Heartbeat
The Magazine of St. Francis Hospital The Heart Center

New Destination For Outpatient Care
- 2200 Northern Blvd Offers One-Stop Medical Services
- Cancer Institute Gets Highest Possible Accreditation in New Expanded Site

St. Francis Hospital, The Heart Center® Catholic Health Services
At the heart of health
Welcome

The Heart Center Adds New Beats

St. Francis Hospital has been synonymous with world-class cardiac care for nearly forty years. Over a decade ago, we realized that if we were to continue to thrive and grow, we needed to bring the same levels of excellence and innovation in cardiology and heart surgery to other areas of patient care. So we embarked on an ambitious plan to grow non-cardiac service lines and expand and update our facilities. The blueprint also called for significant investments in facilities and equipment for our renowned cardiac specialties.

The plan included expanding services in orthopedic surgery, cancer care, and other types of general surgery. We invested almost $500 million in new facilities over the last decade—with additions and improvements continuing today. They included the DeMatteis Pavilion and its 14 ORs dedicated to non-cardiac surgical procedures, renovation and major technological upgrades of the hospitals existing cardiac ORs, expansion and renovation of the Emergency Department, and most recently establishing a dedicated Cancer Institute as part of a new outpatient facility at 2200 Northern Boulevard in East Hills.

The results of this plan have been impressive. Orthopedic surgeons at St. Francis have more than tripled in the last five years, making the hospital's program one of the busiest on Long Island. Just as striking, the number of cancer treatments delivered at St. Francis has grown over 40% since the Cancer Institute began operating in 2012. In addition, we are proud of the fact that our Cancer Institute was recently awarded the highest initial accreditation from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer.

St. Francis also continues its growth and leadership in cardiac care. Our Heart Valve Center is in its second year of pioneering work to treat valve disease through innovative procedures such as TAVR and MitraClip. At the same time, our Cardiac Catheterization Lab is breaking new ground in intravascular imaging, which promises to transform the treatment of coronary artery disease. We are making significant investments in renovating and expanding the Cath Lab, as well as adding an additional Hybrid Cardiac OR to facilitate advanced procedures.

These recent changes have created many new synergies that are best exemplified by our new ambulatory center at 2200 Northern Boulevard, our largest facility expansion in decades. Anchored by the Cancer Institute, the center will also provide patients with a highly convenient, well-coordinated facility capable of fulfilling several outstanding clinical needs all under one roof. It is a reflection not only of how healthcare is changing, but of how at St. Francis we are always looking for innovative new ways to put patients first.

Best wishes,

Ruth E. Henners
Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer

In the News

Twin Anniversaries: First CoreValve Patient on LI Celebrates 5 Years of Recovery and 68 Years of Wedded Bliss

“It seems like we just met only yesterday,” says the doted husband, who still calls his wife “Babe.” Their relationship has lasted nearly seven decades, yet grew even stronger after Mr. Leito was implanted with the minimally invasive device that allows elderly patients with aortic valve stenosis to avoid open heart surgery — giving the close couple a new lease on life.

Newell Robinson, M.D., Chairman of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery at St. Francis, held a stethoscope to the chest of his history-making patient and after hearing the results remarked, “Sounds as good as the day we put it in.” Dr. Robinson, who oversaw the replacement with George Petrosian, M.D., Co-Director of the Heart Valve Center at St. Francis, said, “This therapy came along at a great time.”

The minimally invasive procedure has given this active senior and his wife a chance to travel to their timeshare in Arizona and pursue his passion of growing fig trees in the backyard of their West Hempstead home. An Italian immigrant, who grew up poor, Mr. Leito prides himself on the warm pork roast he brought home as a butcher, and continues to cook and share the love for his life. He recently drove her for a special birthday meal to his prized Cadillac. Although they recently gave up their timeshare, they still maintain their first priority in life: “We have each other and that’s enough,” he says.

Heartfelt Memories

Anthony Leito made headlines when he became the first patient on Long Island to receive the revolutionary CoreValve TAVR device thanks to doctors at St. Francis. But the 97-year-old retired butcher recently captured the media spotlight once again when he celebrated two special anniversaries at the Hospital — his 75th anniversary of receiving the life-saving cardiac procedure and the 68th anniversary of being married to his wife, Fanny.

Anthony and Fanny Leito were married in 1945 when Anthony, then a 21-year-old fisherman, was instantly smitten with Fanny who was just 17. “I liked everything about her,” he said.

Fonda Memories of Former First Lady Nancy Reagan at St. Francis

When news first broke of the death of former First Lady Nancy Reagan, the story really hit home at St. Francis. Robert Vita, for president and chief executive, shared some heartwarming recollections with several major media outlets about two visits she made to the Hospital. Reagan, who died at age 93, brought a boy and girl from South Korea to St. Francis aboard Air Force One in 1978 for life-saving heart surgery. She returned five years later when a halfway at the Hospital was named in her honor. But with one condition—that the two children, who had been adopted by a family in Arizona, be there.

“She didn’t even let the security guards in the office,” said Vita of Reagan’s 30-minute meeting with the children in his office. He recalled the then-First Lady putting out two clear jelly bean jars with white House seals from her purse and giving the children the candy. “They talked about school and their lives in America. It was a warm visit,” Vita said, adding that Reagan was “very friendly, very open”—the epitome of a First Lady.
In the News


For the ninth consecutive year, St. Francis Hospital has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the best hospitals in the nation. St. Francis was ranked #13 for Cardiology & Heart Surgery nationwide. It also ranked among the top 50 hospitals in the U.S. in three other adult specialties: Gastroenterology & GI Surgery; Geriatrics; and Orthopedics - the only hospital on Long Island to be nationally ranked in any adult specialty. St. Francis was also the top-ranked hospital on the Island once again and rated #4 in New York State.

“To consistently receive this nationwide recognition in cardiology and heart surgery as well as non-cardiac specialties is a testament to our ongoing mission of providing excellence in patient care,” says Ruth Hennessey, EVP & Chief Administrative Officer of St. Francis Hospital. St. Francis was also recognized by U.S. News as high performing regionally in three specialties: Neurology and Neurosurgery, Pulmonology, and Urology.

Less than 3 percent of the nearly 5,000 hospitals that were evaluated for Best Hospitals 2015-16 earned national ranking in even one specialty. According to U.S. News, the Best Hospitals rankings are designed to be a resource for patients who need a high level of care because they face particularly difficult surgery, a challenging condition, or are at higher risk because of age or multiple health problems. Objective measures such as patient survival and safety data, adequacy of nurse staffing levels, and other data largely determined the rankings in most specialties.

To see the complete list of top rated hospitals and find out more about how they were chosen, log on to: http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals

St. Francis Hospital’s Student Athlete Cardiac Screening Program Hits the Road

St. Francis Hospital has gone mobile to provide free cardiac screenings. The pilot launch took place at St. Anthony’s High School in Huntington where attendance was great. The mobile destination marked the first time the popular program, which recently celebrated its sixth anniversary, provided potentially life-saving screenings off-site to high school student athletes, grades 9 through 12. The goal is to detect and assess potential cardiac abnormalities which may put a strain on an athlete’s heart, particularly when he or she is engaged in strenuous physical activity.

“Over the last six years we have screened nearly 1,400 students in our local community, and over 100 abnormalities have been identified, some of which have had life-saving consequences,” says Sean Levchuck, M.D., Chairman of Pediatric Cardiology at St. Francis and director of the program. “We look forward to further expanding our efforts to this new venue.”

The program includes an exam, EKG, and Echocardiogram. Dr. Levchuck evaluates the results at the time of each student’s screening. Student athletes are required to pre-register in advance of the screening. For more information about the program, please call (516) 69-3020. Or visit our website to download a health history form. Just type in “Student Athletes” in the search field on our home page.

Father and Son Cardiologists Give Their Expert Opinions in Debate over Future of Stethoscope

Ronald J. Gulotta, M.D., cardiologist and Chief Medical Officer at St. Francis Hospital, and his father Stephen, a retired cardiologist, were featured extensively in a Newsday article focusing on the 150th anniversary of the stethoscope. While some physicians never leave home without theirs, others question the need for “perhaps the best-recognized symbol of the medical profession,” as health care goes more high tech.

Dr. Gulotta thinks younger doctors don’t know how to use a stethoscope to diagnose conditions the way physicians of his father’s generation did. His dad definitely agrees.

“I’ve seen young cardiologists examining patients in emergency rooms,” says the elder Gulotta. “They’re ostensibly good cardiologists. But they’ll listen to one spot with a stethoscope for two seconds, then another spot for two seconds and they’re finished.”

The younger Gulotta says he too has seen a decreasing reliance on the stethoscope by younger graduates and he’s saddened by it—adding that the cardiac physical exam used to be the gold standard for physicians of his father’s generation, but is now becoming a dying art.

“I graduated from medical school in 1965 and it’s still important,” says the son. “As a cardiologist, there is still emphasis on the utility of it. But we have the CT scan and echocardiography. Those technologies really gave us the real structure and anatomy, so when there’s a murmur you can actually visualize it.”

St. Francis Leads Long Island in Patient Satisfaction Survey

According to a federal survey, more than four out of five patients treated at St. Francis Hospital last year rated their overall experiences highly, giving it the highest rate of satisfied patients among Long Island hospitals. The state appeared in a Newsday.com article showing St. Francis at the top of the list when it comes to recommending the Hospital to friends and family.

“We stress communication with patients as an integral part of patient satisfaction,” said Ruth Hennessey, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer at St. Francis, where 81 percent of patients gave it a score of nine or 10 out of 10. “That applies to our security guards who greet patients to nurses and doctors.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services randomly selected and surveyed adult patients at least 48 hours after they were discharged. The 32-question survey asked about various areas of hospital care such as cleanliness, the quality of communications with nurses, doctors, and hospital staff as well as administrative services like payment, discharge, and care transfer.

Heart Beat Adds Some New Beats

Newsday ran a two-page article on St. Francis Hospital spending close to $200 million to expand its noncardiac services including oncology, orthopedic surgery, and neurosurgery. The report cited the Hospital’s largest clinical expansion to establish a 60-story, one square-foot Cancer Institute and other ambulatory facilities at the former headquarters of the Bell Corp. at 2000 Northern Blvd. It also highlighted the Mather II Pavilion with 127 of the art operating rooms for noncardiac procedures.

“My goal is that if you live on Long Island, and you’re sick with anything complex, you choose St. Francis Hospital,” said Alan Geno, M.D., Chief Executive of Catholic Health Services and former CEO of St. Francis.
New Outpatient Center
Designed to Put Patients First

For far too many cancer patients, the stress of coping with a serious medical condition is only made worse by the travel and multiple interactions involved in seeing one specialist here, getting tests or images there, then scheduling infusion therapy or surgery elsewhere – each time entering into a new dialogue with a new set of health providers.

The vision behind the historic expansion at 2200 Northern Boulevard in East Hills was to provide Long Island patients with state-of-the-art medical care in a convenient, comforting environment, all under one roof and close to home.

“Being diagnosed and treated for cancer can be an extremely stressful experience. Our mission is to provide the very best treatment in a very comfortable setting,” said Bhoomi Mehta, M.D., Director of the Cancer Institute as well as Director of Oncology. “Our motto is We put our heart into cancer care; it’s something we all take very seriously.”

The new Cancer Institute in East Hills is housed in a large, modern facility using advanced technology and staffed by an expanded team of seasoned professionals. Largely funded through private philanthropy, it reflects St. Francis Hospital’s ongoing commitment to meet the growing demand for non-cardiac specialties, such as cancer care.

Joining the Cancer Institute at 2200 Northern Boulevard are several other medical practices affiliated with St. Francis Hospital, as well as St. Francis Diagnostic, an outpatient imaging center. The facility will soon be the home of St. Francis Radiation Oncology and a new ambulatory surgery center. The complex, the former site of the Pall Corporation, offers ample parking for patients and their families.

Our governing vision was to create a facility where patients can be treated with all their doctors under one roof, communicating in close contact with each other for the patient’s benefit,” Dr. Mehta said.

“Now we have it – a comprehensive facility that includes all the disciplines of oncology: medical oncology, surgical oncology, imaging services, infusion therapy and, soon, radiation oncology.”

At the new facility’s core is a conference center for multi-disciplinary tumor boards, a reflection of St. Francis Hospital’s commitment to providing individualized, continuous care.

“This allows both hospital staff and community doctors from various specialties – along with critical ancillary support services such as genetic counseling, social workers and nutritionists – to assemble on a regular basis and review each patient’s situation in a prospective manner,” Dr. Mehta said.

With an established center for discussion, all members involved in a patient’s care can arrive at a consensus and tailor a therapeutic plan to each patient’s needs. “Everybody’s situation is different, whether it’s a unique tumor, an unusual social situation, or a psychological or nutritional challenge,” Dr. Mehta said.

So why does a hospital classically known as a heart center need an (continued on page 8)
St. Francis Diagnostic Offers One-Stop Imaging

St. Francis Diagnostic, a new outpatient diagnostic imaging center, is located adjacent to the Cancer Institute – Suite 300C, at 2200 Northern Blvd in East Hills, New York. At the new center, patients have access to the following state-of-the-art imaging modalities:
- CT Scan
- PET CT
- 3T MRI
- Ultrasound
- Diagnostic Radiology

The center is also beginning to perform diagnostic echocardiograms and is currently the only hospital on Long Island using the powerful 3T MRI for cardiac applications. Nathanael Reichek, M.D., the Director of Research and Cardiac Diagnostic Imaging, is using MRI for promising research that will assess the impact of chemotherapy on the hearts of cancer patients. Another exciting study examining how the brain governs the functions of the heart will soon be under way.

The decision to locate the new diagnostic center at 2200 was made with the patient’s convenience in mind, placing it just steps away from several of our affiliated physician’s offices. In most cases, patients can be accepted without a prior appointment, adding to the convenience. The center offers the latest technology along with a patient-centered approach that caters to individuals’ needs.

St. Francis Diagnostic imaging results are interpreted by some of the most experienced radiologists and cardiologists in the region. “Our patients rely on us for all of their imaging needs,” according to Scott Sherman, M.D., Chairman of Radiology. “Our focus on high quality medical imaging reiterates our excellence in patient care at St. Francis.”

As we move forward, we expect to gain a reputation for providing the best possible cancer care.

(continued from page 7)

associated cancer institute? “People are living longer, which is great. Yet as we age the risk of cancer increases, and it can often co-exists with heart disease, which presents quite a challenge,” said Dr. Mehrotra. What often happens is a heart patient will have images taken that uncover a previously undetected tumor. In those cases, the patient needs the total care of both medical specialties, all working hand-in-hand.

“We are lucky to have the top-notch skills sets of our cardiology colleagues,” said Dr. Mehrotra. “They are always active participants in cases of involving both heart disease and cancer. They are strong advocates for their patients and we welcome that.”

The Cancer Institute enables specialists from their respective disciplines to come together and communicate freely with one another to come up with a cogent plan for each individual. It’s all about putting the patient first.

The strategy is having an impact. In December 2015, SFH’s Cancer Institute was awarded full accreditation as a comprehensive cancer center with commendation by the Commission on Cancer – the highest recognition the commission awards a new program.

“We are all very proud of making this vision a reality,” said Dr. Mehrotra. “As we move forward, we expect to gain a reputation for providing the best possible cancer care.”

Coming Soon: On-Site Radiation Oncology Services

St. Francis’ Cancer Institute will soon offer a division of radiation oncology on-site.

“Currently our radiation oncology facility is based in Garden City,” said Dr. Mehrota, “but we are in the process of developing space here at 2200 Northern Boulevard. So ultimately we’ll be able to offer patients at least two locations to choose from, each managed by SFH’s Cancer Institute.”

Once deployed at 2200, the radiation oncology facility’s staff will include three radiation oncologists known for their expertise in various types of cancer treatment across the tri-state area. (See page 19) “We are delighted to welcome them to our Cancer Institute,” said Dr. Mehrota. “The inclusion on an on-site radiation oncology facility will strengthen the continuity of care that patients with a cancer diagnosis often need.”

Meeting the Growing Need for Outpatient Surgery

As Nassau County’s baby boomers age, there’s more and more demand for orthopedic surgeries to repair injuries and keep everyone as active as they’d like to be.

“St. Francis did more than 7,200 cases in 2015, including 1,400 total joint replacements, among the highest volumes on Long Island,” said Richard D’Argentino, M.D., Director of Orthopedic Surgery. “Once the Ambulatory Surgery Center opens in summer of 2017, we will handle most of these outpatient cases. That will allow more room for inpatient surgery in our main OR.”

It’s interesting to note that most patients seen by St. Francis’s sports medicine division could be treated at the coming outpatient center. Good news for weekend warriors and hospital administrators alike.

Serenity Now

Visitors to 2200 Northern Blvd invariably comment on the calming environment. That’s no accident. It was felt from the get-go that patients — particularly those seeking cancer care — should feel a reassuring sense of tranquility upon entering.

Our facilities team worked with architectural designers as well as our clinical teams to carefully plan the spaces, flows, and color schemes in a way that would soothe the anxious spirit. Beyond the structural and cosmetic design, furniture and fabrics were selected to fit the environmental mood. “We get so many positive comments from our visitors,” said Patricia Daye, VP of Ambulatory Surgery. “Our design is definitely a positive factor in assisting the patient through their treatment. It goes to show, we are all 3-dimensional human beings.”

Surgery in the morning. Dinner at home.

The new outpatient center at 2200 Northern Blvd will soon be joined by the East Hills Surgery Center, a joint venture between St. Francis Hospital and local physicians to provide ambulatory surgery. The center will utilize 15,000 square feet, featuring five operating rooms, each specializing in procedures that allow patients to return home the same day.

By moving less complex outpatient surgical procedures to the East Hills Surgery Center, St. Francis Hospital can concentrate its main campus operating rooms on the more intensive cases.

“This is part of a growing trend,” said Ruth Hennessy, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer. “The East Hills Surgery Center will offer orthopedic, ear/nose/throat, vascular, neurosurgery, plastic surgery, pain management and other general surgery.”

“The center expects to perform over 3,700 procedures our first year, with that number rising 5% annually through our third year,” said Patricia Daye, VP of Ambulatory Services.

The ambulatory surgery center is part of the overall “medical mall” concept, creating a one-stop environment wherein a patient can see a specialist, have any type of testing they need, and if necessary schedule surgery. “The same place/same day experience makes it much easier on the patient,” said Hennessy.

Heartbeat

Serenity Now

Mushing the Experiences: User-friendly display directory offers touch-screen interactivity, allowing visitors to step-by-step navigate to their destination or return to the home page in the office.
Staying On-Guard Against Infectious Disease

Heartbeat: When infections do occur, are antibiotics the go-to solution?
AbB: They are and they aren’t. We actually make a deliberate effort not to prescribe antibiotics if we don’t really need you. You have to remember that systemic antibiotics kill off all bacteria, healthy and unhealthy. And because we spent decades over-using antibiotics, many bacterial organisms are now resistant.

Heartbeat: Is the use of antibiotics at St. Francis Hospital tightly controlled?
AbB: Yes it is. Actually, that is one of my major responsibilities. My team monitors when and how antibiotics are to be used. We are in constant dialogue with our staff to promote effective choices and provide education.

Heartbeat: Zika is in the news. What do we know about it?
AbB: It is a virus spread via mosquito bites and poses the greatest risk to a developing fetus in the first trimester. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended that pregnant women, or those trying, avoid travel to areas with active mosquito transmission. Some experts predict that Zika could make it to the USA, as the same mosquitoes live here. Sexual transmission from infected partners has also been described.

Heartbeat: What are the symptoms of Zika?
AbB: Fever, muscle, joint pain, headache, rash, and malaise. It’s relatively mild and those infected usually recover without any residual effects. The bigger concern surrounds infection of pregnant women and the association with subsequent fetal birth defects.

Heartbeat: Does travel-related infection impact St. Francis Hospital?
AbB: On occasion. There’s an instructive parallel between being medically prepared for travel to a faraway place and being medically prepared to enter a hospital. Just as travelers are advised to get vaccinated or take the appropriate medical prophylaxis before traveling, say, to Africa for a photo safari, or the Amazon, so should at-risk patients be prepared before entering a hospital. The point is the same in both scenarios – you want to keep your guard up. As always, don’t forget to wash your hands frequently, even if you find yourself in a hospital bed. You can ask the same of any caregivers. And, stay up to date with all appropriate vaccinations and your current medications.

Alban Bulbin, M.D. is responsible for ensuring the effective treatment of those infected – and just as importantly – preventing infection to others. He also bears responsibility for stewarding the Hospital’s protocols and guidelines governing the use of antibiotics. He received his medical degree from the University of South Florida College of Medicine and has an infectious disease practice based in East Hills, NY. Dr. Bulbin has been associated with St. Francis Hospital since 1993.

Heartbeat: St. Francis Hospital is largely focused on cardiac care. What makes infectious disease a shared concern?
Alban Bulbin, M.D.: In any hospital or patient care environment, there is always the risk of infection. Some patients come for treatment of a community associated infection, so naturally they’re bringing that into our environment. But other patients, uninfected, are coming to us for invasive procedures, planned or unplanned. They are particularly vulnerable to the risk of infection, because they tend to be older and are often coping with multiple medical problems, which means that their resistance is low.

Heartbeat: How do we neutralize the risk?
Alban Bulbin, M.D.: We maintain a strong barrier to infection through a number of protocols – from sanitizing the environment, safeguarding patients and visitors with the use of personal protective equipment including masks, gowns, gloves, and most importantly, hand hygiene.

Heartbeat: How do we measure our effectiveness in terms of infectious disease control?
Alban Bulbin, M.D.: Our team is constantly tracking our rate of infection, which we report to the State. I’m happy to say we stack up very well and compared to many other hospitals. But we always want to do better and this is actually a particular goal of ours, to sharply decrease the incidence of hospital born infections.

Heartbeat: St. Francis Hospital has a rigorous program for minimizing the potential risk of patients contracting an infection during their treatment and recovery. As Director of Infectious Diseases and Antimicrobial Stewardship, Dr. Bulbin is responsible for ensuring the effective treatment of those infected – and just as importantly – preventing infection to others. He also bears responsibility for stewarding the Hospital’s protocols and guidelines governing the use of antibiotics. He received his medical degree from the University of South Florida College of Medicine and has an infectious disease practice based in East Hills, NY. Dr. Bulbin has been associated with St. Francis Hospital since 1993.

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Giving Back

The Ladies of The Guild Always there. Always part of the solution.

When most people think of St. Francis Hospital, they likely think of its reputation for medical excellence or long history of honors for outstanding cardiac care. And yet as important as our medical expertise is, it’s also vitally important that St. Francis continue to develop and expand, which requires a continuous stream of financial support.

To assist in that ongoing endeavor, there’s The Guild of St. Francis Hospital Foundation. Founded in 1942, The Guild is a major auxiliary assisting the Hospital in its fundraising efforts. Started by thirteen women from Long Island’s north shore communities, The Guild vowed early on to assist the Hospital in its mission.

Back then, St. Francis Hospital was still a small sanitarium, providing treatment and respite for children suffering from rheumatic fever. Today, The Guild is over 500 members strong with a membership that spans Long Island and the surrounding areas. Members are actively involved in hosting fundraising events as well as operating the Gift Shop at the Hospital. The Guild’s dedicated members also host the Heart to Heart Luncheon in January. A Fall Luncheon in October, a Holiday Tree of Lights in December, and participate in American Heart Association’s Champions for Charity holiday shopping fundraiser in early December.

As a top-income-producing body in New York State, The Guild of St. Francis Hospital has been chided by HAMPS for its exemplary fundraising efforts, directly affecting the quality of health care available in our community. Over the past several years, The Guild has helped finance such projects as the expansion of the Ambulatory Care Unit, the site of thousands of same-day surgeries each year. They’ve also played a major role in the development and the growth of the new Research Institute of St. Francis Hospital, the renovation and expansion of the Emergency Department, and a new state-of-the-art operating suite as part of the Hospital’s Master Facilities Renovation Plan. Most recently, The Guild pledged $5 million to benefit the Hospital’s Master Facilities Renovation Plan. Once this goal is achieved, it will constitute The Guild’s fourth $5 million gift to the Hospital.

For many, the thought of The Guild’s board members? Each has his or her particular point of view. “For me it’s a sense of continuing a great legacy,” says Joan M. Brakman. “My mother was on the first board and worked on the first luncheon fashion show.”

“When giving to others just adds to one’s sense of purpose in life,” says Sandi Landon. “The rewards that come back are much greater than those you give.”

“Being a board member of The Guild of St. Francis Hospital Foundation has truly enriched my life,” says Assistant Treasurer Inga Costa. “Being able to give back to the Hospital brings its own manifold blessings.”

“It’s a funny thing, but most of the people who’ve joined The Guild do so after coming to St. Francis Hospital during a very challenging time,” says current President Joan Duro Sera. “They experience something truly life changing, then make a new beginning by committing to being a part of The St. Francis community.”

The Guild is always looking for new members. Interested? To speak with a Guild Member, please call (516) 323-0491.

“It’s a wonderful group of women to journey with,” adds Rose Emmano. “It’s gratifying to be able to work and share so many selfless and like-minded ladies.”

Planned Giving

John Branaccio

Stepping Up to Help Others with Heart Valve Disease

John Branaccio knows firsthand how stressful it can be to be diagnosed with heart valve disease. He was at his father’s bedside when he passed away from aortic valve stenosis, and was diagnosed with the very same condition himself years later. But 25 years after undergoing open-heart surgery to replace his valve and surviving amazing odds, the 50-year-old retired mechanical engineer has made it his mission to help others by creating his legacy to ensure the future of the Heart Valve Center at St. Francis Hospital.

“There are many charitable options available today, if you are in a position to give. But my attitude is to provide help where the goal and outcome is almost an immediate impact in the lifestyle of an individual human being,” says John about his commitment to the Heart Valve Center—soon to be named The John Branaccio Heart Valve Center at St. Francis Hospital, thanks to John’s transformational bequest.

Game, Set and Match

The avid tennis player and longtime Suffolk County resident knew he had found the perfect philanthropic “match” thanks to pioneering physicians at St. Francis and their minimally invasive approach in Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR). “This was a situation where medicine and technology came together to create a program that can provide immediate relief to fragile seniors who have no other option, it’s a real home run” he says.

When John was diagnosed with aortic valve stenosis after fainting on a tennis court in 1991, there was only one option for aortic valve replacement and it was surgery. His first priority was to do some of his own research. “I wanted to see if I could find a hospital and physicians on Long Island who could perform the procedure as safely here as the best doctors in Manhattan.” The professional engineer discovered a winning team in Richard Shiffrin, M.D., an interventional cardiologist who’s now Chairman of his Department at St. Francis, and Paul Dumas, M.D., a cardiothoracic surgeon who has since retired from St. Francis.

In the Long Run

After being given the option of a mechanical valve or a porcine one, John chose the latter even though he was told it could last only 8 to 10 years. But he’s defied the odds and it’s lasted a quarter of a century, part of which he attributes to his lifelong and current cardio training programs and consistent stress test monitoring. In addition to playing tennis, he was a former track star, skier, and ballroom dancer who always made exercise an integral part of his routine.

When John expressed his interest in making a bequest to benefit the Heart Valve Center prior to finalizing his plans, the Development team at St. Francis was able to offer John an opportunity to witness his transformational gift during his lifetime—a ceremony to commemorate his generosity will be held this May. The John Branaccio Heart Valve Center will be his lasting legacy so the next generation will benefit from continued advancements through less invasive approaches to patients, where none existed before.

Cancer Institute Receives Research and Community Outreach Grants

The cancer Institute at St. Francis Hospital has received $155,000 for research and community outreach grants. The grants will fund a study to evaluate new methods for detecting the risk of heart failure in patients receiving chemotherapy. Working closely together, cardiologists and oncologists at St. Francis Hospital are using the latest technology to identify early signs of cardiotoxicity which can result from the use of certain chemotherapy agents, including those commonly administered to treat breast cancer.

Generous support from MVAABC’s outreach committee and the Junior Co-Allies has also helped to launch and expand a restorative yoga program for cancer patients and survivors at St. Francis Hospital. The Junior Co-Allies made an additional grant to sponsor St. Francis Hospital’s new healthy cooking workshop for teens with a parent undergoing cancer treatment, which will be held for the first time in 2016. Elsevier Neuroscience, M.D., Director of Oncology and Director of the Cancer Institute, and Nathaniel Berhman, M.D., Director of Research, recently accepted this support on behalf of St. Francis Hospital from MVAABC. Dr. Mehrotra and Reichel, along with Hanyi Zeng, M.D., an echocardiologist and expert on cardiac-oncology, are principal investigators for the study.

Heartbeat Heroes: John Branaccio, just before working out at the Bellinici Center in Greenlawn, dismiss Stretching when it comes to providing high quality cardiac care close to home.
St. Francis Leads Global Research Study To Shed Light on the Value of OCT-Guided Angioplasty

St. Francis Hospital is pioneering a new technology that promises to provide cardiologists with a dramatically enhanced ability to visualize and map coronary artery blockages and determine their size, shape, composition, and effect on blood flow. Called Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT), and already incorporated into the OPTIS system by St. Jude Medical, this advanced imaging modality is now the focus of a global research study led by Richard Shlofmitz, M.D., Chairman of Cardiology.

Although cardiac catheterization is the long-time gold standard to assess blockages in coronary arteries, the field began to expand when intravascular ultrasound (IVUS) entered the picture about 10 years ago. "Now with the introduction of OCT-guided angioplasty, we're in a new phase, expanding the potential of IVUS exponentially," says Dr. Shlofmitz. With OCT there are cases where you can rule out the need to place a stent. Conversely, when you are needed, you can custom-fit them with great precision," Dr. Shlofmitz says. "It's a potentially revolutionary technique for imaging of the coronary arteries."

The ILLUMIN III trial – short for Optical Coherence Tomography Compared to Intravascular Ultrasound to Guide Coronary Stent Implantation: A Multicenter Randomized Trial in PCI – is randomizing patients to receive an angioscope, IVUS, or OCT. Even then, all patients will have OCT performed at the end of the trial to gauge how much more precise that technology is as compared with the other options. The multinational trial is taking place at 64 sites globally, with results expected this summer.

Only 5% of heart centers are using OCT-guided angioplasty right now. Because of its early commitment to OCT, St. Francis has enrolled more patients than any other site. "We've done more OCT than anyone else in the world within the trial," notes Dr. Shlofmitz. "St. Francis is committed to the OCT project because we feel it will be the future of angioplasty, enabling us to optimize angioplasty management before and after procedures to improve outcomes."

With an increased emphasis on research and education, Dr. Shlofmitz has trained more than 60 physicians from other hospitals on how to perform OCT-guided angioplasty at St. Francis. In March, he also co-directed an international conference on intravascular imaging, at which OCT was center stage. The meeting, held at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, was co-sponsored by The Cardio Research Foundation and St. Francis Hospital, drawing over 200 leading interventional cardiologists.

"Imaging is everything," said Dr. Shlofmitz at the conference. "I believe the ILLUMIN III trial will help establish OCT’s position as the imaging mechanism of choice for angioplasty."

Special Care For Women’s Hearts

Did you know that heart disease is the number one cause of death in women in the United States? One out of three women will die of heart disease, which often times presents with different signs and symptoms in women than it does in men. As one of the nation's leading cardiac centers, St. Francis Hospital has launched a new heart program designed to specifically meet the needs of women.

"Our goal is to identify women who may be at increased risk and provide them with strategies to help reduce those risks and foster research to further the understanding of the specific nature of women's heart disease," says Madhavi Kalyada, M.D., a cardiologist and Director of the new program. "We want to provide women with a one-stop destination for comprehensive cardiac and preventive care, where many of their unique needs can be addressed without having to go to multiple locations," says Louise Spadaro, M.D., a cardiologist and Director of the Outreach Program at St. Francis.

Services at the Women’s Heart Program, located at the DeMatteis Center in Greendale, include:
- Prevention and Early Detection of Coronary Artery Disease
- Research in Women’s Heart Disease
- Integrative Care Including Medication/Yoga/Tai Chi
- Cardiac Fitness/Rehabilitation
- Nutritional Counseling
- Coronary Calcium Screening and Advanced Cardiac Imaging

The program partners with radiologists, gynecologists, primary care providers, nutritionists, physiologists, and psychologists to offer women comprehensive diagnostic testing and treatment. It recognizes and treats the unique cardiovascular needs of women during all stages of life. To schedule an appointment or for more information call (414) 622-4555.
The Latest Approaches for Treating Heart Failure at St. Francis

Vital Signs

The new implantable device is designed to not only relieve patients suffering from congestive heart failure, but also to improve their quality of life. It typically takes about 10 minutes to implant in the Chest Lab and patients can go home the very same day. The device contains a wireless monitor that is implanted inside the pulmonary artery. It typically takes about 10 minutes to implant in the Chest Lab and patients can go home the very same day. The device contains a wireless monitor that is implanted inside the pulmonary artery.

CardioMEMS Monitoring System

St. Francis Launches First UARD Program in Nassau County

In keeping with its reputation as a nationwide leader providing innovative heart procedures, St. Francis became the first hospital in Nassau County to offer Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD) therapy to patients suffering from advanced heart failure. This major initiative by the Kroll Family Center for Heart Failure and Circulatory Support offers new hope for patients who are waiting transplant or who are physically unable to undergo heart surgery.

SVL is an implantable mechanical device that is used to partially or completely replace the pumping function of a failing heart. It offers a longer term solution to short-term heart pumps that are typically used for patients recovering from heart attack or heart surgery.

Adult Congenital Heart Disease Specialist Joins SFH

For nearly 60 years, Mary Molino lived with being blue—not mentally, but physically. The Huntington Station office assistant had open-heart surgery at the age of three to repair an Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) or hole in her heart. She underwent the procedure at a time when it was in its early stages and miraculously survived, but was left with a perplexing side effect. Her face and hands were blue.

“Our mission is to provide the very best care for patients suffering from advanced heart failure,” says Edward Lundy, M.D., (Ph.D). Surgical Director of the program. “This device is designed to not only relieve symptoms and improve our patients’ quality of life, it also can slow down the progression of the disease and reduce their need for emergency rooms and hospital visits.”

All rise, retired sales rep from Oceanus, has experienced the benefits firsthand. He received an LVAD in July 2014 at another hospital before it was being offered closer to home at St. Francis, but now he has follow up visits with Timothy J. Vittorio, M.D., Medical Director of the new program.

“I’ve changed my life,” says Mr. Luntz. “Before receiving LVAD: my breathing was down to nothing. I lost all of my strength and my weight went down 40 pounds from 165. Now I never get short of breath. I recently took a trip to Washington D.C. and did a lot of walking, but it had no effect on me.”

For more information on the program, please call: (631) 689-3330.

St. Francis Is the First Hospital in Nassau County to Introduce Robotic Orthopedic Surgery

The new implantable device is designed to not only relieve patients suffering from congestive heart failure, but also to improve their quality of life. It typically takes about 10 minutes to implant in the Chest Lab and patients can go home the very same day. The device contains a wireless monitor that is implanted inside the pulmonary artery.

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St. Francis Hospital’s Cancer Institute Earns Highest Recognition Possible In Its First Survey

The Commission on Cancer (CoC) of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) has granted three-year Full Accreditation with Commendation to the Cancer Institute at St. Francis Hospital. To earn this national accreditation, a cancer program must meet or exceed 34 CoC quality care standards, be evaluated every three through a survey process, and maintain levels of excellence in the delivery of comprehensive patient-centered care.

St. Francis Hospital’s Cancer Institute received a recognition certificate and a surveyor report that detailed the program’s achievements. The program was assessed against national standards for cancer care and in all areas, the Cancer Institute exceeded its goals.

“This is a tremendous accomplished by the entire cancer care team at St. Francis Hospital,” said Dr. Anthony DeMaria, Medical Director of the Cancer Institute. “It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in providing the best possible care for our patients.”

The Commission on Cancer is the leading source of cancer care standards and supports cancer program accreditation as a way to showcase high-quality, patient-centered care. A cancer program accredited by the Commission on Cancer must meet or exceed 34 CoC quality standards.

“Your dedication to providing the highest quality of care for our patients is truly appreciated,” said城市Mayor Terence M. Coyle. “We are proud of the exceptional care you provide each and every day.”

The Cancer Institute at St. Francis Hospital has implemented a number of initiatives to improve the quality of care provided to patients, including:

- Implementation of a comprehensive risk assessment tool to identify patients at risk for cancer recurrence.
- Enhanced multidisciplinary care teams to coordinate patient care across specialties.
- Increased use of evidence-based guidelines for patient care.
- Improved patient education and communication strategies.

“We will continue to work towards providing the best possible care for our patients,” said city Administrator Tia Green. “This accreditation is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team.”

The Cancer Institute at St. Francis Hospital is committed to providing the highest quality of care for patients with cancer. We are proud to have received this national accreditation and will continue to strive for excellence in patient care.”

At St. Francis Hospital, we are dedicated to providing the best possible care for our patients. This accreditation is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team. We are committed to providing the highest quality of care for patients with cancer and will continue to strive for excellence in patient care.”

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“As some of the most experienced healthcare providers in the region, we know how important it is to offer the most appropriate, weight-loss options for patients facing serious health challenges,” said Dr. Michael Osicao. “Our dedicated team of weight-loss experts has consistently shown their commitment to helping our patients achieve their weight-loss goals.”

The Cancer Institute at St. Francis Hospital is committed to providing the highest quality of care for patients with cancer. We are proud to have received this national accreditation and will continue to strive for excellence in patient care. We are committed to providing the best possible care for our patients and will continue to work towards improving the quality of care we provide.”
St. Francis Hospital Foundation
42nd Annual Golf Classic

Monday, June 6
The Creek
Meadow Brook Club
Nissequo Country Club

Surf & Turf Dinner at The Creek

Individuals and foursomes are welcome. Golf reservations will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.

stfrancisheartcenter.com; click on "Ways to Give"
or call: (516) 705-6655