

The Vigil

SPRING / SUMMER 2022

Jeremiah's Hope expanded to Jefferson State Community College

IN MARCH 2020, COVID shuttered the restaurant where Kayla Hollon waited tables. Soon she couldn't pay her mortgage. Buying groceries for her eight-year-old son became a challenge.

Today, thanks to Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation-funded Jeremiah's Hope medical jobs training program, Hollon is an Ascension St. Vincent's certified clinical medical assistant. Working alongside a nurse practitioner at American Cast Iron Pipe Company, she conducts health screenings, takes vital signs, and assists in the event of an accident. "Jeremiah's Hope took a huge

burden off me," Hollon says. "It allowed me to establish a better foundation to support my family."

Since 2003 Jeremiah's Hope has graduated hundreds of medical assistants, patient care technicians, sterile processing technicians, administrative medical assistants, and phlebotomists. In 2019, these certification courses were transitioned to Jefferson State Community College, expanding Jeremiah's Hope to four locations and enabling more flexible hours for students. "Without the Foundation's donors we could not provide scholarships and support materials for these students," says Program Manager Kim Sztanyo.



Kayla Hollon performs a blood pressure screening.

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Now Sztanyo and her team are seeking additional support. "There are students who dream of a healthcare career," Sztanyo says. "We want to break down all the barriers, so they can make that dream a reality." While some like Hollon have supportive families, others struggle alone to work fulltime, raise children, and complete demanding night classes. "Jeremiah's Hope got me on the fast track in six months," Hollon says. "But I saw others drop out because they didn't have reliable transportation, childcare, or all the tuition money needed."

Tom and Cathy Adams witnessed the impact of Jeremiah's Hope and annually support the program. "This is the most joyful donation we make," Cathy says. "We were asked to be part of the Jeremiah's Hope graduation pinning ceremony, and it was very emotional. The families were all there. Pride was written on their faces. We heard so many inspiring stories. One young man had graduated from the program and then went back to become a Registered Nurse. He is now head of his department."

The Adams are asking others to give. "I think the more people who learn about this remarkable program, the more people who will be eager to help," Cathy says. "Their graduation success rate is unbelievable. This is something that works. This is a hand-up, not a hand-out. It's not easy. Each participant has to invest a lot of time and effort. These folks are not being trained for a job, but a career they can take pride in. The person who is drawing your blood at the doctor's office might be the first step toward saving your life."

The hope announced by the Prophet Jeremiah (29:11) is particularly meaningful to Cathy. "God has a plan for everybody, but sometimes that plan needs a little facilitation. There are not enough healthcare personnel to fill all the jobs available locally. Giving to Jeremiah's Hope is a privilege, because it can help make a lasting impact on someone else's life."

Hollon agrees. "For somebody like me, what donors give to this program means more than they can imagine; their generosity has changed my life."

Every gift designated for Jeremiah's Hope goes directly to support scholarships and students' needs. Give online at stvhfoundation.org or call 205-558-3850.



Tom and Cathy Adams

Honorariums *The following individuals were recognized through a gift in their honor.*

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Why we give: Wadsworths' endowment supports Chilton County "family"

JIM WADSWORTH REMEMBERS

the moment he heard Ascension St. Vincent's might build a hospital in Clanton. "I thought that would be a home run," says Jim, who owned Clanton-based Wadsworth Oil Company before his 2020 retirement. "I knew I wanted to support that effort. Since 2016, Ascension St. Vincent's has been the best thing that ever happened to Chilton County."

That's why Jim and Debbie Wadsworth have established an Ascension St. Vincent's Chilton endowment. Although they now live in Homewood, Debbie says Jim's commitment to the area is rooted in his high regard for those who helped him build his business there.

"Jim wants to give back to the place where he spent almost 40 years of his life," she says. "The people of Chilton County are extremely generous, and it's amazing how they support their local community. We have so many friends and people who worked for Jim that have



Jim and Debbie Wadsworth

been like family to him, and we hear all the time about their great experiences at the hospital."

"Two of my friends have told me Ascension St. Vincent's Chilton saved their lives," Jim says. "They wouldn't have made it to a hospital further away. I'm now honored to serve on the Foundation board, seeing first-hand how a thankful community and grateful patients support all five of the hospitals. I decided that if I gave this gift as an endowment, it would still be useful even when I'm no longer here, allowing Ascension St. Vincent's to draw off the earnings to help sustain future needs."

Ascension St. Vincent's Chilton Administrator Shanon Hamilton says that even though the hospital is new, it requires similar thoughtful donors to maintain and sustain its services for the years ahead. "We are very grateful for this long-term gift," he says. "The Wadsworths' generosity demonstrates their love for this community, as well as their commitment to the Ascension St. Vincent's mission."

Memorials

Lord, may our prayers come before you in memory of those we entrust to your eternal care.

Marion E. Abbott
Cynthia S. Bailey
S. A. Baker
Linda H. Beard
Tolandar Bell
Dr. Richard L. Berryman
Jane Elizabeth S. Brasfield
Michael T. Brewer
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St. Vincent de Paul
Mary J. Sampson
Casey C. Stephens
Beth Sumner
Ben A. Tamburello, Sr.
William Tepper
Carolyn and Mary Jo Toro
Dorothy W. Trigg

Cindy Troha
Linda Vance
Richard Vest
Susan Viola
A. J. Virciglio
Irene M. Waid
Betty Watson
D. Dianne William

Our brand is our promise

BY 2017, Jason Alexander had served as an administrator in governmental, faith-based, and for-profit hospitals. But he was looking for more. "Having worked from 2006 to 2011 at Ascension Providence in Mobile, I knew I wanted to rejoin Ascension," says Alexander, now Ascension St. Vincent's chief executive officer. "I wanted to return to an environment where everyone around me embraced carrying on the mission, rather than just fulfilling a job."

The name "Ascension" references the Christian scriptures (Matt. 28:19-20) when Jesus ascends to heaven and places His ministry into the hands of the community, sending them forth to be instruments of transformation.

The mission of St. Vincent's began in 1898, when the Daughters of Charity operated the first hospital out of The DeBardeleben Mansion. One hundred years later, the Daughters and the Sisters of St. Joseph formed Ascension, assuring the mission would continue with the same commitment to "serving all persons with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable."

"The Daughters knew there were not enough sisters to continue in leadership roles in all of their hospitals," Alexander says. "So, they established a formal structure and process to train lay leaders to continue their vision." When Alexander served at Ascension Providence in Mobile, he received two years of leadership training in Ascension's vision of Catholic healthcare.

The continued dedication to the mission proved particularly providential. Nationally, Ascension has



Jason Alexander

grown to nearly 150 hospitals. "If St. Vincent's was independent, and not part of Ascension, we would not have the leverage of contracting, regulatory expertise, advocacy, or a robust commitment to rural healthcare," Alexander says.

For Alexander, Ascension is more than a name. "To me, Ascension means we have the benefit of being part of an innovative national health system, yet retain the local reputation and commitment that has distinguished our health ministry since 1898."



**Ascension
St. Vincent's
Foundation**

Your gift. Your community.

While "Ascension" is now formally part of our St. Vincent's Foundation name, every gift continues to support our mission. Donor gifts are not used for marketing or administrative costs. Thus, your entire gift supports Ascension St. Vincent's commitment to wellness and quality healthcare in our community. Our brand is our promise. So, please designate a gift in any amount to a specific Ascension St. Vincent's hospital, or service line — or simply give to "the greatest need."



Caring for caregivers: How donors help further Ascension St. Vincent's nursing legacy

BY NOVEMBER 21, 1898, four sisters from the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul had arrived at Birmingham's Union Station. Their mission was to start a hospital.

The task had stymied others. Birmingham, a raucous town of 100,000 people, was known for industrial accidents, tuberculosis, typhoid, and smallpox epidemics. However, Sister Benedicta Roach's letter upon arrival summarized the mission: "The prospects are that much good can be done for the poor and for suffering humanity." Within the week that four-member nursing staff had started a hospital — and forever changed lives.

"They've invested in me, just like I'm investing in my patients at their bedsides."

Today the legacy lives on. "I am so grateful to have Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation supporting our nurses," says Ascension St. Vincent's Practice Transformation Director Heather Swindle. "What donors have done and are doing shows how much they appreciate our nurses."

While donor-provided meals and other support "helped nurses feel appreciated during the pandemic," Swindle

says, the new Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation-funded Certification Support Program for Registered Nurses will further extend nursing expertise. "I became a certified emergency nurse 15 years ago. The difference that training made was like a light switching on for me. I learned the key signs of patient monitoring that can save lives in a matter of moments. And, my continuing education to maintain that certification helps to sustain my knowledge base."

However, nursing certification is costly. That makes this Foundation-funded, UAB-partnered program especially meaningful. "The Foundation provides up to \$1,000 for expenses related to the review courses and the fees for the test," Swindle says. "That's the servant's heart Ascension St. Vincent's was founded on. Our nurses are deeply grateful for this ongoing professional development. They're thinking, 'They've invested in me — just like I'm investing in my patients at their bedsides.'"

Nurses have had so many demands and have made so many personal sacrifices. Please recognize them with a donation to our Certification Support Program for Registered Nurses. Join in supporting Ascension St. Vincent's nursing legacy by caring for our amazing caregivers.
Visit stvhfoundation.org or call 205-558-3850.

Planned giving and CGAs: Make a gift, receive a gift

FOR 28 YEARS, Jeanette Wyrick provided spiritual care at Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham. "As chaplains, we strived to see every patient in the hospital, to offer spiritual support and aid the emotional part of their healing," she says as the former director of spiritual care. "Especially, in the critical care units and during end of life, both patients and their families were making difficult decisions. We were available at all hours."

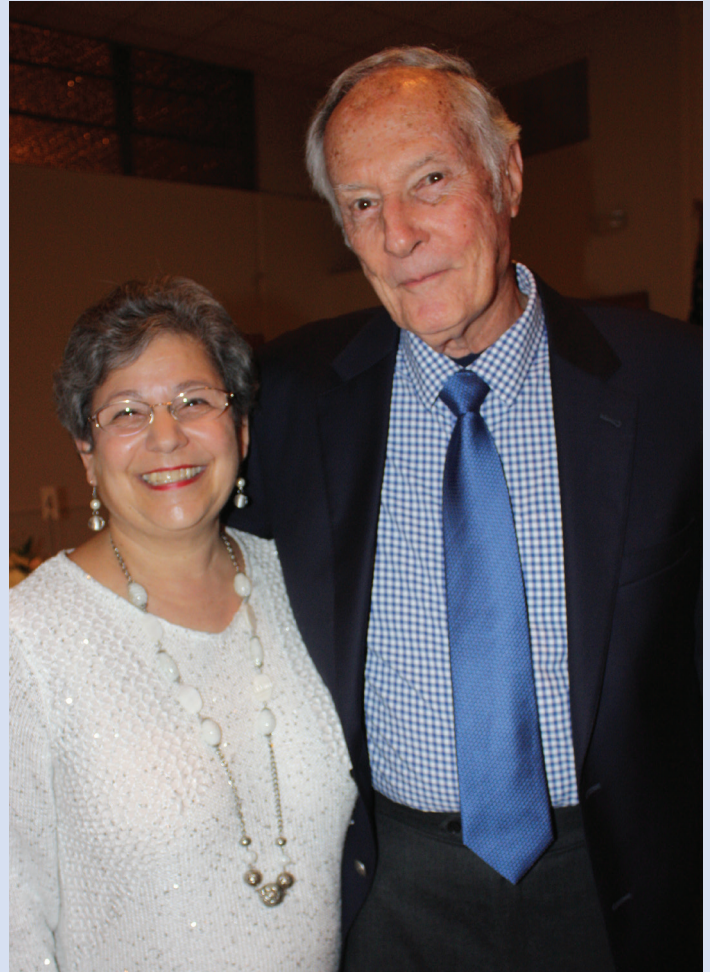
During her tenure, Jeanette crossed paths with Bob Wyrick, an insurance field underwriter whose wife was hospitalized with terminal cancer. "Most of the time I was working out of town and couldn't visit her every day," Bob remembers. "But everyone at the hospital extended such good care to her, and we had happy memories even in difficult times. One day I walked into her room and said, 'I just saw one of your coworkers,' thinking Jeanette was a friend, because I had seen her there so much. But it turned out Jeanette was a chaplain!"

"It is a way of giving thanks, of giving back to help meet others' needs."

After Bob became a widower he and Jeanette remained friends. Eventually they married. After retirement, they knew they wanted to support Ascension St. Vincent's future. "Serving at the hospital was very meaningful for me, and I received more blessings than I provided," Jeanette comments. Because of his insurance background, Bob suggested they make their gift through a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA).

Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation is licensed by the Alabama Securities Commission to offer CGA contracts. Many donors find CGAs to be a mutually-beneficial "Planned Giving" vehicle, as CGAs allow donors (annuitants) to make a gift of cash, appreciated stock, or their home in return for a fixed regular payout during the donors' lifetimes. At the end of a donor's life (and the spouse's life, if giving as a couple) or term of years, Ascension St. Vincent's receives the remainder of the annuity.

In addition to an income stream, annuitants may also be eligible to take a tax deduction when making the gift. A portion of the annuitants' payments may also be tax-free.

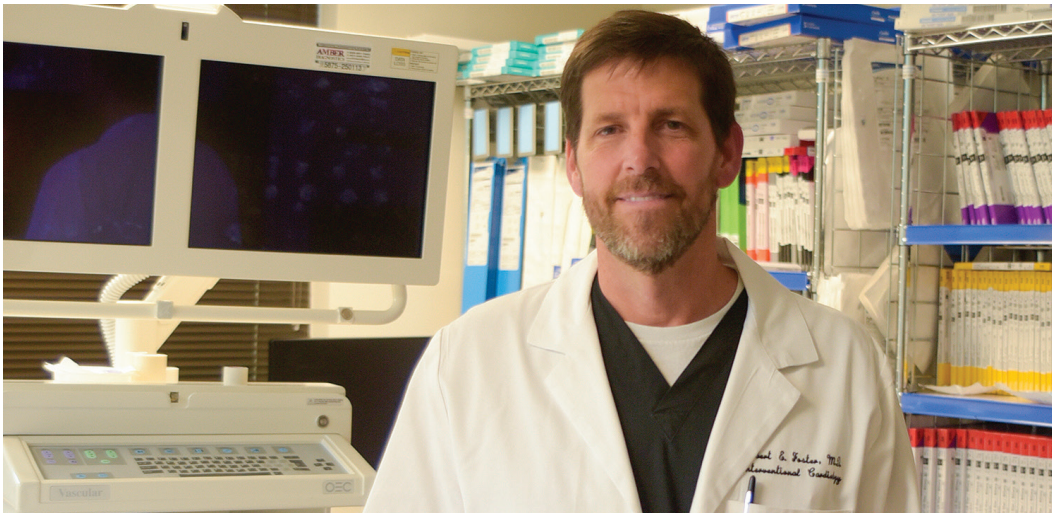


Bob and Jeanette Wyrick

There are minimum gift requirements for establishing CGAs, and donors are always encouraged to consult their financial/tax advisors to explore all Planned Giving options, from CGAs to wills/trusts, to life insurance designations. "We would definitely encourage others to use these charitable tax advantages to support the future of the health system," Bob says. "It is a way of honoring the past and helping to secure Ascension St. Vincent's future."



To learn more about CGAs, receive a written gift illustration of the tax benefits and annuity payments, or explore other Planned Giving options, contact us at stvhfoundation.org or call 205-558-3850.



Robert Foster, M.D.

Giving monthly helps daily: Why one physician supports the Foundation

AFTER 25 YEARS of serving as a Birmingham Heart Clinic interventional cardiologist at Ascension St. Vincent's East and Ascension St. Vincent's Blount, many might think Robert Foster, M.D. has done enough for his community. However, this son of a hospital administrator knows faithful donors are the key to sustaining hospitals.

"The Foundation funds initiatives that increase the quality of patient care," he says. "In our area that means things like next-generation resuscitation devices, catheter lab updates, new lifting devices, and better IVs and monitors. Such advances not only benefit patients but help us recruit and retain great staff."

"It's not what you give, but what you offer from your heart — what you've been led to share."

Foster is also impressed with how the Foundation honors donor interest. "I like the fact that the Foundation allows me to not only donate to a specific Ascension St. Vincent's campus, but to a specific department. And, they're not just about

securing a gift. The Foundation is truly appreciative. I feel like I am part of the mission. That means a lot to me."

Foster makes his monthly gift through the Foundation's Saint Luke Society. "The society consists of Ascension St. Vincent's physicians who have said, 'I want to give back to this health system.' As physicians, we work on committees to help guide improvements, but we can also support the daily operations. I believe that's a very important part of the larger picture."

Every donor makes an impact, Foster says. "I think that, like the Bible story of the widow's mite, it's not what you give, but what you are offering from your heart — what you've been led to share. And that conveys you are genuinely passionate."

Monthly gifts collectively make a significant impact on those who turn to us during a time of medical need. Please make a recurring gift to benefit the location/department you designate. Start your monthly "Friend of the Foundation" gift today at stvhsfoundation.org or call 205-558-3850.

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Sisters' Vigil



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Susan Salter, M.D.

Cancer patients need your encouragement and your help...

EACH SPRING Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation's Bingo Bash raises funds to provide mammograms, medication, lodging, and transportation for Ascension St. Vincent's uninsured and underinsured cancer patients.

However, the threat to the health and safety of vulnerable patients and attendees warranted cancellation of the 2022 event. Patients, families, and friends who have benefited from the care and compassion received at the Bruno Cancer Center are now being asked to help fill the gap that this \$100,000 fundraising event generates.

"The Cancer Center's Patient Assistance Fund plays an important role in addressing the many needs of our patients," says Radiation Oncologist Susan Salter, M.D. "We are very appreciative of the donors who have provided for these needs in the past and we are trusting that they will provide for these needs in the year ahead."

Celebrate someone who is facing this battle with your gift. Call 205-558-3850.