

Vol. 22, No. 3/ Summer 2026



Heart to Heart

A publication of St. Tammany Health System



Making a difference

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Heart to Heart magazine is a quarterly publication of St. Tammany Health System
Vol. 22, No. 3; Summer | 2026

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Gratefully Yours

Building a healthier community together



Joan Coffman, STHS President and CEO

Every community has people who quietly change lives.

Sometimes, they do it one family at a time, sitting beside parents in their darkest moments and helping them find compassion, comfort and hope. Sometimes, they do it over decades, mentoring colleagues, shaping culture and ensuring every patient encounter reflects the values of a community hospital that has never forgotten why it exists.

In this issue of Heart to Heart, you will find

examples of both.

Our cover story celebrates Bereavement Nurse Navigator Kristi Lamarque-Bordelon, whose vision and advocacy helped inspire the passage of Angel's Law, expanding support for families experiencing infant loss across Louisiana. Her work is a powerful reminder that healthcare is about more than medicine. It is about listening, walking alongside people in moments of unimaginable grief and helping make difficult journeys a little less lonely.

You will also read about the retirement of our longtime chief nursing officer, Kerry Milton, whose 44 years of service helped define the Culture of Caring that remains the foundation of St. Tammany Health System. Kerry led with humility, mentored generations of nurses and never lost sight of our mission to improve the health and well-being of the community we are privileged to serve.

At first glance, Kristi and Kerry's stories may seem very different. Yet both show what is possible when talented people choose to put their neighbors first by investing their gifts close to home.

Their stories are just two of many in this issue that celebrate the people and partnerships strengthening the health of our community every day.

I hope you find them as inspiring as I did — and I thank you, as ever, for trusting St. Tammany Health System with your family's healthcare.

Gratefully,



Joan M. Coffman, FACHE
St. Tammany Health System president and CEO

The STHS-Ochsner partnership, explained

By STHS Communication Department

Got healthcare questions? We've got answers, thanks to our stable of St. Tammany Health System experts.

Today, we enlist STHS Chief Operating Officer Jack Khashou to help explain the partnership between St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner Health.

I have heard people say Ochsner Health owns St. Tammany Health System. I have heard people say Ochsner Health runs St. Tammany. I have heard people say neither is the case. What exactly is St. Tammany Health System's relationship with Ochsner Health?

Khashou: The short answer: Neither is the case. But there's a little more to it than that. Both organizations maintain their own autonomy, identity and governance. St. Tammany Health System was founded in 1954 and is a self-supporting, not-for-profit organization. It receives no tax funding and is governed by an eight-member Board of Commissioners. The two organizations have chosen to partner together clinically and financially integrate in order to enhance specialty care, improve access and provide more cost-effective healthcare to our community.

Where does MD Anderson fit in?

Khashou: That's a good question. The answer is a bit less straightforward. Through our partnership with Ochsner Health, in summer 2021 we opened a purpose-built cancer center at Interstate 12 and Louisiana 21, which is by design just down the street from St. Tammany Parish Hospital.



As part of the partnership between St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner Health, which started in 2014, the two health systems operate St. Tammany Cancer Center — A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center, near the intersection of Louisiana 21 and Interstate 12 in Covington. (STHS photo) **INSET:** St. Tammany Health System Chief Operating Officer Jack Khashou

Reflecting the shared ownership, it was called St. Tammany Cancer Center — A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center. Care providers from both St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner practice there, as do a number of community physicians. Then, in 2023, Ochsner Health announced a separate partnership with the world-renowned MD Anderson Cancer Center. The resulting Ochsner MD Anderson Cancer Center provides patients at multiple Ochsner Health cancer centers access to cancer treatments that, thanks to the involvement of MD Anderson, are among the most advanced in the nation. Among those cancer centers is St. Tammany Cancer Center here in Covington, which benefits from our partnership with Ochsner Health as well as Ochsner Health's separate partnership with MD Anderson.

Are there other community partnerships St. Tammany Health System takes part in?

Khashou: Oh, many. There's Healthier Northshore, a group of community stakeholders that include St. Tammany Health System, Ochsner Health, Slidell Memorial, Lakeview Medical Center and Our Lady of Angels, who together are interested in improving local health metrics. There's St. Tammany Quality Network, an organization of community physicians aligned with St. Tammany Health System to deliver quality healthcare at more affordable costs. There's the St. Tammany Academic Center, through which we have partnered with SLU and Northshore Technical Community College to provide nursing classes right here in Covington. ■

And the winners are...

Celebrating excellence in the St. Tammany Health System family



1) St. Tammany Health System nurse Pamela Barabino, center, celebrates her Daisy win with teammates in the Mother Baby unit at the health system's flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital. 2) Kaitlyn Kusch, left, a nurse in the Pediatrics ED at St. Tammany Parish Hospital, is all smiles upon learning from St. Tammany Health System Chief Nursing Officer Kerry Milton that she won a Daisy Award for Extraordinary Nurses. 3) St. Tammany Health System Mobility Tech Callie O'Bryant, center, celebrates her Sunflower win with members of her team. 4) Nila Dykes, a nurse at the St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center, admires the 'Healer's Touch' trophy – each handcrafted in Zimbabwe – that comes with each Daisy Award. Pictured next to her is St. Tammany Health System nurse Regina Knight, herself a past Daisy winner. 5) Certified Nursing Assistant Theresa James, left, beams as she accepts a Sunflower Award from Milton. (STHS photos)

The heart of caring leadership

After 44 years of dedicated service, STHS Chief Nursing Officer Kerry Milton retires

By Mike Scott, miscott@stph.org

The year was 1983, and a young Kerry Milton — then just two years removed from the LSU School of Nursing — was named Nurse of the Year at St. Tammany Health System's flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital.

"An excellent role model for our nurses," one of her co-workers said in a hospital newsletter.

"An inspiration to others," another said.

Now, more than four decades later, with the announcement of Milton's retirement as the health system's chief nursing officer — a role she's held for 26 years — accolades are again pouring in, and they sound a whole lot like those generated by Milton's early Nurse of the Year honor.

"Kerry's legacy extends far beyond her remarkable tenure," STHS President and CEO Joan Coffman said. "She has been a fierce advocate for our patients, our nurses and our community, leading with compassion, integrity and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Through her servant leadership, she has helped shape the culture of St. Tammany Health System, inspiring generations of colleagues to answer the call to greatness while never losing sight of the people we serve."

Milton officially stepped away June 19. To say she will be missed is an understatement.

At the same time, in a wide-ranging and reflective conversation just two weeks before her big day, Milton was less focused on what she was leaving behind than on what the journey has meant to her.

"This has been an engaging and wonderful experience," Milton said in her office, surrounded by half-packed boxes. "My career has been everything I ever hoped it would be. Not to ever say I expected to be a (chief nursing officer); I did not. It was just an opportunity to give back to the people of this community."

"It's been a challenge," she added, "but also a fun one."

It's been an impactful one, too — one that started years ago as she was growing up in Bogalusa.

"I identified at an early age that I did love

2023: Kerry presents a moved Regina Knight with a Daisy Award for Extraordinary Nurses.

people and I had an affinity for older people, whether it was church or social settings in the community,” she said. “I loved listening to and talking to old people.”

That led her to volunteer as a candy-striper in Bogalusa. There, she was impressed and deeply impacted by those she worked with – and with the certified nursing assistants who guided her. It all made nursing school a no-brainer.

Upon graduation, she spent a year as an oncology nurse in Jefferson Parish. Then, an opportunity arose at St. Tammany Parish Hospital in Covington. It was another no-brainer.

“I was familiar with Covington, being from Bogalusa,” she said. “Knew it to be a wonderful community, (liked) the size of the community. And I wanted to be at a non-for-profit community hospital.”

A lot has changed since those days. The growth of the community is among the biggest, she said – along with that of the hospital, which has blossomed into a regional health system. But one crucial component, she says, is exactly the same now as then: the compassion that defines the culture at St. Tammany Health System.

“I think back to the early days of my hire,” she said, “(and to) the attention on the workforce, the importance placed on patient-focused care and giving back to this community. Listening to what those community needs were is part of that culture, and I think that existed back on Day 1 when I was hired here.”

In fact, she said, it’s that culture – and the knowledge that nurses can make a meaningful difference with every patient interaction – that has brought her back to work each morning for more than four decades.

Indeed, she lists the maintaining of that culture in the face of nonstop growth among her proudest accomplishments.

In retirement, she predicts she will probably volunteer somewhere. Eventually. But first, she foresees spending time with her grandkids, traveling, reading, birdwatching, getting her hands dirty in her garden.

What is certain is that she will not soon be forgotten at St. Tammany – and that the praise from her 1983 award still holds true.

“The Culture of Caring that defines St. Tammany Health System today bears Kerry’s imprint in countless ways,” Coffman said, “and her legacy will live on through the people she has mentored, the trust she has earned and the community she has helped build.” ■



2026: Kerry is photographed in her office just two weeks before her retirement.



2010: Kerry celebrates with members of her team after St. Tammany Parish Hospital was named an Employer of Choice.



1983: Kerry is named nurse of the year - after just one year on the job.



2020: Kerry gets her COVID-19 vaccine.



2023: Kerry speaks at the groundbreaking for the St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center.



1997: Kerry rubs shoulders with 'Florence Nightingale.'



2022: Kerry receives a Daisy Lifetime Achievement Award.

From Heartbreak to Hope



Among those gathered at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge for the signing of Angel's Law were, from left, STHS Chief Nursing Officer Kerry Milton, State Sen. Patrick McMath, STHS Bereavement Nurse Navigator Kristi Lamarque-Bordelon, State Rep. Kim Carver and STHS AVP-Women and Children's Services Cindy Ingram.

How one St. Tammany Health System nurse changed bereavement care across Louisiana

By STHS Communication Department

If there is one universal truth about grief, it is that there really are no universal truths.

Some people seek solitude. Others lean on family and friends. Some need weeks or months before they can speak about their loss. Others begin looking immediately for meaning in the unimaginable.

For Kristi Lamarque-Bordelon, the loss of her infant daughter became the beginning of a mission.

It led her into healthcare, eventually bringing her to St. Tammany Health System, where she now serves as bereavement nurse navigator in the New Family Center at St. Tammany Parish Hospital. More recently, it inspired her to make sure that no family facing the loss of a baby has to navigate those

"We wanted to be a leader for the entire state. We wanted to say, 'This is how care should be given not just here at St. Tammany Health System but across Louisiana.'"

**- St. Tammany Health System
Bereavement Nurse Navigator
Kristi Lamarque-Bordelon**

heartbreaking moments without compassion, support and choices.

On June 1, that mission became law.

Standing beside Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry in Baton Rouge, Lamarque-Bordelon watched as he signed the Perinatal Bereavement Care Initiative, better known as Angel's Law — legislation she

helped conceive and champion.

Afterward, the governor handed her the pen he had used to sign it.

For Lamarque-Bordelon, it was more than a souvenir. It was proof that one family's loss could become a source of comfort for countless others.

"We wanted to be a leader for the entire state," she said. "We wanted to say, 'This is how care should be given not just here at St. Tammany Health System but across Louisiana.'"

The idea took root after she learned about a similar measure in Texas known as Everly's Law. Determined to win Louisiana families the same support, she contacted the office of state Sen. Patrick McMath with a simple proposal. The response was almost immediate.

What began as a phone call last September quickly evolved

ABOUT OUR COVER PHOTO: Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry gives St. Tammany Health System Bereavement Nurse Navigator Kristi Lamarque-Bordelon the pen he used to sign Angel's Law — which Lamarque-Bordelon championed — after a June 2 signing ceremony in Baton Rouge. Also pictured are, from left, advocate Jamie Strahl, STHS AVP-Women and Children's Services Cindy Ingram and state Rep. Kim Carver. Photo by STHS Director of Communication and Marketing Amy Bouton.



Kristi Lamarque-Bordelon, left, and advocate Jamie Strahl are all smiles after Gov. Jeff Landry signed the Perinatal Bereavement Care Initiative – now known as Angel's Law – to provide additional support to bereaved parents.

into a legislative effort that drew overwhelming bipartisan support. Lamarque-Bordelon traveled to Baton Rouge to testify on the bill's behalf, sharing both her professional expertise and her own experience with infant loss. By the time it reached the governor's desk, 118 lawmakers had signed on as co-authors.

"From what I've been told, that just doesn't happen," Lamarque-Bordelon said.

That speaks to the significant need Angel's Law addresses.

An estimated 22,000 stillbirths occur in the United States each year, while roughly one in four pregnancies ends in miscarriage. Behind every statistic is a family experiencing profound loss, often while navigating a healthcare system that varies widely in the bereavement resources it can provide.

Angel's Law aims to change that by tasking the Louisiana Department of Health to help Louisiana hospitals that offer maternity or neonatal intensive care services provide enhanced support to bereaved parents. That includes specialized

staff training, connections to grief counseling and other mental health resources, as well as access to cooling devices that allow parents additional time with their baby.

Those devices, known by brand names such as Caring Cradles or CuddleCots, gently preserve an infant's body, giving families precious time in which to hold their child, take photographs, make handprints or footprints, and say goodbye at their own pace.

Not every family chooses to do those things, Lamarque-Bordelon said, and that is precisely the point.

"We honor them in their space no matter what their choice is," she said. "But we need to give families the choice."

That philosophy has guided her work at St. Tammany Health System, where she has helped build a comprehensive bereavement program rooted in empathy rather than protocol.

"The pain of losing a child does not go away," she has said. "How we care for patients facing such a loss stays with them forever." ■

Bereavement resources

Support for families navigating loss

Support group options at St. Tammany Health System

Our STHS bereavement support group meets on the first Tuesday of every month at St. Tammany Parish Hospital in Covington. Everyone is welcome, no matter where you delivered or when your loss occurred.

GriefShare grief and loss support groups

Offers support groups throughout many communities.
Online: [GriefShare.org](https://www.griefshare.org)

Heidi Saint James

An organization committed to changing how baby loss is cared for by supporting hospitals and grieving families.
Online: [HeidiSaintJames.com](https://www.HeidiSaintJames.com)

Star Legacy Foundation

Support project offered to any family that has experienced perinatal loss. This foundation provides free virtual support groups and free peer-to-peer support. *Online: [StarLegacyFoundation.org](https://www.StarLegacyFoundation.org)*

No Heart Left Behind

Local organization that offers low-cost, quality services for therapy.
Online: [NoHeartLeftBehind.com](https://www.NoHeartLeftBehind.com)

Abel Speaks

Organization that supports families who have chosen to carry a child with a life-limiting diagnosis. *Online: [AbelSpeaks.org](https://www.AbelSpeaks.org)*

The Finley Project

This organization offers free support to any mother grieving the loss of an infant.
Online: [TheFinleyProject.org](https://www.TheFinleyProject.org)

Innovation on Display

STHS offers community a hands-on look at the da Vinci 5 robotic surgical system

By STHS Communication Department

At St. Tammany Health System, innovation is not confined to laboratories or operating rooms. Sometimes, it shows up right in the lobby of its flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital.

That was the case April 24, when physicians, colleagues and members of the community gathered for an interactive demonstration of the da Vinci 5, the latest generation of robotic-assisted surgical technology designed to help surgeons perform minimally invasive procedures with enhanced precision, control and visualization.

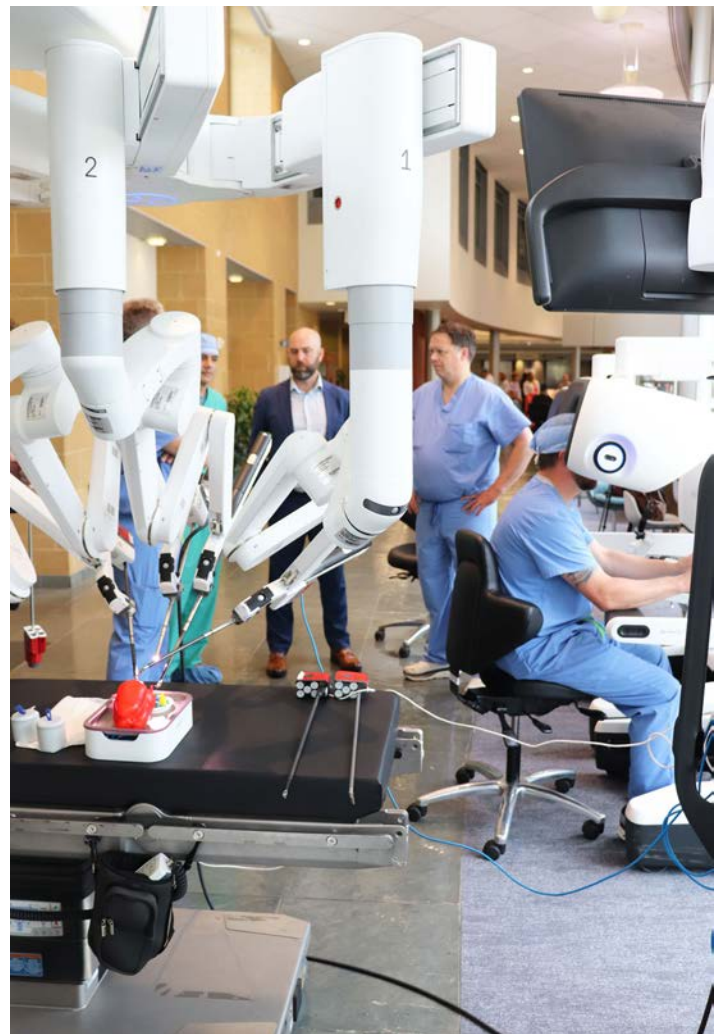
Hosted in partnership with the medical technology company Intuitive, the event invited attendees to step up to the console and test the system's capabilities firsthand. Using a red bell pepper as a patient stand-in, participants also got an up-close look at how advanced technology is helping shape surgical care close to home.

Used in a range of abdominal procedures – from hernia repairs and colon resections to gall bladder surgeries, appendix surgeries and more – the da Vinci 5 boasts a number of advancements over its predecessors.

"The analogy I always tell people, since lots of people are familiar with iPhones, is that this is the newest and brightest iPhone, takes the best pictures. And really that's one of the biggest things, the imaging quality, so you can see the images really clearly," said Dr. Jacob Daigle, a surgeon with St. Tammany Health System's Northlake Surgical Associates practice. "The old technology is still very good, but this is an updated platform. It's got better ergonomics for the physician, and some of the instruments we use are newer and updated."

The demonstration also served as a celebration of a recent milestone for St. Tammany Health System surgeons, who recently completed their 500th procedure using the da Vinci 5 platform. Across the life of the health system's robotics program, its surgeons have now performed more than 11,700 da Vinci-assisted procedures.

For the health system, the event reflected a longstanding dedication to technology and innovation. That commitment dates to 2007, when STHS purchased its first da Vinci



Using a red bell pepper as a patient stand-in, a STHS surgeon (seated at right) controls the arms of a Da Vinci 5 robotic surgical assistant as part of an April demonstration in the lobby of St. Tammany Parish Hospital. (STHS photo)

system, establishing itself as the first medical robotics institute along the Interstate 12 corridor. Since then, the health system has continued to invest in advanced surgical technology, adding multiple robotic platforms in support of high-quality care close to home.

Dr. Jonathan Brent Moss, who is also a surgeon with STHS's Northlake Surgical practice, said the health system's investments in such technology as the da Vinci 5 benefit patients in meaningful ways.

"It's really good for the patient," Dr. Moss said. "It decreases length of stay, it decreases operative time, it decreases post-operative pain – and any time we as general surgeons can perform a surgery minimally invasively and decrease pain, we're going to do that." ■

Tiny Topics | Raising a self-motivated child

Part of an occasional series from the St. Tammany Health System Parenting Center.

By Kayli Coleman MA,
STHS Parenting Center

Motivation is the drive that prompts us to act. Whether we are motivated by love, money, enjoyment or praise, our reasons influence our behavior — and the same is true for children. Understanding two types of motivation can help parents raise more self-motivated kids.

In today's Tiny Topics column, we will discuss two types of motivation, the outcomes of each and how to help children develop self-motivation.

One type is called extrinsic motivation, which involves behaving in a certain way to get a reward or avoid a negative outcome. Adults commonly use extrinsic motivators with children, including stickers, token systems, candy and praise like "Great job!" or "Way to go!"

Punishments like spanking, time-outs or taking things away are also extrinsic motivators.

While extrinsic motivation can improve behavior in the short term, rewards often lose their effectiveness as children come to expect bigger and better incentives. Over time, a sticker for staying seated may become less appealing than exploring the classroom.

Punishment as extrinsic motivation is ineffective long-term because it increases fear in children, which reduces the child's ability to learn from the behavior. That can lead to a damaged and less trusting relationship with children.

Intrinsic motivation is behaving in a

certain way because of internal factors such as interests, values, joy or fun. This offers multiple benefits over extrinsic motivation, including increased dedication and engagement, improved learning and performance, promotion of creativity and innovation, as well as enhancing emotional well-being. This type of motivation also has long-lasting effects on behavior.



Fortunately, parents can use several techniques to help children develop intrinsic motivation.

Although praise is considered an extrinsic motivator, some praise can improve intrinsic motivation. First, praise should communicate that success is related to effort and under the child's control rather than purely about ability. An adult saying, "Wow, look at you working so hard!" emphasizes effort rather than "You did it! Great job!" which focuses on the outcome.

Praise should also reflect realistic expectations. When in doubt, offer feedback or appreciation instead: "Thank you for cleaning up your toys," rather than simply, "Great job!"

There are a few other ways to help children develop intrinsic motivation. Adults can also allow time and space for children to explore and exercise curiosity. Instead of

directing children and hovering over them during play, we can help them find their own interest without forcing something on them.

Adults can support and encourage children by commenting on their efforts, enjoyment and progress without concern for the outcome. For example, "You are working so hard to tie your shoes. Just let me know if you need help, I'll be right here if you need me."

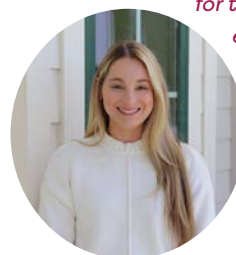
Lastly, adults can explain the intrinsic motivators behind specific behaviors and emphasize feelings of pride and accomplishment. For example: "I know brushing your teeth is not always fun, but it is so important that we have clean and healthy teeth." Or: "I just finished brushing my teeth and I like having fresh breath after I'm done."

Ideally, our children will grow into teenagers and adults who do not "do the right thing" because they expect some prize or to avoid punishment. As parents, we can raise children to do the right thing when nobody is looking.

Intrinsic motivation helps children develop an internal moral compass they can follow when parents are not there, growing into self-motivated children — and, eventually, self-motivated adults. ■

Kayli Coleman MA is an educator with the St. Tammany Health System Parenting Center, which since 1987 has worked to promote confidence and competence in parents, encourage optimal development for their children, and

enhance the well-being of local families as a whole. Learn more about the Parenting Center's programs at StTammany.health/ParentingCenter.





ABOVE: Some of the 41 local artists whose works appear in St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's latest gallery exhibition pose for a group photo in the lobby of St. Tammany Health System's flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital. The show, which is part of the foundation's Healing Arts Initiative, is on view for free through Aug. 17. **BELOW:** A trio of mixed-media pieces featuring owls, and created by local artists Joshua Duncan and Sarah Megan Jenkins, are among the artworks adorning the Skybridge hallway at St. Tammany Parish Hospital. **BOTTOM:** An oyster shell sculpture by artist Colette Martin. (STHS photos)

Healing, heart – and art

Works from 41 local artists bring color to hospital halls

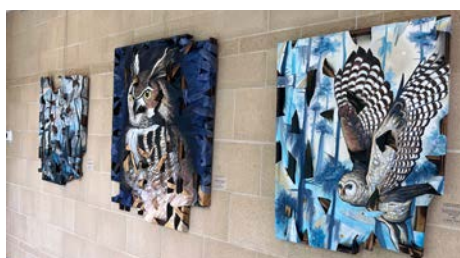
By STHS Communication Department

Bright blooms, vivid landscapes and soaring imagination are once again transforming the halls of St. Tammany Health System's flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital into a vibrant gallery of color, creativity and, of course, healing.

The latest installment of St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's Rotating Gallery Series is now on display through Aug. 17, bringing 121 pieces from 41 artists to the hospital's first floor as part of the foundation's Healing Arts Initiative.

Now in its 11th year, the exhibition — themed "Colorful Fields of Flights and Flowers" — is the largest in the program's history. According to organizers, it is also among the boldest and most vibrant showcases to date, highlighting a lively mix of classically trained and self-taught artists.

Visitors will also find a personal



connection woven throughout the exhibit, with four STHS colleagues featured among the artists, along with one artist who is the mother of three health system colleagues. Special labels identify colleague artists throughout the display.

"We're thrilled to share this year's exhibition with our colleagues, patients and visitors because it truly reflects the joy and energy that art can bring into a healing space," said Emily Revere, a member of the foundation team who served on the exhibition committee. "Art has a unique ability to comfort, inspire and create moments of peace.

It is our hope that this collection helps make the hospital environment feel even more welcoming and restorative for everyone who experiences it."

Designed as a self-guided tour, the exhibition includes informational pamphlets along hallway corridors, detailed wall labels and directional signage to help guests navigate the collection.

The Rotating Gallery Series is part of St. Tammany Health System's Healing Arts Initiative, a program of St. Tammany Hospital Foundation that promotes art as a meaningful component of healthcare and healing. ■

Visit STHfoundation.org/HealingArts to learn more about the foundation's Healing Arts Initiative and see a list of the artists in the current exhibit.



Community rallies behind foundation's autism campaign

More than \$15,500 raised in April for local programs

By *STHS Communication Department*

St. Tammany Health Foundation's annual autism acceptance and awareness campaign once again reflected the heart of a community coming together in support of children with autism and their families across the Northshore.

This year's efforts raised more than \$15,500 to further the work of St. Tammany Health System in strengthening care, resources and understanding for patients with autism.

Held each April in recognition of World Autism Acceptance Month, the campaign is built on simple but powerful acts of support. This year, for example, colleagues across St. Tammany Health System showed their commitment by purchasing awareness T-shirts and socks, turning everyday wear into visible encouragement for local families.

That spirit was amplified by Medtron and Med-Data, whose employee giving campaign — bolstered by



Students from St. Peter Catholic School raised money for St. Tammany Health Foundation's autism efforts as part of the Covington school's annual S.O.U.L. Day, which stands for 'Serving Others, United in Love.' (Provided image)

a charitable donation match — added meaningful momentum to the foundation's ongoing work.

Students at St. Peter Catholic School in Covington also selected the foundation's autism initiative as one of the featured charities of their annual S.O.U.L. Day — bringing a bright, hopeful energy to the effort.

The foundation also extends

heartfelt congratulations to board member and autism initiative chair Sunny McDaniel, recently honored by Children's Advocacy Center — Hope House as one of its 2026 Champions for Children.

The campaign's impact continues to grow beyond April, carried forward by community traditions like the 8th annual Falaya Float, held June 6. That event raised \$8,000 in support of the autism initiative, thanks to the efforts of Courtney and Josh Graham and the many sponsors who made the day possible.

"Together, these efforts reflect something simple and powerful: a community showing up for its children — and making sure families navigating autism on the Northshore know they are not doing so alone," St. Tammany Health Foundation Executive Director Nicole Suhre said. ■

Visit www.sthfoundation.org/autism to learn more about how you can help the foundation's autism efforts.

THE Gala to 'Step Into the Future' in support of cancer care

By *STHS Communication Department*

As it prepares for its annual party with a purpose, St. Tammany Health Foundation is inviting locals to Step into the Future at its annual fundraising Gala, with a sci-fi-inspired celebration blending philanthropy, imagination and forward-thinking fun.

This year's black-tie event is set for Thursday, Oct. 1, from 7 to 10 p.m. at Tchefuncta Country Club.

Proceeds from the evening will

support vital patient programs and services at St. Tammany Cancer Center — A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center, helping local cancer patients and their families receive compassionate care close to home.

Presented once again by HUB International, this year's event is also made possible through the generous support of Louisiana Blue, Ochsner Health, St. Tammany Health System, Professional Emergency Medicine Management, First Horizon Bank and

UnitedHealthcare.

"As we Step into the Future together at THE Gala, we are creating a future filled with compassion, innovation and support for local cancer patients and their families," the foundation's Melanie Rudolph said. "This evening is about transforming generosity into life-changing care right here in our community."

For details, visit TheGalaNorthshore.org. Individual tickets go on sale Friday, Aug. 21, while they last. ■

Gratitude in action

St. Tammany Health Foundation hosted its annual donor recognition celebration May 7 at the St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center, bringing together the people who power its mission for a night of appreciation. In addition to honoring guests reaching new giving milestones, the winners of this year's prestigious Adrian Award – the nonprofit Ruby's Kids – was also announced. Thanks go to all our donors for their extraordinary generosity and for making it possible to bring better care and stronger hope to the community we are privileged to serve.



1) The Pink Ladies, a group of local breast cancer survivors and advocates, take a well-deserved bow. 2) The foundation's Kathleen Thomas, left, with supporters Rich and Rachel Mauti of the Mauti Cancer Fund. 3) Foundation Executive Director Nicole Suhre, far right, address the group gathered in the lobby of the STHS Surgery Center. 4) A member of the John Eubanks Trio helps set the tone for the evening. 5) The winners of this year's Adrian Award, given annually to a person or group with an established track record of in-kind giving to the foundation, are the nonprofit Ruby's Kids – members of which are shown here – who have for more than a decade been brightening the holidays of children of Northshore cancer patients. 6) St. Tammany Health Foundation Board of Trustees members, from left, Paul Davis, Kevin Gardner and Mark Grayson.

Standing together

Making a difference in the community doesn't have to be difficult



Nicole Suhre, STHF executive director



The St. Tammany Health Foundation team — from left, Melanie Rudolph, Kathleen Thomas, Doug Walker, Nicole Suhre and Emily Revere — are pictured at their 2026 donor appreciation celebration in May.

Every act of philanthropy begins with a simple truth: We are stronger when we care for one another.

I am reminded of that as fall approaches each year — and as our community comes alive with purpose as we celebrate our season of impact. At St. Tammany Health Foundation, we see businesses, individual donors and families rally around events that shine a light on the healthcare needs that touch so many of us: men's health, cancer care, breast and lung cancer screenings, families and parenting, and hospice care.

These moments of gathering and giving represent more than dates on a calendar or fun outings. They are opportunities for us to stand together in support of the patients, families and caregivers who rely on St. Tammany Health System every day.

As we look ahead to fall, I invite our business community to join us as sponsors and partners in these efforts. Your support strengthens the programs that care for our neighbors — your customers, employees and families — at their most vulnerable. Every dollar contributed fuels innovation in healthcare.

Individual participation matters just as much. When you purchase a ticket, attend an event, bid on an auction item or encourage others to get involved, you help create the momentum that keeps our mission moving forward.

If you are interested in learning more about sponsorship opportunities, I welcome you to reach out. Your partnership truly makes a difference.

On behalf of the Foundation's Board of Trustees and our team, I hope each of you is enjoying a wonderful summer, and we look forward to seeing you at our many events soon!

Warmly,

Nicole Suhre, CFRE
St. Tammany Health Foundation executive director

Foundation calendar Save the dates!



Walk of Remembrance – Walking with Angels

Sept. 19, 9 a.m.
Pavilion at Koop Drive

First-time walk in memory of infant and pediatric loss. Join us as we remember precious loved ones gone too soon with a walk and butterfly release. To sponsor this meaningful event, please contact the Foundation at 985-898-4171.

Details: (985) 871-5932

THE Gala 2026

Oct. 1, 7 p.m.
Tchefuncta Country Club

The foundation's signature annual fundraising soirée steps Into the Future. With an evening of music, dancing, silent auction, delicious food and fun — all to support St. Tammany Health Foundation's mission to power next-generation cancer care on the Northshore.

Details: THEGalaNorthshore.org | (985) 898-4141

Monster Mash

Oct. 17, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Bogue Falaya Park

St. Tammany gets in touch with its spooky side with the 38th anniversary of the spooktacular Monster Mash presented by Metairie Bank Northshore, featuring family-friendly games, costumes, trick-or-treating and more. Proceeds benefit the STHS Parenting Center.

Details: DoTheMash.org | (985) 898-4435

Angels of Light

Dec. 10, 5:30 p.m.
STPH Lobby

The foundation ushers in the holiday season with the lighting of its Hospice Tree for Life, which is decorated every year with tribute angels purchased by community members to honor or memorialize a loved one. Proceeds benefit St. Tammany Hospice.

Details: STHfoundation.org / Angels | (985) 898-4141



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