follow their lead when it comes to discipline and other matters that may be different these days than in the past.

"You want to respect the approach your children take," Karas said.

The center's staff are cheerful and supportive experts whose ever-present smiles never cease to amaze him, he added.

**"We see grandparents taking a growing role in their grandchildren's lives as more parents are working."**

— Carmen Fouquet, STPH Parenting Center's volunteer activities coordinator

"A lot of parents don't have back-up support or grandparents to pitch in when it comes to raising their children," Karas said. "The hospital is providing a great resource both to them and to all families in supporting the center. The ladies here love every child and never stop smiling."

The weekly chats at the STPH Parenting Center emerged out of a trend that the staff has noted in recent years: more grandparents visiting the center with grandchildren to help their adult children at work or in school. "We see grandparents taking a growing role in their grandchildren's lives as more parents are working," said Carmen Fouquet, the center's volunteer activities coordinator.

The group began meeting once or twice a month starting last summer, then upped the frequency of the gatherings to once a week at the suggestion of the group itself.

The center staff typically suggests a topic for the mid-morning chats, but conversations are shaped by the interests of participants and the group is largely self-sufficient, noted Renee Ridgley, the center's parent-education specialist.

"They more or less run their own group and there is a lot of laughter and conversation," Ridgley said. "But we are close by to answer questions as they have them."

Grandparents often have questions about effective discipline and potty training, said Lori Cage, the center's director. How much time little ones should spend with electronic devices is another frequent concern, Cage said. "Technology is a big focus of questions," she said.

Cage described the gatherings of grandparents as a beautiful addition to the center's resources for families. "The grandparents see the value of face-to-face interaction and relationships," Cage said. "And the children absolutely love their grandparents."



# GROUNDBREAKING ALTERNATIVES TO OPIOIDS FOR PAIN

STPH OPIOID STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE GARNERS NATIONAL ATTENTION



A pain-management approach that combines reduced use of opioids with pain-relief methods such as heat and ice packs has made St. Tammany Parish Hospital a U.S. leader in combatting the national opioid crisis at the local level.

The Society of Hospital Medicine describes aspects of the approach developed by the hospital's Opioid Stewardship Committee over the past three years as "groundbreaking."

The committee's work earned a 2018 Brilliance Award from national healthcare-quality firm Vizient, which invited the STPH multidisciplinary team's leaders to present its methods at a national conference in Las Vegas in October 2018.

The approach developed by the committee and now in use across

**"This is proven technology. Interest in it is coming full circle as people look for alternatives to opioids."**

— Bert Lindsey, head of STPH inpatient rehabilitation services

at the outset, STPH providers offer non-prescription options including heat, cold, electrical stimulation, acetaminophen or anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen for pain. Patients who do not experience adequate relief may be prescribed opioids for a limited time subsequently.

Limiting patient exposure to opioids is crucial because some patients can develop dependency on the drugs in as little as five days,

the hospital and in its emergency department centers on a go-slow approach to pain medication combined with use of both traditional and alternative non-pharmacological treatments for pain.

Rather than prescribing opioids



noted committee co-chair and STPH clinical pharmacist Ashley Wilson.

"The idea is to start small to see if the pain can be relieved," Wilson said.

Non-pharmacological treatments such as moist heat, ice-cup massage, cold packs and electrical stimulation are clinically proven pain-management methods.

Such hands-on practices increasingly had fallen by the wayside as opioid prescriptions for pain accelerated, explained physical therapist Bert Lindsey, committee co-chair and head of STPH inpatient rehabilitation services.

"This is proven technology. Interest in it is coming full circle as people look for alternatives to opioids," Lindsey said of the techniques he learned more than 20 years ago while training to become a physical therapist.

The approach developed by the committee also includes dry needling and kinesiology tape, alternative modalities for pain management that no other U.S. hospital is using in the acute-care setting, Lindsey noted.

Patient education about physiological changes tied to chronic use and explanation of the effectiveness of opioid alternatives were additional important elements of the approach.

The committee's formation in 2016 as the national opioid crisis accelerated seems prophetic, in retrospect. Vizient that year called on healthcare providers to develop alternatives to opioids. The Joint Commission in 2017 directed hospitals to develop non-opioid alternatives to pain management, and the U.S. government declared opioid misuse a public health emergency.

Key developments bolstered the committee's work. In late 2016, just months after the committee's formation, STPH was chosen for an 18-month mentorship with the Society for Hospital Medicine's Reducing Adverse Drug Events related to Opioids (RADEO) program, one of just 10 U.S. hospitals chosen for the program.

Data from participation in the RADEO program indicated that the committee was pursuing a promising course when participants in a pilot program reported significant reductions in pain after non-pharmacological treatments.

The experience of individual STPH patients further stoked interest in the committee's work. A 22-year-old woman who was admitted to STPH with severe pain after a boating accident offers a case in point.

After three days of treatment with soft-tissue manipulation, moist heat and Tylenol, the patient's pain rating had dropped to a three from nine out of 10 at the time she was admitted. She was discharged from STPH without taking any opioids during her stay, Lindsey said.

Administrative support has also been a critical factor in the committee's success, Wilson and Lindsey added.

"This is a place that communicates well," Lindsey said. "If you have an idea that works and helps patients, they let you run with it."

## STH Guild Donation Funds Non-Opioid Pain Modalities

Donation to Support Additional Equipment and Enhancements

The St. Tammany Hospital Guild donated more than \$65,000 in January for projects and patient care improvements at St. Tammany Parish Hospital that include development of groundbreaking alternatives to opioids for pain management.

More than \$51,000 of the guild's annual contribution to St. Tammany Hospital Foundation will support staff training related to nationally acclaimed modalities developed by the hospital's multidisciplinary Opioid Stewardship Committee as safe, effective alternatives to opioids.

"The development of alternatives to taking opioids for pain really caught our attention," said Ken Lane, STH Guild president. "As volunteers, we try to make a difference in the lives of our patients, staff and the community, and we thought this was the perfect way to do just that."

The guild raises funds for the foundation through sales at the St. Tammany Parish Hospital Gift Shop run by its volunteer members in conjunction with hospital staff.

Monies generated by gift shop sales in 2018 will also fund a new telestroke cart, iPads for the hospital's pediatric unit, additional rocking chairs for the New Family Center and an infant loss memory kit.

Including its most recent donation, the guild has donated more than \$330,000 to the foundation for hospital equipment and initiatives since 2003.

"What the guild and gift shop staff do is so much more than just selling items to customers," said Nicole Suhre, St. Tammany Hospital Foundation executive director. "They are turning profits into philanthropy, enhancing the hospital with every dollar they make and, in turn, giving back. It's a truly remarkable gift."







## Expanding Patient Access to Care

Online Scheduling and “Video Visits” are among New Options

New online scheduling with physicians, a nurse-on-call pilot program and “video visits” to the doctor for minor ailments are key ways St. Tammany Physicians Network is expanding patient access to healthcare.

“The goal is to make sure that anyone seeking healthcare can get it as easily as possible,” said Dionne Williams, STPN director.

The network now offers online scheduling in a variety of convenient ways. Established patients use MyChart, and now patients can book online at STPH.org and Healthgrdes.com, which provides information about physicians, hospitals and other healthcare providers.

At stph.org or healthgrades.com, patients can view the physician’s schedule and choose the day and time that works best for them, Williams explained.

Online scheduling is proving especially popular with patients 55 and older, who accounted for more than half of users in the first weeks after the new online scheduling option was added in January.

“There has been a tremendous response to this added option,” said Williams.

A nurse-on-call pilot program for STPN patients in Folsom is

**“The goal is to make sure that anyone seeking healthcare can get it as easily as possible.”**

*Dionne Williams, STPN director*

likewise expanding access to care. St. Tammany On Call connects callers to nurses who can help them determine if they can wait until the following day to see a physician or need immediate care for their condition.

St. Tammany On Call nurses can also schedule appointments for patients with the appropriate physician.

The after-hours service is available from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. Monday through Thursday and around the clock from 5 p.m. Friday until 8 a.m. Monday.

St. Tammany Pediatrics in Madisonville is also now offering “video visits,” which enables parents whose children have symptoms of minor ailments such as a rash or pink eye to interact with their child’s physician through an iPad, iPhone or Android device.

Patients must be registered on the MyChart patient portal to make the video connection, Williams added, as that enables the private, secure connection.

Once the pilot program is consistently in routine use at the pediatrics clinic, the service will be expanded to adult patients at STPN locations across the network.

“It is taking access to a whole new level,” Williams said.

## Bras for a Cause

Largest Group Gift to Date to Support STPH Women’s Pavillion



The St. Tammany Women’s Council of Realtors recently made a \$13,500 donation to St. Tammany Hospital Foundation in support of the St. Tammany Parish Hospital Women’s Pavilion in Covington.

Raised through its 2018 “Bras for a Cause” event, the donation represents the group’s largest gift to date to the foundation and brings its total giving to benefit the Women’s Pavilion to \$82,000.

The Women’s Pavilion staff works in partnership with St. Tammany Women’s Council of Realtors to support the popular annual fundraiser by publicizing the event and selling raffle and event tickets.

The Women’s Pavilion staff also participates in the friendly competition at the heart of the fundraiser: the purchase and decoration of a bra to be worn on stage by a volunteer male “model” and then auctioned to the highest bidder during the event itself.

“It gets to be fun and competitive,” said Robin Gitz, outpatient-services operations manager for the Women’s Pavilion. “And, of course, the idea is to raise additional money for the cause.”

Given the significant work done by the staff, it is critically important to continue to raise the bar. These funds make ongoing education and the development of educational materials possible, which helps to promote patient care and ensure St. Tammany is always current in the best practices of diagnosing breast cancer, Gitz said.

**THE STPH WOMEN’S PAVILION OFFERS CARE AND EDUCATION VITAL TO WOMEN’S HEALTH.**

**Services include:**

- Digital mammography
- 3-D mammography
- Diagnostic breast mammography
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- Stereotactic biopsy
- Ultrasound-guided biopsy
- Ultrasound-guided aspiration
- Preoperative image-guided needle localization
- Bone-density scans

Appointments or more information are available by calling 985-773-1500.



## Parish President and Business Leader Step in to Lead

Parish President Pat Brister Joins STPH Board of Commissioners

Mimi Goodyear-Dossett Joins STHF Board of Trustees

St. Tammany Parish Hospital Service District No. 1 Board of Commissioners welcomes Parish President Pat Brister as its newest member, after the loss of long-time board member Pizzie Romano, who passed away in Dec. 2018; and St. Tammany Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees welcomes developer and hospital commissioner Mimi Goodyear-Dossett, president of Money Hill Plantation in Abita Springs, to fulfill Romano's role as liaison between the two boards.

As parish president, Brister has a nonvoting seat on the board of commissioners. At the time of his death, Romano was serving as her designee.

A Covington native, Goodyear-Dossett is active in civic and community initiatives. Her family are lifelong residents of St. Tammany and have been both patients and supporters of the hospital for 50 years.

Goodyear-Dossett and her husband, Bill Dossett, have three adult sons who live out of state. Visiting them is a favorite pastime for Goodyear-Dossett, who is also an avid golfer in her free time.

"I'm honored to be working with such a great group of people on the Board of Trustees,"

Goodyear-Dossett said. "The hospital plays a big role in the quality of life of our community, and the foundation has played an exceptional role in advancing healthcare innovation that really adds to that quality of life."



## Remembering a Champion

"Pizzie" Romano Dedicated Life to Giving Back



St. Tammany Parish Hospital lost a champion and beloved member of both the STPH Board of Commissioners and the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees with the December 2018 passing of John "Pizzie" Romano at age 81.

The lifelong Covington resident was a longtime member of the hospital board and an instrumental member of the group of volunteers that formed the STH Foundation in 2003 to support St. Tammany Parish Hospital's mission of providing world-class healthcare on the Northshore.

"2018 was the end of a very special era in the life of St. Tammany Parish Hospital," said Joan Coffman, president and CEO of STPH. "Pizzie was a true asset to our hospital, our town and our lives. He will be deeply missed, but we celebrate the exceptional life he lived and the contribution he brought to us."

Romano served as a liaison between the two mission-driven organizations' boards, the hospital commissioners and the foundation trustees. A U.S. Navy veteran, Romano also served on the foundation's executive committee, where his experience as a successful business owner and longtime civic leader shaped the philanthropic organization's vision and direction.

A former Covington City Council member, Romano was well known as the longtime owner of Tugy's Bar and several other establishments, including Romano's Steakhouse.

Soft-spoken and good-humored, Romano had been an STPH patient on several occasions and used that experience to advance community understanding of the hospital's commitment to world-class care close to home.

"He was deeply dedicated to the hospital's work and understood that work as both a patient and a director," said Greg Pellegrini, the foundation's chairman. "He was also just the nicest man you could meet."

Romano made an immeasurable impact on the foundation's work in sharing its story with the community and securing numerous donations and in-kind gifts over the years, noted Executive Director Nicole Suhre.

STPH Board of Commissioners Chairman John Evans noted, "Pizzie was our heart and soul. When the hospital was first opened, he and his high school buddies washed its windows. From his earliest days to his very final days, Pizzie loved this hospital, and we all loved him back."

**"Pizzie was a true asset to our hospital, our town and our lives."**

— Joan Coffman, President and CEO of STPH



## Listening to Important Voices

St. Tammany Cancer Center Group Offers Key Feedback on Patient Experience

Insight from patients like David Mancuso is a powerful source of guidance on improving the patient experience at St. Tammany Cancer Center.

Mancuso and his wife, Candice, are members of the STCC Patient and Family Advisory Group. Each month, members of the group—patients, caregivers, cancer center staff and hospital administrators—gather to discuss ideas for enhancing services in ways that are meaningful to patients and their families.

"It's a great opportunity to make connections between service providers and those being served," said Mancuso, a Lutheran minister and retired U.S. Navy chaplain who lives in Slidell. "Everybody has a chance to be heard by those who are able to make changes happen."

STCC administrator, Jack Khashou, said patients and caregivers are uniquely positioned to offer ideas on improving their own experience.

"Our patients truly view this as their cancer center, and to hear their thoughts on what they want to see is invaluable," Khashou said. "It is the most constructive kind of feedback."

Recommendations made by the group have resulted in a series of changes to the patient experience since its formation in 2015. Recent examples of such changes include a daytime support group that began in January, and the 2018 shift toward a live telephone



operator, a turn away from automated answering systems.

"Those were changes the group wanted to see," Khashou said.

Expanded and more nutritious food options

for patients were of special importance to Candice Mancuso, who was delighted to see the addition of high-protein snacks like yogurt, cheese sticks and fresh sandwiches in the STCC kitchen area near the center's infusion suite.

"There is follow-through on the ideas that we put forward," he said.

The center also developed patient-education binders for patients about to start radiation or chemotherapy, established ways to celebrate milestones for patients on maintenance therapy and moved the annual survivors' picnic from humid June to milder November to make it more enjoyable for attendees, including patients fatigued by treatment.

More changes are in the works as a result of feedback from the group, including a new planter that will display a rock garden with stones decorated by patients, families and staff. Insights from the group will be important as the center looks to further enhance its nurse-navigation program, Khashou added.

"There is power in hearing from the patients about what they want to see at St. Tammany Cancer Center," Khashou said. "The group has been such a success that the hospital is implementing a similar program for the inpatient setting."



**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  
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# 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.

## GiveNOLA Day

MAY 7

Support St. Tammany Hospital Foundation on this one-day online giving event.  
Facebook.com/sthfoundation  
985-898-4174

## Call for Artists

St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's Healing Arts Initiative is announcing the next exhibit in its rotating gallery series. Artists who are interested in exhibiting should visit [www.sthfoundation.org/HealingArtsSubmission](http://www.sthfoundation.org/HealingArtsSubmission) for more information and to submit their online application. Applications will be accepted between May 13 and June 14, and the ten-week exhibit will take place beginning July 23 at St. Tammany Parish Hospital. [sthfoundation.org/healingarts](http://sthfoundation.org/healingarts)  
985-898-4110



## Save the Date THE Gala: Step into Paradise

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

Transport yourself to paradise and join us at THE Gala, an unforgettable evening benefiting local cancer care in one healing place—St. Tammany Cancer Center—where nationally ranked leaders, St. Tammany Parish Hospital, Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center and Ochsner, are fighting to beat cancer.  
[thegalanorthshore.org](http://thegalanorthshore.org)