

The Vigil



St. Vincent's
FOUNDATION
A ministry of Ascension
St. Vincent's

Sisters' Vigil

Spring 2021

Donor dollars at work:
“These incredible nurses need every advantage as they help babies fight for their lives.”



Caroline Williamson comforts Warren in the Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham NICU.

Caroline Williamson's eyes fill with tears when asked what she wants St. Vincent's Foundation donors to know. “I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart,” says this mother of Warren, the now-healthy 18-month-old son born 15 weeks early.

“I know Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) saved our baby's life. I want donors to know that Warren is a miracle. My husband and I know Foundation donors provided much of the equipment the NICU team needed during our 104 days there. I don't think he would have made it without the high-tech Giraffe OmniBeds donors provided. But there is always new technology needed for the next child. These incredible nurses need every advantage as they help babies fight for their lives.”

What donors have done

NICU Nurse Manager Allison Blackburn, RN, MSN, says Foundation donors have played an essential role in helping provide the highest standards of care for the hospital's tiniest and sickest babies. The Foundation's

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continuing five-phase renovation and expansion project, initiated in 2017, has already expanded the NICU's capacity, provided the Giraffe beds "micro-preemies" require to regulate electrolytes, temperature, and other life essentials, built overnight family rooms, enhanced NICU entrance security, and renovated the waiting area, nursery pods, public corridors, unit corridors, and nurses' station.

"Without the Foundation we couldn't provide other enhancements, like the cameras that virtually connect parents with their hospitalized babies," Blackburn says. "While our entire unit has been updated, maybe our highest family-use area is the NICU classroom the Foundation provided, where we teach parents how to care for their babies at discharge. We have to be good stewards of our budget, and sometimes there's not enough to go around for things like that. That's when donors come in and ease the financial burden tremendously."

What is needed now

While NICU nurses are grateful for everything Foundation donors have already done, Blackburn says her staff continues to rely on donors to meet emerging needs. "Neonatology has come so far, and we continually need new equipment, as well as replacements of existing equipment." That's why the next phase of the Foundation's NICU project will focus on securing Giraffe OmniBeds for every patient, from the tiniest preemies through full-term babies at discharge.

"We can take the best care of our babies when we have the right equipment," Blackburn says. "When we need to replace aging equipment that can't be repaired, we rely on Foundation donors' help to meet those needs."

Will you help babies who are fighting for their lives? Every dollar makes a difference. Visit stvhsfoundation.org today. †

FOUNDATION-PROVIDED NICVIEW CAMERAS CONNECT BABIES AND FAMILIES



New NicView cameras connect parents with their baby anytime.

Five years ago, an Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham workgroup considered how the hospital's NICU could enhance its family-centered care. One of their goals was to purchase parent-accessible bedside cameras like those in higher-level NICUs around the country. However, the cost of providing 31 such cameras at Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham made that goal seem like an unattainable dream.

But that was before St. Vincent's Foundation Junior Board members turned the dream into a providential reality. Thanks to their efforts, every NICU parent can now connect with their baby anytime through their personal electronic devices. NICU Nurse Manager Allison Blackburn

says those cameras were a particular godsend during the pandemic.

"The NicView Camera is a small, secure camera placed at each infant bedspace that provides a 24/7 live, real view of an infant in NICU through each parent's phone, iPad, or other device," says Blackburn. "This was a wonderful invention when mom was too sick to visit her baby in the NICU, or a dad was deployed, or grandparents and extended family lived too far away to visit in-person. But it really became essential – and such a blessing – when COVID-19 hit and there was at one time the potential for a mom and baby to be separated for up to two weeks. With these cameras, even COVID can't separate a mom and dad from seeing and bonding with their baby."

Each camera can be accessed and moved remotely via a private, patient-specific log-in through a secure online portal. At any time of the day or night parents unable to be with their babies in-person can use the portal to rotate the image to best see their child.

"We wanted to be able to provide that connection between family and baby around the clock, but that also meant a lot of money that we just couldn't provide at one time," says Blackburn. "We are so grateful for the Foundation donors' generosity and investment into our unit and our precious families and babies. We are forever grateful for these cameras and the many other past and continuing contributions. And I know our families are, too!" †

Moms2Be: *Foundation links donors, programs*

Everyone knows Ascension St. Vincent's is where babies come from. What everyone may not know is that St. Vincent's Foundation is where dreams can materialize. When a donor dreams of sponsoring a program that is based on a proven need, physicians dream of better patient outcomes, and mothers dream of receiving parent programming and critical baby equipment, the Foundation is ready to respond.

“Our group was glad to comply with the Foundation’s proposal that we and other OB/GYN practices match a first-year grant from Medical Properties Trust to establish Ascension St. Vincent’s Birmingham’s Moms2Be program,” says Eastern OB/GYN’s Elizabeth Blair, MD, a Foundation board member. “The program encourages mothers on Medicaid to not only come to their prenatal and postpartum visits, but also provides free parenting classes and incentives for program completion. Since we know such programs can improve medical outcomes for mothers and babies, we were glad to help.”

The infant mortality rate for deliveries paid for by Medicaid in 2017 was 7.4 deaths per 1,000 live births, compared with 4.3 deaths for deliveries paid for by private insurance. In an effort to reduce infant mortality rates in our community by encouraging mothers-to-be to seek early prenatal care, St. Vincent’s Foundation worked with Medical Properties Trust, Ascension St. Vincent’s Women and Children’s Center, and the following practices to develop the Moms2Be program: Eastern OB/GYN, Henderson & Walton Women’s Center, OB/GYN Associates of Alabama, and Sharp & Stone OB/GYN.

Short-term Medicaid enrollees were the least likely to receive early prenatal care (58.8 percent). In contrast, nearly all mothers living in high-income areas (91.7 percent) received early care.

The Foundation is uniquely positioned to link donor

interests with proven programs, says Jody Robinson, RN. Robinson is the team leader for Ascension St. Vincent’s Birmingham’s Monogram Maternity program, which includes fee-based parenting classes for all patients. Thanks to the Foundation’s efforts, Moms2Be participants now qualify for Monogram Maternity scholarships as well as extra incentives to participate in prenatal and postpartum care.

“Part of our mission is to minister to those who are most vulnerable,” says Robinson. “We are using donors’ generous gifts to incentivize expectant mothers in at-risk situations. We invite them to our Beautiful Beginnings event, which introduces everything we offer in Monogram Maternity, from infant feeding and sleep classes to lactation consults. Moms2Be participants who complete the program’s requirements may choose an essential gift—such as a car seat, pack-and-play, or high chair.”



Jamie Kilgore spends time with precious daughter Amelia.

While Moms2Be was the realization of organizers’ dreams, not even the most imaginative could have anticipated how vital the effort would become in 2020. By mid-spring, all parenting classes were virtual. When pandemic layoffs resulted in losses of private health insurance, the ranks of Medicaid mothers grew. Soon patients like Jamie Kilgore were accessing Moms2Be for the first time.

“Moms2Be was a great opportunity,” says Kilgore, whose daughter Amelia was born last August at Ascension St. Vincent’s Birmingham. “My son Oliver was born there in 2014. Since Amelia was our 2020 surprise, this program offered me a lot of peace of mind, knowing I’m re-educating myself about infant care. It also provided peace of mind to know I was receiving an important item for my newborn’s safety as a present upon completion of the program.”

The Foundation is helping realize additional dreams, too. Learn more about how donors can support other important needs across Ascension St. Vincent’s at stvhfoundation.org. †

Why We Volunteer: *Youngest and furriest family member follows multi-generation service tradition*

Honey can barely wait to see her friends again. By early 2020 Honey, the youngest and furriest member of Benny and Lynn LaRussa's family, had visited Ascension St. Vincent's Bruno Cancer Center every week for more than two years. When she and Lynn routinely exited the Center's door in March, they couldn't imagine a pandemic preventing volunteers from reentering the place they love for more than a year.

"Honey began visiting Ascension St. Vincent's in December 2017, when she was just barely three," Lynn says. "As one of Hand in Paw's youngest therapy dogs, she loved going to visit the patients, families, and Bruno Cancer Center staff. We both wore a uniform, and she would get so excited when I got her yellow scarf out of the closet."

While this golden retriever and her brother play exuberantly at home, Honey was known for her calm demeanor while volunteering. "She was always on leash, always with me, and always accompanied by Oncology Counselor Louis Josof, who guided us to those most likely to enjoy her," Lynn says. "Honey can sense who needs her, and she just lets people stroke her soft fur. If they really connect, Honey will roll on her back and let them rub her tummy or snuggle. Each week we spent two hours making our way with Louis through the waiting and treatment areas, and you could see people just being transported mentally

to Honey's happy place. They would start taking pictures with Honey and showing us pictures of their pets. I've had people stop me on the street to say, 'My friend met Honey, your dog, at the Bruno Cancer Center!'"

Honey's Ascension St. Vincent's service runs in the family. It was the generosity of Joe and Theresa Bruno, Benny's

grandparents, that enabled Ascension St. Vincent's to establish the Bruno Cancer Center in 1989. The extended family's support is memorialized within numerous Ascension St. Vincent's ministry sites, while the current generation continues the family tradition via its own time-talent-treasure investment in Ascension St. Vincent's healing ministry.

"It was just natural that we wanted to volunteer," says Lynn. "I've had cancer in my family, and we've had family members treated at the Center. It's very important to us that we give our time. My mother-in-law, Anne LaRussa (daughter of Joe and Theresa Bruno), first told me about Hand in Paw, and urged me to look into it. We've

seen how people benefit from loving on a dog. The Cancer Center associates have been so supportive, because they know Honey has lots of love to give. It's hard to see people suffering, but good to know we're doing something. After all, everyone—including Honey—can do a little something. Volunteering is just a great way to give back." †



Lynn and Honey's Halloween visit with a patient at the Bruno Cancer Center.

Leadership Transition: *Foundation seeks new president to “share in our vision”*

While the February resignation of St. Vincent’s Foundation President Susan Sellers means Ascension St. Vincent’s executive search process is well underway, Interim Foundation President and Ascension St. Vincent’s Chief Mission Integration Officer Wayne Carmello-Harper says this season remains an appropriate time to reflect on the Foundation’s transition, vision, and future.

Transition

“Susan Sellers told me about the search firm contacting her regarding the CEO position at United Ability. This is a reflection of her character, and once I knew this, I was certain they would want to hire her,” Carmello-Harper says. “All of us, which includes the entire health system, will miss her deeply. Susan has been a transformative leader in every way.”

Senior Vice President Ascension, Ministry Market Executive Jason Alexander agrees. “Susan has been a valued leader at the Foundation and across our health ministry. Her seven years have resulted in record donor engagement, integrated programs that directly care for our most vulnerable patients, a robust grant program, and a solid staff that will continue to welcome and thank our remarkable and generous donors. Susan’s new position with United Ability is a great opportunity, and we wish her every success.”

“All of us, which includes the entire health system, will miss her deeply. Susan has been a transformative leader in every way.”



*Wayne Carmello-Harper,
St. Vincent’s Foundation Interim President,
Chief Mission Integration Officer, Ascension St. Vincent’s*

Vision

As the Foundation seeks its new president, Carmello-Harper serves in a familiar interim role. The Foundation has long been part of the Mission Integration Department he leads. That organizational position is quite intentional, as it reflects Ascension St. Vincent’s emphasis on extending the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.

“St. Vincent’s has faithfully cared for this community since 1898,” Carmello-Harper says. “People trust that we are prepared to respond in a crisis or time of medical need. They know we will listen and assist them in every way possible.” For many patients and families, an expression of gratitude to Ascension St. Vincent’s for the compassionate, personalized care they or their family member received is a vital step in their healing process. “The Foundation’s mission uniquely serves in celebrating this final healing step,” he says.

Future

The Foundation receives such gratitude in whatever form it is offered. “There is an essential mutuality in this relationship,” Carmello-Harper says. “Patients and families are thankful for safe, quality care, trained and responsive personnel, and the commitment to place them at the center of our concern, especially at the close of life. Without their renewed gratitude, we can forget our meaning and purpose; we can view our work as routine and not as sacred. We can shift to a healthcare delivery system, and lose our way as a healing ministry.”

That’s why the new president will be someone poised to continue the Ascension St. Vincent’s faith-based mission, working with what Carmello-Harper calls “a remarkable team of very committed professionals to welcome others to share in our vision.” †

Honorariums

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

Dr. David Adkison	Dr. Tammi Dahle	Reed Monroe Kennedy	Dr. Michael K. Ryan
Jason Alexander	Stephanie Dameron	Mary Jo Kynerd	Dr. Susan Salter & Radiation Staff
Dr. Leland Allen	Olivia Davidson	Dr. Shaily Lakhnopal	Karen Sanders
All the Associates	Dr. Jeffrey C. Davis	Kimberly Lee	Latrena Sanders
The Employees of Alternative Insurance Resources, Inc.	Rebecca DiPiazza	Tracie Loftis	Mr. and Mrs. Shannon Scaturro
Dr. John E. Ammon	Lisa Donnell	Kimberlyn M. Mayer	Catherine A. Schilleci
Lili Anderson	Debbie Dresher	Peter Lewis McCray	Brittany Scott
Avery T. Armstrong	Allyson Duncan	Kathryn McCulloch	Cynda Screws
Eli James Ashley	Shaney Dunn	Dr. Owen R. McLean	Susan E. Sellers
Patty Baker	Leslie Edmondson	Dr. Joshua Y. Menendez	Dr. Robert A. Shaffer
Sally Baker	Dr. and Mrs. Noah J. Fitzpatrick	Drs. Mary Carol and Jimmy Miller	Dr. Monjri M. Shah
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Adell Benton	Frontline Workers	Kellie Neil	Dr. Jason S. Smith
Tracy L. Berke	Dr. Ashley Fry	Bea Newman	Dr. Elizabeth Snowden
Dr. Melissa Black	Anna Garmon	Knud Nielsen	St. Paul's Cathedral
Kimberlee Blake	Margaret Lucille Gast	Kristen Noles	St. Vincent's East 5th Floor Staff
Dr. Tim Bode	Scott Goggins	Dr. Gerald P. Norris	St. Vincent's Foundation
Kris Boone and Staff	Dr. and Mrs. Samuel R. Goldstein	Karen and Larry Norris	Colleagues and Friends
Dr. Joseph W. Brewer	Bennett, Charlotte, & Ellis Gray	Marilyn Oden	Dr. Parvez K. Sultan
Cindy Brown	David "Ellis" Gray	Dr. Ronald W. Orso	Julia Taliaferro
Carolyn Bruhn	Dianne S. Guthrie	Betsy Pautler	Charlotte Elizabeth Tapley
Dr. David Shane Buggay	Nancy Hale	Janet A. Payton	Summer Tappan
Rhonda Buzbee	Dr. David B. Hall	Mr. and Mrs. Bradley C. Phillips	Suzanne Thorn
Camp Bluebird & Volunteers	Trey Hamer	McCoy Phillips	Sara Towns
Ian Samuel Capra	Shanon Hamilton	Jennifer Philpot	Dr. Scott Tully
Wayne Carmello-Harper	Dr. Michael K. Han	Dr. John Piede and the Oncology Department	Mr. and Mrs. Jack W. Vines, Jr.
Margaret Carpenter	Kathleen E. Hedrick	Lucy Poole	Virginia B. Vinson
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Kendall Chambliss	Rosie Herdt	Susan W. Pridmore	Kara T. Weis
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Allesha Coleman	Sonya H. Holcomb	Dr. David L. Rader	Mr. and Mrs. Brandon M. Williams
Dr. Corey M. Coleman	Sandra W. Holland	Krista Rataj	Eric and Caroline Williamson and Family
Brantleigh Brooklyn and Braden Cook	Jim and Julie Hollon	Dr. Barry K. Rayburn	Alyse Windsor
Kristin Costanzo	Val Holman	Dr. Van C. Reeder	Dr. William C. Wood III
Dr. and Mrs. Richard L. Cox	Anna Kate Hooks	Dr. John Richardson	Erin R. Yost
Dr. E. Merritt Cullum	Johnetta Jackson	Laura S. Roberts	Tovia Young
	Matthew A. Jagger	Dr. Jon D. Rosser	
	Louis Josof		

Memorials

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

Lillian Dorse Andrews	Eleanor M. Davis	Lee H. Holt	Pricilla Allie McCray	Robert E. Shannon, Jr.
Joseph Arbuthnot	Sister Virginia Delaney, D.C.	Mary Huey	Joanne McLinn	Elizabeth Cutter Shei
S. Allen Baker, Jr.	Guerry and Virginia Denson	John E. Huie	Lacosta Miles	Cecil Smith
Dr. Richard L. Berryman	Joe Dunham	Diane Jenkins Jersey	Claude M. Moncus	James M. Smith
Michael T. Brewer	Karen Dunn	Edwin T. Kerr	Jack "Jackie" Andrew	James C. Snow
Frederick Allen Brown	John Dupree	John William Kidd	Monroe II	Billy Songer
Jeanne Brown	Irma Rae Erdreich	Mildred Kilgore	Holly Beard Montana	Raymond G. Spears
Alan Caldwell	M. K. Erdreich	RK Lakhnopal	Patricia A. Moon	Margaret Thurber
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Barbara S. Case	Dr. James S. Faulkner, Sr.	Dr. Shirley S. Letchman	Donna B. Nathan	Dorothy Wynne Trigg
Sue Van Pelt Case	Cora K. Gipson	Robert Lumpkin	Levoy Niblett	Robert H. Tubbs
Larry K. Chamblee	Bettie Ruth Glover	William D. Lunsford, Jr.	Brian K. Nix	Ruby D. Vickery
Oscar Cintron	Felipa Gonzalez	Billy C. Martin	James Phillips	Jacki Lynn Ward
Thomas L. Clark	Jessie Hall	Harvey G. Martin	Joyce Pigg	Jacqueline S. Whisenhunt
Jo Classe	Vanessa Hannah	Phillip Martin	Harry C. Reich	Dianne Williams
Linda M. Compton	Randy J. Harper	Clive M. Mason	Paul and Frances Ross	Wilda Willingham
Mike Coppage	Joanne Hightower	Clyde G. May	Blanche Schwab	Lynn O. Wilmoth
Frank and Lena D'Amico	Frances K. Holcomb	Willie McCollum	Robert Seale	

Why We Give: Telling stories of individual lives and multiple ministries



Carol and David Daigle

The names on the opposite page represent many stories—stories of each individual’s life and stories of ministries benefitting from donations given in each name.

One name listed in last Fall’s *The Vigil* represents the story of the well-lived life of David C. Daigle and the Ascension St. Vincent’s East ministry that served and cared for him.

“While we have many ties to Ascension St. Vincent’s Birmingham, we designated Ascension St. Vincent’s East for my dad’s memorial gifts because of the care shown to him and my mom,” says Dottie Pak, Birmingham attorney and St. Vincent’s Foundation board member emeritus. “When my father suddenly fell ill last year, Ascension St. Vincent’s East was the nearest emergency department. My mom will say to this day that it was God’s hand that led them there. She says she could feel God’s arms around her through the Ascension St. Vincent’s associates, and that everyone there was an angel to help her through that journey.”

While Pak says her dad received excellent health care, “Sometimes there’s nothing that can be done. At a time like that it

means so much to be in a place where professionals can not only take care of health needs, but the full complement of a family’s spiritual and emotional needs. Every single person, from the night security guard to dad’s physician, focused on caring for us. That tenderness and thoughtfulness is why we designated dad’s memorial gifts to Ascension St. Vincent’s East.”

The cards the Foundation sends for each memorial reunites the memory of someone who has died with the living community that cares, says Interim Foundation President and Chief Mission Integration Officer Wayne Carmello-Harper. “Likewise, remembering has a profound connection to celebrating life. And as Dottie points out so well, memorials help people live through a time of loss and grief. Frequently, recipients are surprised when they receive memorials from people they do not know well. They often discover new connections and new memories that help sadness find a way to joy.”

Honorariums also convey gratitude for a person’s service, care, or skills, Carmello-Harper says. “While more than 5,000 Ascension St. Vincent’s associates and clinicians come to work each day to continue our wellness and health care mission, it is very renewing when their contributions are recognized and appreciated.”

The Foundation sends a card for each Memorial or Honorarium which, if not anonymous, includes the name and address of the donor. Remember or celebrate a loved one at stvhsfoundation.org. †

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St. Vincent's Foundation *Bingo Bash Goes Virtual*

A global pandemic didn't stop faithful sponsors and supporters of Ascension St. Vincent's Cancer Centers from gathering virtually on April 29. Instead of a casual, fun night of Bingo, participants viewed inspiring stories from our brave patients and their devoted caregivers.

Val Holman, St. Vincent's Foundation board member and Bingo Bash 2021 Chair, says, "Healthcare workers all over the world have been our heroes during the pandemic, but those serving patients at Ascension St. Vincent's have truly been remarkable." Holman added, "The caregivers at our cancer centers have continued to focus on serving and providing their patients with the latest treatments available while offering a safe, compassionate, uplifting environment because cancer does not stop nor quarantine."

Proceeds from Bingo Bash benefit innovative patient care, education, and patient assistance. Our needs are greater this year than ever before. Each gift changes the lives of our cancer patients. Visit stvhs.com/philanthropy/bingobash to watch the video. Donations are still gratefully accepted. †



Val Holman, St. Vincent's Foundation board member and Bingo Bash 2021 Chair