



# Heart to Heart

A publication of St. Tammany Health System



## ON A ROLL

Be Well Bus, new cancer center signal 'a new day' for Northshore cancer care

What you need to know about COVID-19, p. 4  
New St. Tammany Cancer Center opens its doors, p. 8  
Be Well Bus hits the streets for community health, p. 11  
Shake, shake, shake your booty at THE Gala 2021, p. 14

St. Tammany Health System is home to the **first** and most experienced **robotics** team on the Northshore. US News and World Report has named us a **High Performing Hospital**. And because of our **dedication** to teaching the healthcare heroes of tomorrow, we've been named a **top teaching hospital** nationally.



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**St. Tammany Health System**

(985)898-4000 | StTammany.health  
1202 S. Tyler St., Covington, LA 70433

**St. Tammany Hospital Foundation**

(985)898-4171 | STHFoundation.org

Heart to Heart magazine is a quarterly publication of St. Tammany Health System  
Vol. 17, No. 3; Summer 2021

- Melissa Hodgson, executive editor
- Mike Scott, editor and senior writer
- Tim San Fillippo, cover design and art direction
- Jan Budenz, editorial assistant



# Gratefully Yours

## Summertime, and the living is ... healthy

Summer is brimming with excitement and great news, from the opening of our beautiful new patient tower and our collaborative cancer center with Ochsner Health to the launch of our community health screening unit, the Be Well Bus!

Although COVID-19 seems to be rearing its head once again – a result of too few people being vaccinated combined with the arrival in our community of the highly transmissible Delta variant of the virus – those who have gotten their shot appear still to be well-protected, and the brilliant and brave work of scientists and healthcare professionals worldwide and here in our own system continue to make a difference.



Joan M. Coffman, FACHE

If you haven't received your COVID-19 vaccine yet, call us at (985) 898-4001. We'll get you protected in no time.

If you haven't yet seen the Be Well Bus, check out the article in this issue to learn more, and keep your eyes out for our sleek and modern mobile health screening unit coming to a location near you. We see this new bus as an embodiment of our mission to be the heartbeat of our community, caring for our patients and their families with excellence, compassion and teamwork.

Being out in the community with education and outreach, screening for heart disease, diabetes and a wide spectrum of cancers is a great way we can make a difference in the overall population health. Detecting these types of conditions and diseases early gives patients the best possible chance to prevail.

Please enjoy this issue of Heart to Heart magazine, our opportunity to share with you the world-class healthcare we deliver here close to home.

Gratefully,



Joan M. Coffman, FACHE  
STHS President and CEO

“Everything we do in life is a decision of benefit and risk. I think the benefit of taking the vaccine far exceeds the risk.”

– Dr. Mike Hill, St. Tammany Health System infectious disease specialist

# Delta Blues

Talking COVID, variants, vaccines and what comes next

BY MIKE SCOTT, MSCOTT@STPH.ORG

We’re not wearing masks everywhere we go anymore, but 16 months after COVID-19 showed up in St. Tammany Parish, it’s still making headlines.

There’s talk of the nasty new Delta variant. There’s talk of vaccine side effects. There’s talk of what things are going to look like this fall – and whether we’ve got another outbreak ahead of us.

To get the straight scoop on the virus and what the next few months hold, we recently sat down for a chat with St. Tammany Health System infectious disease guru Dr. Mike Hill. Below, find an edited transcript of our conversation:

**Let’s start by talking about who our COVID patients at St. Tammany Parish Hospital are now.**

The majority of COVID patients we’re seeing now are younger and unvaccinated. There have been one or two patients that have been vaccinated that came in sick but were not as sick as the unvaccinated patients. The majority of patients in all age groups that took the vaccine seem to be well-protected, but we have had a significant shift in demographics to patients 60 and under.

**And there’s an easy way to avoid that.** Right: vaccinations. Get vaccinated.

**There are those, though, who are still concerned about vaccine side effects.** That’s an important point, particularly given recent



Dr. Mike Hill, infectious disease specialist at St. Tammany Health System. (Photo by Tim San Fillippo / STHS)

headlines about the incidence of myocarditis or pericarditis (heart inflammation) after vaccination, but that’s extremely rare. These cases are primarily in younger males, usually under the age of 30 and most under the age of 20, and the majority of it is completely resolved within five to 10 days. Again, this is an extremely rare event.

And, by the way, you can get myocarditis or pericarditis when you get COVID.

Also, speaking of side effects: The vaccine does not cause sterility. It does not cause birth defects. It does not cause long-term genetic dysfunction. Those are myths propagated by anti-vaxxers, and they’re just not true. There’s no substance to them.

**Are you more worried about the long-term effects of COVID than you are about vaccine side effects?** Yes. Everything we do in life is a decision of benefit and risk. I think the benefit of taking the vaccine far exceeds the risk.

## COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS

Key COVID-19  
figures as of July 1, 2021

**70-75%**

The approximate percentage of people who experts say need to be vaccinated to begin approaching herd immunity.

**37.7%**

The percentage of people in Louisiana who have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine.

**40%-49%**

The percentage of people in St. Tammany Parish who have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine.

**30% - 39%**

The percentage of people in Tangipahoa Parish who have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine.

Less than  
**29.9%**

The percentage of people in Washington Parish who have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine.

**600,859**

The total number of COVID deaths in the United States since the start of the pandemic.

**10,723**

The total number of COVID deaths in Louisiana since the start of the pandemic.

STHS administers COVID-19 vaccines from 8 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays and noon to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays at its Express Care clinic in Covington. Use the MyChart app or call (985) 898-4001 to make an appointment.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Louisiana Department of Health

## STHS cuts ribbon on \$56 million, four-story patient tower

Expansion allows for every room in the hospital to be a private one

BY MIKE SCOTT, MSCOTT@STPH.ORG

St. Tammany Health System leaders cut the ribbon in April on one of the biggest expansions in the organization's 67-year history, a four-story, \$56 million new patient tower blending state-of-the-art medical technology with the health system's long-standing Healing Arts philosophy.

"What an exciting day today is, and long awaited," STHS President and CEO Joan Coffman said. "One of the things that was so important as we developed this new bed tower was to really incorporate new technology and innovation that will help to sustain us well into the future."

That includes new administrative space and a seven-room conference center on the first floor; 30 intensive-care beds on the second floor; and 40 medical-surgical beds on the third floor. The fourth floor has been left unfinished, reserved for future expansion.



STHS leaders cut the ribbon on the health system's new patient tower, designed by fl+WB architects and built by Womack Construction to blend seamlessly into the existing hospital. (Photo by Mike Scott/STHS)

In addition to featuring the latest medical technology, the new tower's addition of 70 patient rooms – which were designed with input from the health system's doctors and nurses – will allow for every room in the hospital to be a private one for the first time in its history.

"I've been on the medical staff here for 31 years, and I'm really pleased to be able to say that," STHS Chief Medical Officer Dr. Patrick Torcson said. "At the end of the day, what it means is a new era at St. Tammany Health System."

The new wing will also feature artwork funded through St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's Healing Arts Initiative, which seeks to promote a conducive healing environment through everything from installation of traditional artworks to choice of lighting and wallpaper design.

Completion of the new tower represents the second phase of STHS's Expansion 2020 project. With its completion, focus turns to remodeling and renovation of parts of the existing hospital. ■

## STHS brings 'Stop the Bleed' training into community

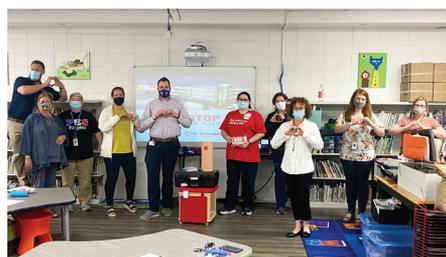
BY MIKE SCOTT, MSCOTT@STPH.ORG

Two to five minutes. That's all it takes for a bad situation to get worse.

More to the point, that's all it takes for a person suffering a traumatic injury to bleed to death without proper medical attention.

The good news is that learning what to do to stabilize such a patient until first responders arrive is easier than you probably think.

Making sure Northshore residents have that life-saving information is the focus of "Stop the Bleed," a free community outreach program of St. Tammany Health System that, with help from St. Tammany



St. Tammany Health System's Bethany Monistere, center in red shirt, recently visited Pontchartrain Elementary School in Mandeville to train faculty and staff members how to 'Stop the Bleed' in the event of a traumatic incident. The training was offered as part of a free community outreach program at the health system. (STHS image)

Hospital Foundation, has been offering one-hour courses to health system colleagues and community members since 2018.

Earlier this year, from January to April, the health system's "Stop the Bleed" team visited all 56 public schools in St. Tammany Parish, as well as a handful of

the school system's non-classroom sites. There, they trained 302 faculty and staff members on how to pack a wound, apply a tourniquet and perform other life-saving techniques.

Some of those recently trained school system employees now qualify as "Stop the Bleed" trainers themselves, so they can share the knowledge with more teachers and staff. Additionally, the school system has committed to purchasing Stop the Bleed kits for each of its schools.

"The number one cause of a preventable death is hemorrhage, or bleeding out," said STHS Trauma Services Manager Bethany Monistere. "If you can arm citizens with this information to control bleeding, you can save someone's life."

*If you'd like to discuss arranging free Stop the Bleed training for your group, email [communityeducation@stph.org](mailto:communityeducation@stph.org).* ■

# Full Circle

Covington woodworker goes from tragedy to triumph, with help from STHS

BY MIKE SCOTT, MSCOTT@STPH.ORG

This is a story that ends in triumph. It's important to know that because it starts with an awful tragedy. In between, there is no small amount of soul-searching, self-discovery and compassionate caregiving. Not insignificantly, it also involves the crafting of a custom-designed table, a physical symbol of that triumph.

But first, there was tragedy. Covington woodworker Ben Bigler remembers it all too vividly.

"It was 6 o'clock, November 9th, three years ago," Bigler said. "I had the music blaring. It was the last cuts of the day."

There were a lot of those cuts to be made – thousands, in fact, as he worked in his shop on an electric chop saw to mass-produce pieces for a wooden balancing game he invented. With Christmas approaching, he was working into the night.

He was also, he admits now, not paying as much attention to safety as he could have been. It took just a second for that to upend his life.

"I'm a very careful woodworker," he said. "My hands are my livelihood. So when I cut my finger off, it was the kind of injury I was scared to look at."

When he finally summoned the strength, he saw that the pointer finger on his left hand had been severed below the middle knuckle. Bigler, who is normally prone to smiling and laughter, was overcome with a blend of shock, fear and uncertainty about his future.



ABOVE: Covington woodworker Ben Bigler discusses his craft, his philosophies on life, and his full-circle relationship with St. Tammany Health System, which started with a shop accident three years ago that took his left pointer finger. BELOW: The new St. Tammany Health System board room table, created by Bigler. (Photos by Tim San Fillippo / STHS)



That included fear about his ability to provide for his family with his woodworking business, but it also put into question his dreams of becoming a musician.

"It was just a sense of, not 'Why me, God?' None of that. I know why. I was being not the wisest person operating a machine the way I was," Bigler said. "But it was more like, 'What's next? What comes next?'"

What came next for him was an ambulance ride to the Emergency

Department at St. Tammany Health System's Covington hospital. There, he met Dr. Brent McCarty, an orthopedic hand surgeon.

"When he walked in, he was so cool, so calm, easygoing," Bigler said. "He just said, 'Wow, what do we have going on here?' Just very calm: 'Here's what we'll do.' ..."

"It made me feel like I was in capable hands, that things would be OK. It was kind of the beginning of feeling like things would be OK."

Post-surgery, Dr. McCarty referred Bigler to STHS's Occupational Therapy team, where he would go once a week for six months. There, the hand therapists – Dolly Smith, Tricia Doell and Cassie Cloutet; he remembers their names – helped him adjust to his injury and regain motion in his hand.

They didn't just patch him up physically, though. They helped him with the emotional aspects of his injury, as well.

"It's a blow," he said. "It really is a blow to your sense of identity, especially for me, working with my hands."

He added: "The words of encouragement that they did offer were things like, 'You're not alone with this. This does happen, and people recover and we see it all the time. You're going to be fine.'"

Eventually, Bigler – who gives all the credit to Dr. McCarty, Dolly, Tricia and Cassie – not only reopened his shop, Bigler Woodworks on North Jefferson Avenue in downtown Covington, but he decided to rededicate himself to it.

Among his new clients: St. Tammany Health System, which needed a board room table for its recently opened new wing. This wasn't just any table, though. It would have a 360-square-foot footprint, big enough to seat as many as 27.

"It was immediate for me: 'Yeah, I'm going to do that,'" Bigler said. "I'm going to do whatever it takes to not just build that project, but I'm going to make it the best thing I can."

After a year of design and construction, he delivered his finished product, made of American walnut over a welded steel frame, in March. His unique vision for piecing the table together involved 20 pieces, with the largest being delivered to the hospital on a custom-built trailer. A police escort helped manage traffic.

It took a small crew and no small amount of sweat to maneuver it into the new building's board room.

This is where the triumph part comes in.

As the last piece fit into place, Bigler threw his arms in the air in a "Rocky"-style celebration. A friend snapped a photo of the moment, captured from behind Bigler – and capturing the moment of victory that closed the book on that awful night three years earlier.

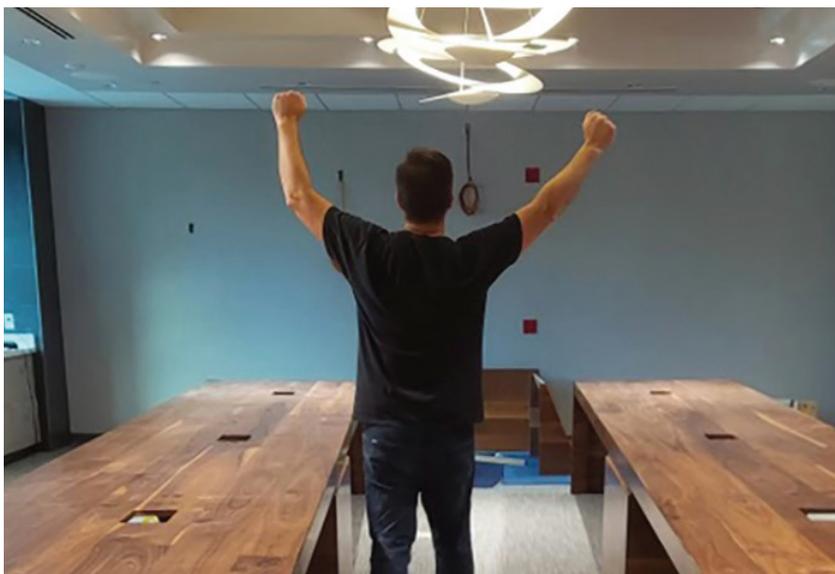
"One of the things that struck me about what was said at the ribbon-cutting (for the new building) was this concept of, 'We're reworking our identity' or 'We're building our

identity at St. Tammany with the expansion of this new tower,'" Bigler said. "And in a way, St. Tammany Parish Hospital helped me rebuild my identity."

He added: "I got the opportunity to craft a boardroom table where you're going to have the kings of the community, really, that are influencing the direction of where St. Tammany Hospital goes. That's pretty cool for me. It's kind of full circle, really." ■

**"In a way,  
St. Tammany  
Parish Hospital  
helped me rebuild  
my identity."**

**– Covington woodworker  
Ben Bigler**



Covington woodworker Ben Bigler throws his arms in triumph after reassembling STHS's new board room table in the health system's new wing. (Photo provided by Ben Bigler)

# STAT!

Quick hits from the STHS newsroom

By STHS Communication  
Department

In April, St. Tammany Health System earned a **five-star overall rating** from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services in its 2021 ratings. It is one of only six Louisiana hospitals to earn the five-star ranking and the only one in the Greater New Orleans metro area, according to Becker's Hospital Review. ... Also in April, STHS once again earned a spot on Women's Choice Award's list of **Best 100 Hospitals for Patient Experience** in its size category. ... The American College of Cardiology recently recognized STHS for its demonstrated expertise and commitment in treating patients with chest pain, reaccrediting it this spring as a **Chest Pain Center with Primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention**. The ACC also awarded the health system's chest pain program with a **Silver Performance Achievement Award** for 2021. ... STHS said goodbye this past spring to a number of longtime colleagues. Among them: Home Health Nurse **Marylyn Skinner**, who retired after 41 years with STHS; Payroll Manager **Lee Anna Ruberts**, who retired after 28 years with STHS; LPN Unit Assistant **Sabrina Causey**, who retired after 21 years; and Registered Nurse **Marilyn Moore**, who retired from our St. Tammany Physicians Network's Covington office after 25 years on the job. Thanks and congratulations to all!

# A new day for cancer care in St. Tammany

St. Tammany Health System, Ochsner unveil new, \$50 million cancer center



Participating in the ribbon-cutting on the new cancer center are, from left, Ochsner oncologist Dr. Zoe Larned, Cancer Center Administrator Jack Khashou, St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman, Ochsner Health President and CEO Warner Thomas, St. Tammany Parish President Mike Cooper, Medical Director of the Ochsner Cancer Institute Dr. Brian Moore, St. Tammany Health System breast surgeon Dr. Angela Buonagura, and Ochsner Health Board Chairman Andy Wisdom. (Photo by Mike Scott / STHS)

BY MIKE SCOTT, MSCOTT@STPH.ORG

The future of cancer care on the Northshore has arrived.

On June 7, leaders of St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner Health cut the ribbon on the new St. Tammany Cancer Center, a campus of Ochsner Medical Center. The three-story, 75,000-square-foot facility at the intersection of Interstate 12 and Highway 21 is being characterized as a game-changer for cancer treatment on the Northshore.

Built around an integrated, multidisciplinary philosophy that focuses on treating the whole patient – mind, body and spirit – the new cancer center, which cost \$50 million and took 18 months to build, was designed to deliver the most comprehensive cancer treatment in a single place in the region.

It addition, it will give patients access to the largest clinical trials network in Louisiana, allowing them to take advantage of groundbreaking new cancer therapies without ever leaving the parish.

St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman said the facility's brand of integrative oncology will revolutionize cancer care on the Northshore.

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**“This is probably the most patient-centric project I’ve ever been involved with. I’m very proud to be part of it.”**

**– Cancer Center Administrator  
Jack Khashou**

“Today, we mark a new day for cancer care in St. Tammany Parish,” Coffman said just before the ribbon-cutting. “For one, it enables St. Tammany Health System, working with our partner Ochsner, to elevate the high-quality cancer services we’ve been providing the Northshore region for years. But for another, what I’m most grateful for, is what this means for our community. So many more local families will be able to find the world-class care they need right here, close to home, in their own backyard. That is truly a blessing.”

Ochsner Health President and CEO Warner Thomas echoed those sentiments, stressing there's no other facility in the region like the new St. Tammany Cancer Center.

"The idea of housing 30 physicians and over 80 cancer professionals together, to put the best minds together to think about how to improve cancer care and bring the best treatments to our patients is what we really seek to do each and every day," Thomas said.

Following the ribbon cutting, cancer center leaders threw open the doors for a day's worth of tours ahead of the arrival of the center's first patient on June 14.

Those patients will have access to some of the most innovative technology in the cancer care sphere, including new PET scan and CT machines, as well as more than 45 infusion bays, each of which provides comfortable seating for patients and a caregiver, not to mention access to their own TV screen.

In addition, hanging throughout the building are 17 pieces of art from noted local artists, part of the Healing Arts Initiative of St. Tammany Hospital Foundation,

which serves as the cancer center's philanthropic arm.

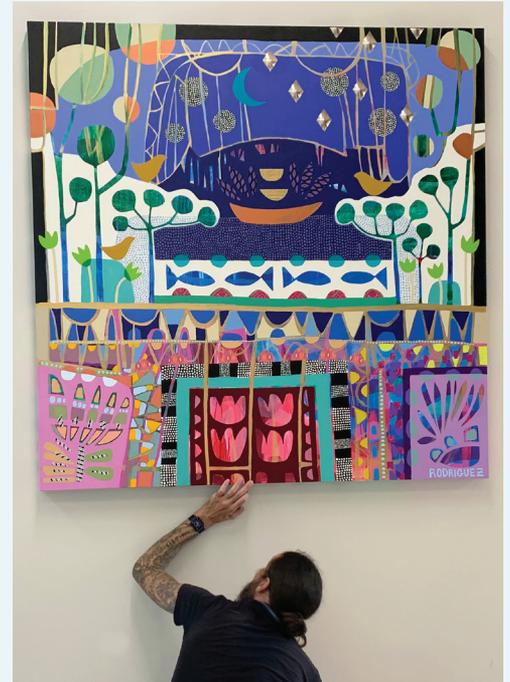
The artwork is among the more conspicuous facets of the center's holistic approach. As part of what has been dubbed the facility's "Lagniappe Services" are a therapeutic food pantry, a boutique and physical therapy area, along with access to yoga, acupuncture, meditation and tai-chi classes.

"This is probably the most patient-centric project I've ever been involved with. I'm very proud to be part of it," said St. Tammany Health System's Jack Khashou, administrator of the cancer center.

"It really is a continuum-of-care project. It connects the St. Tammany Health System hospital, this campus here in Covington and Ochsner Cancer Center across the lake to create a continuum of care that really will make a difference and hopefully get away from the fragmentation we see in our community when it comes to cancer care." ■

*To learn more about St. Tammany Cancer Center, a campus of Ochsner Medical Center, visit [StTammany.health/Cancer](http://StTammany.health/Cancer) and [NorthshoreCancerCare.org](http://NorthshoreCancerCare.org).*

The new \$50 million St. Tammany Cancer Center, a campus of Ochsner Medical Center, is located at the intersection of Interstate 12 and Highway 21. (Photo by Mike Scott / STHS)



A painting by Marianne Rodriguez gets an adjustment as it is installed at the new St. Tammany Cancer Center, a campus of Ochsner Medical Center. In all, nearly two dozen original works of art from Northshore artists were acquired to hang in the cancer center as part of St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's Healing Arts Initiative. (Photos by Norma Richard / STHS)

## Northshore artists leave mark on new cancer center

### Building adorned with a gallery's worth of original works

BY MIKE SCOTT, MSCOTT@STPH.ORG

"Wait until you see what's going here," Norma Richard said, sweeping her arm in the direction of a large, empty wall.

That's how she thinks. Where most see vacant space, Richard sees possibilities – which is exactly why St. Tammany Hospital Foundation Executive Director Nicole Suhre recruited her subcommittee to spearhead the selection, acquisition and installation of artwork for the newly completed St. Tammany Cancer Center, a campus of Ochsner Medical Center, as part of the foundation's Healing Arts Initiative.

In theory, it might sound like a fun project, especially for someone as passionate about the arts as Richard is. But in practice, there were extenuating circumstances.

“When they asked us, I said, ‘OK, well, how much time do we have?’” Richard remembered. “And Nicole said, ‘Well, that’s the catch.’”

In all, Richard and other members of the foundation’s Healing Arts Committee including Mary Lee, Carlos Sanchez and Sarah Bonnett, who Richard said were key to the effort, would have to locate, acquire and install nearly two dozen pieces of original artwork from local artists in just seven weeks.

The result was both a marathon and a sprint from which Richard and her fellow committee members are still catching their breath.

“Everything in the front of the house is original pieces, original artwork from local artists,” Richard said. “And that was the goal. We wanted our local, Northshore artists to shine in this modern, 75,000-square-foot building.

“The problem was, who do we call that we know who has an inventory that fits the beautiful, contemporary flow of this building?” she added. “That was the hard part, finding artists whose work was a good fit.”

For Richard, who’s been a key part of the Healing Arts Initiative since joining STHF’s Board of Trustees almost five years ago, that meant shaking trees, beating bushes and burning up her mobile phone, tapping into the relationships she’s nurtured over the years throughout the Northshore art community.

Finding the art was just the first step. Then there was also getting it approved by all the stakeholders in the cancer center, negotiating for price and installing 17 original pieces by 14 local artists all in one day.



This work by Bernard Mattox was so big, it wouldn’t fit in the elevator at the new cancer center, so installers had to haul it up the stairs.



St. Tammany Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees member Mary Lee, who also chairs the foundation’s Healing Arts Committee, makes sure everything is just right during installation of a painting by artist Mary Helen Seago.

“It was a whirlwind,” she said.

And they’re not done. Five more commissioned pieces are still on the way. Plaques have yet to be installed identifying each work. They’ve also got a couple of surprises in the works – like what’s destined to adorn that large, empty wall.

Still, Richard is pleased with what she and her team have put together.

“On ribbon-cutting day, we were just so proud,” she said. “The goal was to make St. Tammany proud, make the arts community in St. Tammany proud. They gave us an opportunity to shine.”



A handful of pieces from the old St. Tammany Cancer Center, such as this triptych by Gretchen Armbruster that once hung in the infusion suite, now reside in the new cancer center.

Does she think they were successful?

To answer, Richard tells the story of a couple she saw in the cancer center recently. He was an older man, pushing the wheelchair of a woman, presumably his wife. Passing a piece of recently installed art, she asked him to stop. They examined it together and talked for a short time before moving on.

“When they got closer,” Richard said, “I heard her say, ‘Let’s go over here. I want to see the art over here.’”

She teared up a little thinking about it, then added:

“That’s what it’s all about.” ■

*Learn more about St. Tammany Hospital Foundation, including ways you can make a difference in cancer care on the Northshore, at [STHfoundation.org](http://STHfoundation.org).*

## Meet the Artists

Artists whose work hangs in the new cancer center:

### FIRST FLOOR

Lori Spier  
Mary Helen Seago  
Carol Lapari\*  
Pam Soileau

Marianne Rodriguez  
Linda Dautreuil  
Marcia Holmes  
Craig McMillin

### SECOND FLOOR

Rick Brunner  
Bernard Mattox  
Linda Dautreuil  
Carol Hallock  
Craig McMillin  
Joel Blazek

### THIRD FLOOR

Cindy Trist  
Marcia Holmes  
Gretchen Armbruster  
Tanya Dischler  
Kellie Girona  
Bernard Mattox

\* Commissioned work yet to be installed.

# On the Road Again

As COVID cases surge, STHS's new community-focused Be Well Bus is ready to roll

BY MIKE SCOTT, MSCOTT@STPH.ORG

St. Tammany Health System is hitting the road.

Health system leaders took delivery in mid-May on what's been dubbed the "Be Well Bus," a 40-foot motorcoach outfitted with an array of health screening instruments. In coming weeks, it will be setting a course for local fairs, festivals, employer-sponsored events and other gatherings, all in the name of improving community health on the Northshore.

"St. Tammany Health System has been known for decades for bringing world-class healthcare close to home for our neighbors on the Northshore," said Anne Pablovich, the health system's community outreach coordinator. "Now, with the Be Well Bus, we're bringing it even closer to home, right into the communities that need it the most."

Conceived as an effort to combat stubbornly poor health metrics prevalent throughout South Louisiana by addressing barriers to quality healthcare, the fully loaded Be Well Bus includes a registration area and two private screening suites. Between them, the bus's healthcare team will be equipped to conduct such on-the-spot services as:

- Mammograms
- Colorectal cancer screenings



St. Tammany Health System's new Be Well Bus is a 40-foot motorcoach dedicated to community health in western St. Tammany and Washington parishes. (Photo by Tim San Fillippo/STHS)

**"We're raising awareness, addressing barriers to good health and wellness, providing screenings, connecting patients to care and measuring outcomes for learning opportunities."**

**- STHS President and CEO Joan Coffman**

- Skin cancer screenings
  - Head and neck cancer screenings
  - Prostate cancer screenings
  - Lung cancer screening assessments
  - Vaccinations
  - Cholesterol checks
  - Blood pressure checks
  - Arterial ultrasounds
  - Osteoporosis screenings
  - Labwork
- "We're ready to roll," Pablovich said, adding that locals can expect to see the bus at events throughout the area.
- The Be Well Bus is an initiative of St. Tammany Health System in partnership with Ochsner Health. It serves as part of a larger initiative called Healthier Northshore, an alliance of 50 of the Northshore's leaders in healthcare, government and nonprofit sectors to improve health and wellbeing in

St. Tammany and Washington parishes.

"In a state ranked 49th for overall health, in a region with higher cancer rates than Louisiana's average and the state's highest prostate cancer mortality rate, our community's health directly impacts our success and quality of life," STHS President and CEO Joan Coffman said. "St. Tammany Health System's Be Well Bus and the Healthier Northshore initiative we launched with like-minded Northshore leaders will elevate the overall health of our population and improve the quality of life for those who live here.

"We're raising awareness, addressing barriers to good health and wellness, providing screenings, connecting patients to care and measuring outcomes for additional learning opportunities." ■

Want to know more? Interested in having the Be Well Bus visit your business?  
Contact STHS Community Outreach Coordinator Anne Pablovich at (985) 871-5932.



STHS Foundation cooked up a boatload of fun for its 2020 donor appreciation party, held this year at Tchefuncta Country Club. (Photos by Chuck Billiot of Billiot Photography)

# Party Flavors

## Crawfish boil spices up 2021 donor appreciation event

In South Louisiana, we do things differently. For example, when we say “thank you,” more often than not we do it with food.

That was the case on May 23, 2021, as St. Tammany Hospital Foundation donors gathered at Tchefuncta Country Club for a donor appreciation crawfish boil. The event recognized STHF donors for their

generosity in 2020, which saw more than \$1 million raised to support the healing work done at St. Tammany Health System.

The weather was warm, the crawfish were seasoned to perfection and the event was an incredible blast!

The foundation is grateful to our many wonderful donors, and this event is our way of making them feel appreciated for all they do. ■



This year, STHF honored Rebecca Bradford, the owner of Southern Avenue, with the annual “Adrian” spotlight award. The award, named after STHF’s founding board chairman, Dr. Adrian Cairns, is bestowed annually on a member of our community for their dedication to supporting the foundation through in-kind giving.



From left, St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman, 2021 Adrian Award winner Rebecca Bradford, St. Tammany Hospital Foundation Executive Director Nicole Suhre and foundation Board of Trustees Chairman Will Trist.



The scenic grounds of Tchefunca Country Club served as a picturesque backdrop for St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's 2021 donor appreciation event.



Among other things, guests at the 2021 donor appreciation event were treated to piping hot Louisiana crawfish, prepared by Geaux Creole.



St. Tammany Hospital Foundation board trustees, from left, Will Trist, Norma Richard, Becky Parks and Mary Lee pause for a pose with guest Jim Lee.



Guests at the 2021 STHF donor appreciation event mingle amid the pines at Tchefunca Country Club.



St. Tammany Health System's Dr. Christopher Foret rubs elbows with other guests at the 2021 event.



St. Tammany Hospital Foundation team members, from left, Emily Vairin, Doug Walker, Nicole Suhre, Melanie Rudolph and Jennifer Garrard.

# DANCE FEVER

THE Gala 2021 promises disco-themed fun – and fundraising

BY MIKE SCOTT, MSCOTT@STPH.ORG

We interrupt this issue of Heart to Heart magazine for an important public health announcement: Medical experts are reporting an outbreak of dance fever in our community.

Unfortunately, there's no vaccine for this particular malady. The only cure is to lace up your boogie shoes, don as much disco attire as you dare and shake, shake, shake your booty at THE Gala 2021, St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's signature annual fundraiser, this year themed "Step Into Your Dancing Shoes."

All proceeds will be used to further enhance the programs that provide for a comprehensive cancer care experience for patients of St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner Health.

"St. Tammany Health System's array of cancer services has grown enormously in the past few years, and we at St. Tammany Hospital Foundation are thrilled to be part of that growth," foundation specialist Melanie Rudolph said. "But there's more work to

## THE Gala 2021

**What:** St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's signature annual fundraising event, which this year carries the theme 'Step Into Your Dancing Shoes.' Proceeds benefit St. Tammany Health System's cancer care programs.

**When:** 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 12.

**Where:** Tchefuncta Country Club, 2 Pine Crest Drive, Covington.

**Attire:** "Disco-chic" or 1970s-inspired.

**Tickets:** \$175 each, available through [thegalanorthshore.org](http://thegalanorthshore.org). (Sponsorships available.)

be done. Cancer diagnoses are on the rise in our community, partly because of early detection, which means there's more need for

quality cancer care here on the Northshore than ever before."

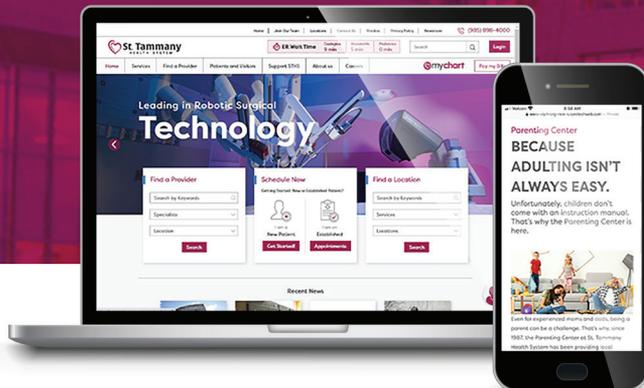
This year's event, scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 12, at Tchefuncta Country Club in Covington, is again sponsored by HUB International, with other major sponsors including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana, Hancock Whitney, Ochsner Health, St. Tammany Health System and United Healthcare.

Tickets, scheduled to go on sale in early July, are \$175 each and can be purchased online through [TheGalaNorthshore.org](http://TheGalaNorthshore.org). Sponsorships are available.

In addition to live music by Four Unplugged, the event will include food, an open bar, a live auction, and a whole lot of dancing.

Attire is "disco chic" or 1970s-inspired. Can you dig it? We knew you could. "As always, this is a party with a purpose," Rudolph said. "But it's still a party, and if history is any guide, it'll be a full-on 'Disco Inferno.'" ■

## OUR NEW WEBSITE IS LIVE



visit us now at  
[StTammany.Health](http://StTammany.Health)

# #SummerVibes

Let's come together, right now – over snowballs



STHF Executive Director Nicole Suhre

If you don't already know us, let's take this summer to remedy that. I would like to invite you to visit our website to meet our team and our board. You can also always give us a call or send an email so we can meet up in person.

Personally, I've been feeling quite giddy with the summer upon us. That familiar feeling that comes with school being out, beach vacations, snowball stands opening and the (ahem) warm Southern sun is here, and it feels good!

But just one glance at this issue and it's plain to see St. Tammany Health System doesn't take a summer break. In fact, they never take a break at all.

The need for quality healthcare never wanes, nor does STHS's commitment to its vision: We will strengthen the health of our community with compassion, innovation and partnership.

It's exactly that commitment to caring for our community that makes our job at St. Tammany Hospital Foundation so gratifying. Our Northshore community is among the most generous around, and our donors demonstrate time and time again with their giving that they genuinely believe in the healing work of our health system.

Combined, our dedicated foundation staff and our STHF Board of Trustees have decades of experience in development and relationship building. It is the goal of every foundation colleague and board member to help pair each

and every individual and corporate donor with a healthcare cause that is meaningful to them so they can make a difference.

If you don't already know us, let's take this summer to remedy that. I would like to invite you to visit our website to meet our team and our board. Learn more about them at [STHFoundation.org/team](http://STHFoundation.org/team) and [STHFoundation.org/trustees](http://STHFoundation.org/trustees).

You can also always give us a call or send an email so we can meet up to learn more about you and how you feel about healthcare in our community.

And, hey – it's summer. If nothing else, it's the perfect time to enjoy a snowball together!

Sincerely,

Nicole Suhre CFRE  
STHF executive director

## FOUNDATION CALENDAR

Save the dates!

### Aug. 12

**THE Gala:** Step into your Dancing Shoes  
**What:** The foundation's annual fundraiser, this year benefitting cancer care at St. Tammany Health System, presented by HUB International  
**Where:** Tchefuncta Country Club  
**More:** [thegalanorthshore.org](http://thegalanorthshore.org) (985) 898-4141

### Oct. 23

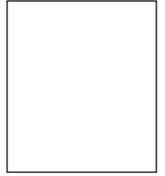
**Monster Mash**  
**What:** Our annual not-so-scary, Halloween festival/fundraiser, presented by Metairie Bank Northshore  
**Where:** Bogue Falaya Wayside Park, Covington  
**More:** [STPH.org/monstermash](http://STPH.org/monstermash) (985) 898-4435

### Dec. 9

**Angels of Light**  
**What:** Annual tree-lighting and program of tribute and remembrance benefiting St. Tammany Hospice  
**Where:** St. Tammany Parish Hospital front lobby  
**More:** [sthfoundation.org/angels](http://sthfoundation.org/angels) (985) 898-4141



A scene from the pumpkin patch at Monster Mash 2020.



# THE *gala*

PRESENTED BY  
 **HUB**

*Supporting  
St. Tammany Health System  
and Ochsner Health's  
groundbreaking approach  
to integrated cancer care  
right here where patients  
most want to be - **HOME.***



**THURSDAY, AUGUST 12**  
**TCHEFUNCTA COUNTRY CLUB**  
**TheGalaNorthshore.org**

*Sponsored in part by:*

**TICKETS AND SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE**