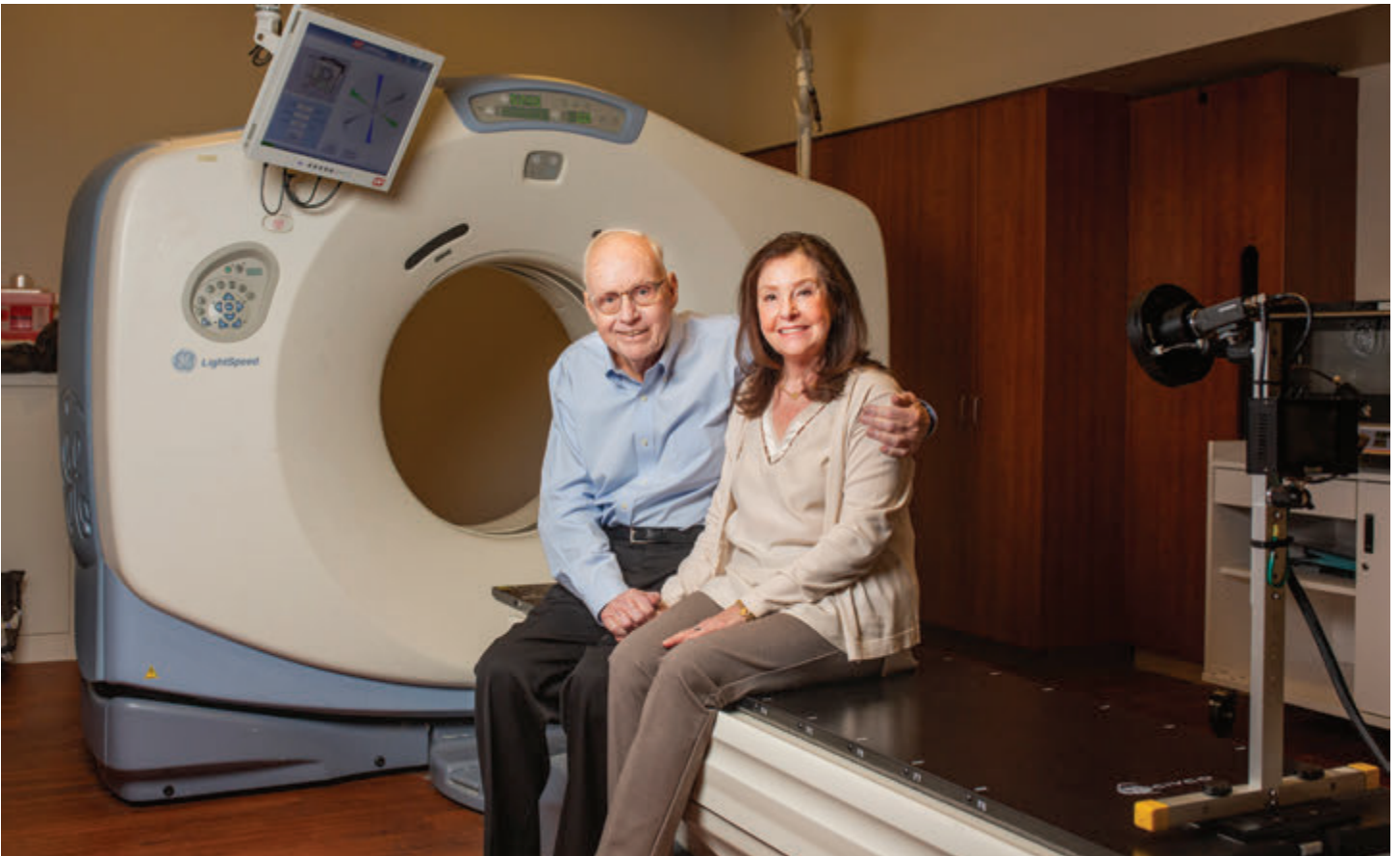


The Vigil

SPRING/SUMMER 2024

Grateful Patients Make Bruno Cancer Center Upgrade Possible



Sandy and Ted Berglund

According to Sandy Berglund, her husband, Ted, was a talker, an outgoing guy who could walk into a roomful of strangers and soon be acquainted with everyone in it. So not long after he began treatment for advanced cancer care at the Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham Bruno Cancer Center, he was on a first-name basis with many of the staff and conversed with them whenever he was there.

"It was during one of those conversations that he learned about the center's aging CT simulator," said Sandy. "He knew right away that he wanted to give back by helping to replace it."

So the Berglunds made a contribution through Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation towards the purchase of a new machine.

(continued on page 2)

“Ted said he wanted future patients to have an even better chance at recovery than he had, and he hoped this would help,” said Sandy. “I’ll always be proud of him for making this decision without hesitation.”

In March 2023, Debbie Wadsworth began a course of radiation treatments for breast cancer at the Bruno Cancer Center.

“I met Dr. Susan Salter and her staff and was extremely impressed with their dedication and loving treatment of all their patients,” she said. “I told Dr. Salter that my husband, Jim, and I wanted to do something for the cancer center, and she told me about the great need for a new CT simulator.”

So, like the Berglunds, the Wadsworths contacted the Foundation and arranged for a contribution of their own. The Berglund and Wadsworth donations, along with a third contribution by Anne and Benny LaRussa, Sr., were combined with capital from the Bruno Cancer Center Fund. An additional \$100,000 provided by Ascension St. Vincent’s helped secure the funds for a new, state-of-the-art CT simulator.

“We are extremely grateful for the generosity of the donors who have committed to the purchase of the new CT simulator,” said Susan Salter, MD, a radiation oncologist at Bruno Cancer Center. “Their support will help us reduce time to treatment and ultimately improve cancer outcomes.”



Debbie and Jim Wadsworth

A CT simulator, said Dr. Salter, is the most powerful tool available for producing the high-quality images needed for developing effective treatment plans and delivering safe, precise radiation therapies. In addition, the new technology will provide faster scan times, improve image quality, and reduce respiratory motion.

“Prior to radiation therapy treatment,” she said, “patients must undergo a CT simulation during which they are positioned in the same way they will be treated each day on the linear accelerator. CT simulation is crucial during the planning process to protect healthy tissue and deliver optimal treatment.”

The CT also has a built-in laser system that can reduce errors when positioning a patient and a built-in display on the gantry, which allows the therapist to stay with the patient at the table for improved safety.

Upcoming 10-Year Milestone

In September, Ascension St. Vincent’s Foundation will host a special event at the Bruno Cancer Center to celebrate 10 years of healing and compassionate care at the “new” Bruno Cancer Center.

“We are excited to be celebrating our 10th anniversary being in our current building,” said Dr. Salter. “This will give us the opportunity to unveil the new CT simulator and share our future plans for providing comprehensive care and support for our patients and their families.”

Supporting the mission of the Bruno Cancer Center promotes exceptional care for cancer patients, as well as hope and support for them and their families. Won’t you help? Visit stvfoundation.org.

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

Mattie Baker
Dr. Mack Barnes
Ted Berglund
Dr. Richard Berryman
Gary Bowers
Michael Brewer
Elinor Burke
Brother Guy Carter
Sarah Crowson
Frank D’Amico

Lena D’Amico
Gary Denton
J. Doody
Jacob Eaton
Sidney Gardner
Reverend Leonard Gavin
Connie Giles
Bettie Ruth Glover
Keilan Gore

Ena Herrin
Frances Holcomb
Donna Horn
Anna Hubbard
Phillip Jones
Edwin Kerr
Concetta Lawson
William Lunsford
Sheard McCulley
Dolores McKellips

Harvey Martin
Dr. James Mason
William M. Moran
Annabelle Mullican
Peggy Ottewill
Jackie Parker
Frances Ross
Paul Ross
Deborah Sheffield
Steven Sheffield

Edgar Stevens
Elizabeth Stevens
Lola Stevens
Ben Tamburello, Sr.
Commander Robert Threlkeld
Dianne Williams
Dr. Jeffrey Wurst

New Sinks Clean Up Health Risks

New ergonomic decontamination sinks were recently installed in the Ortho and Main sterile processing areas at Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham. The sinks are used to remove contamination from instruments used in surgical procedures.

"The pandemic illuminated the amazing dedication of several supporting departments that often operate unnoticed, working behind the scenes to ensure our patients have access to reliable care," said David Edwards of The Resource Group.

As Edwards and his team observed sterile processing technicians using the old sinks, the need for ergonomically designed equipment became apparent. They saw people of heights ranging from 5'3" to 6'5" using the same fixed-height sinks. Making the process even more uncomfortable, what they were cleaning weighed up to 25 pounds each.

"The inability to adjust the sink height to the optimal level for each individual was introducing additional

physical taxation on our team members," Edwards said. "But through the support of our Foundation and the generosity of community donors, we were able to upgrade our sinks to ergonomically focused units that reduce the physical stress that our team members experience each day."

The installation of the sinks required varying degrees of construction and retrofitting of plumbing, which would have posed a significant expense in addition to the cost of the new sinks. However, a generous in-kind donation from Brasfield & Gorrie provided installation services.



Sterile processing team members pose with new sink

"We are grateful for partners like Brasfield & Gorrie that are willing to help fulfill needs by donating supplies and services," said Andy Bell, president and chief development officer of Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation. "Not only do these gifts free up money on our end for meeting other needs, in-kind is often an easier, more affordable way for donors to give."

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

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Abbott
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Almon
Carlton Ambrose
Landon Ash
Mr. and Mrs. Percy Badham
Carl F. Bailey
Jeff and Cindy Barnes
Cat Bartz
Dr. and Mrs. Jason Bearden
Herbert Beville
Omar and Retna Billano
Mr. and Mrs. Raynor Boles
Dr. Joseph Brewer
Mr. and Mrs. Ricky Bromberg
Vincent and Mary Ann Bruno
Will and Tracy Bruser
Mrs. Barbara Burton and Mr. David Williams
Wayne Carmello-Harper
Kirk, Camille, and Piper Carroll
James Carter
Jennifer Carter
Dr. and Mrs. Lee Carter
Mr. and Mrs. Tim Casteix
Dr. Sirisha Chada
Mr. and Mrs. Ralston Cole
Mr. and Mrs. Skip Cooper
Dr. James Crenshaw
Dr. E. Merritt Cullum
Stephen Curry
Christy Bush Davidson

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Davidson
Mr. and Mrs. David Davis
Dr. Jeffrey Davis
Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Deaton
Mr. and Mrs. Forest DeBuys
Christopher Lee Drummond
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Emack
Joe and Ginny Farley
Mr. and Mrs. Jay Faulkner
Jimmy and Carol Filler
Dr. Noah Fitzpatrick
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Georgia White
Ford and Karla Wiles
Mr. and Mrs. Hunter Williams
Jonathan and Angela Williams
Mr. and Mrs. Carlton Wood
Mr. and Mrs. Mike Wright
Diana Young

Celebrating the Past, Anticipating the Future



(L-R) Robert and Shelia Smith with Angela and Terry Payne

In terms of celebrating Ascension St. Vincent's long history of service and care, the 125th Anniversary Gala on January 12 was a tremendous success. But it also proved to be an incredible display of generosity by 40 sponsors and 300 guests, who collectively raised \$416,000 for the Care of the Poor Fund and Nursing Education Fund.

"Our Foundation extends its deepest gratitude to our sponsors and guests for their extraordinary contributions and unwavering support during our 125th Anniversary year," said Andy Bell, president and chief development officer of Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation. "Without their generosity, our mission would not be possible." That mission was born in the pioneering spirit of a small band of Daughters of Charity, who came to Birmingham from St. Louis in 1898 for the specific purpose of establishing a hospital. Not only did the courageous women lay the groundwork for the Ascension St. Vincent's of today, but they also created enduring legacies of ministry to the poor and exceptional nursing care.

"As the healthcare industry continues to recover from the impact of the pandemic, there is a heightened demand for nursing services across various specialties and settings," said Bell. "Developing a new nurse pipeline is crucial to meet this increased demand and ensure that patients receive compassionate, timely, and quality care."

Sculpture Brings Historical Meaning to New Facility

The February opening of Ascension St. Vincent's East Freestanding Emergency Department (FED) in Trussville was a source of great celebration not only for the facility's staff but for the entire community.

The excitement of the opening day was accompanied by a blessing and dedication, tours of the facility, and opportunities to honor the donors who helped make the new FED possible. Two of those donors were Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Allison, who purchased the naming opportunity for the Sisters' Vigil sculpture, the likes of which stand at other Ascension St. Vincent's facilities.

"I always admired the Sisters' Vigil, whose imagery was conceived by Dr. Edwin Waldrop," said Dr. Allison. "I worked with him on many occasions during my internship as a surgical assistant."

The original Sisters' Vigil was created by sculptor Brad Morton, a friend and colleague of Mrs. Allison. The work represents the four members of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul who came to Birmingham in 1898 to start a hospital.



(L-R) Mr. and Mrs. Brad Morton with Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Allison

Dr. Allison is an emeritus member of the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation Board of Directors. He learned of the opportunity to finance the recasting of the sculpture for the Trussville facility while attending a meeting of the Board's allocation committee. "I elected then and there to donate the required funds for completing this great project with the hope that in the future, others would seek out this facility after seeing this

beautiful beacon of mercy, and thereby enjoy the grace of our Lord and Savior into the far and distant future, as the Sisters continue to watch over us from Heaven," he said.

The Works of Arts in Medicine



Volunteer pianist Carol Alston plays for patient Brenda Barham, under the supervision of Occupational Therapists Elyse Young and Stephen Parker

Ascension St. Vincent's Ministry Formation is delighted to welcome UAB Arts in Medicine (AIM) to two campuses, made possible by the generous support of Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation. The AIM program was founded to incorporate the arts into a healthcare setting. It strives to transform the care environment and enhance well-being and healing through creative arts experiences for patients, families, and staff.

According to Ministry Formation Manager Megan Everett, the AIM program began as an associates-only effort, with artists making rounds in each hospital to bring 15-minute arts-related sessions into areas where associates work.

"Whether it's music, movement, or painting, everyone has the opportunity to participate," she said. "It gives them a break in their day, and it's great for community building as they connect through different types of activities than what they normally do."

St. Vincent's AIM programming has been expanded to now include outreach to patients and visitors.

Kim Mayer, volunteer services supervisor at Ascension St. Vincent's East, recently saw the beneficial effects of music on a patient. "I was in the atrium when a therapist brought a patient to hear someone play the piano there," she said. "I could tell the patient was soothed by the music, and the therapist encouraged her to do stretches in time with it. The pianist kept playing as long as they were there. I could tell it meant a lot to that patient."

Participating in creative activities helps alleviate suffering and nurtures souls. To support Arts in Medicine at St. Vincent's, please call the Foundation office at 205-558-3850.

Cool Beans, Hot Coffee, Warm Friendships



Kyle McGee and his communication partner, Michael Richards

Thanks to a coffee cart business called Kyle's Cool Beans, associates and guests at Ascension St. Vincent's One Nineteen can purchase a morning cup of java, enjoy a visit with the proprietor, and go about their day with a smile.

The Cool Beans story began seven years ago when Veronica McGee was searching for a place where her son Kyle, an Oak Mountain High School student, could work on his pre-employment and communication goals.

"Kyle wanted to have inclusive experiences in his own community where he could learn work skills, spend time with his friends, and develop lifelong relationships," his mother said.

So, Kyle, who was born with hydrocephalus, became a One Nineteen volunteer.

Fast forward five years. Kyle decided that he wanted to start his own business and hopefully earn a good wage to help support his lifestyle.

Now four mornings a week, Kyle and his communication partner, Michael Richards, offer a delicious blend of coffee, along with a choice of flavorings and fixings at One Nineteen.

One of the Cool Beans' regulars is Carter Wood, who met Kyle when he was delivering towels to the One Nineteen guests. Wood, along with fellow Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation Board members, provided start-up costs for Kyle's Cool Beans through the Foundation's new Serving Together Grants program.

"Kyle is a great guy," Wood said. "He's somebody who makes you feel good whenever you're around him, and he communicates friendship in his own way. Kyle touches my heart."

Supporting Ascension St. Vincent's Women and Children's Services



Bassinets on Parade

The happy arrival of 15 new bassinets at Ascension St. Vincent's Women and Children's Center was celebrated with music, balloons, and a bassinet parade through the Birth Suites.

"Our previous bassinets were over 25 years old and had served their purpose," said Madonna Nichols, administrative director of Women and Children's Services at Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham. "While they were quite beautiful in their day, they were no longer functional."

Funded by Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation, the new bassinets allow moms to keep babies close to their beds. They can be adjusted to accommodate the height of the mom or nurses and are made of materials that are easily cleaned.



Panda Warmers

The purchase of new Panda Warmers for Ascension St. Vincent's Women and Children's Center was made possible by a generous donation from The Zyne Family Foundation.

Panda Warmers allow the pediatric team to keep newborns unclothed and unwrapped—but still safely warm—while performing initial assessments and routine tasks like footprinting and banding.

"We were grateful for the opportunity to support Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham for the donation of the Panda Warmers to their NICU," said Kimberly Stephens, president of the Zyne Family Foundation. "Most of our Board members, including their parents, were born at this hospital, so it was a blessing to be able to grant this request."



Taste of New Orleans

The carefree rhythms and flavors of the Crescent City rolled into town with the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation Junior Board's second annual Taste of New Orleans on February 1. The Mardi Gras-inspired event took place at The Farrell in Homewood and netted over \$16,000 to benefit Ascension St. Vincent's Women and Children's Services.

"With music from String Theory and food donated by local restaurants, including Big Bad Breakfast, Chuck's Fish, and the Pihakis Restaurant Group, everyone had an amazing time," said Event Chair Meighan Coley. "We are already looking forward to making next year's event even better and more profitable!"

Planned Giving: Estate Gift “Insures” Family Legacy



Donna and Tom Foster

Tom Foster learned about generosity early in life. His father died when Foster was just a kid, so he, his mother, and his siblings were often dependent on the kindnesses of their friends and neighbors in their hometown of Talladega.

“He was essentially raised by the community,” said daughter Laney Blanchard, “and he never forgot that. I think that’s what made him so sensitive to the needs of others. He also just loved people and wanted to help anybody he could who needed it.”

Though Foster’s wife, Donna, wasn’t as outgoing as her husband, she was more than supportive of his generous ways, according to Blanchard.

“They were a classic case of ‘opposites attract’ when it came to being around a lot of people,” Blanchard said. “Mom was an artist, and she was overall more reserved than he was. But she was always happy to be Dad’s partner in contributing to their church and community.”

The Fosters met while both were attending the University of Alabama. After graduation, Foster did a tour of duty in Vietnam with the U.S. Army, earning a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service while there. After returning home, he earned a law degree at Cumberland School of Law, later serving as a city judge and as an administrative assistant for Congressman Bill Nichols in Washington, D.C. He went on to open a real estate law office in Birmingham, where he practiced for 35 years.

Foster’s community endeavors included serving on the boards of Eastside Ventures (a subsidiary of Eastern Health System) and the Eastern Health Foundation. Through those connections, he developed a heart for the hospital that later became Ascension St. Vincent’s East when Eastern Health System merged with St. Vincent’s Health System.

So after Foster passed away on December 23, 2021, no one was surprised to learn that many years prior, he had named the hospital as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy and arranged for the proceeds to support the East Cancer Treatment Center.

Donna Foster passed away on February 16, 2022, only eight weeks after her husband. According to Blanchard and brother Brannon Foster, their parents left them a legacy much like they left countless others through their commitment to generosity and service.

Naming a charity as a primary or secondary beneficiary of one’s life insurance is an easy way for policyholders to support organizations they believe in and to help build better futures for others. Won’t you consider naming Ascension St. Vincent’s Foundation of Alabama as a beneficiary? Contact Jennifer Carter at 205-558-3858 or visit legacy.stvfoundation.org to learn more.

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Sisters' Vigil



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New MRI Means Better Care for Blount Community

Ascension St. Vincent's Blount has acquired a \$1 million Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine, thanks to a generous grant from the Blount County Health Care Authority.

Until the new unit arrived, the hospital depended on a mobile MRI service to fulfill patients' needs. But when the service was making rounds in other parts of the county, some patients had to drive 45 minutes to an hour to the nearest facility with MRI capabilities.

"We don't have to rely on an MRI that goes up and down the mountain three days a week anymore," said Administrator Greg Brown. "This is a big deal for this little hospital."



(L-R) Gena Gullion and Debbie Gossett

MRI Technologist Tristan Lemons agreed. "It's an asset for the community, for sure," she said. "An in-house unit is so much better than a mobile unit in terms of patient care. For one thing, whether it was rain or shine, we had to move patients out into the elements to get them into the trailer."

Lemons also noted that putting a patient inside a machine that was in a small, enclosed space like a trailer often increased their anxiety level. And for larger patients, the small quarters made the experience even worse. "We now have a wide bore, which helps with larger patients and those who are claustrophobic," she said.

Your gift to Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation will provide, sustain, and improve healthcare for individuals and communities, like what the recent MRI purchase will do for Blount County. To learn more, visit stvfoundation.org.