

Gratitude

HOW PHILANTHROPY IS SHAPING NORTHWELL HEALTH 2019 VOLUME 1



Seeing care through their eyes

Cohen Children's Medical Center focuses on creating a kid-friendly surgical experience



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2019 VOLUME 1

GRATITUDE

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On the cover

Katelyn, 8, drew a picture of her neurosurgeon, Mark Mittler, MD, as a superhero. Inspired by her vision, the Cohen Children’s team surprised Katelyn by turning her artwork into a doll.

Gratitude is written and produced by the Northwell Health Foundation.

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Seeing care through their eyes

Cohen Children's
Medical Center
focuses on creating
a kid-friendly
surgical experience

By Kerri Tortorella

Every person you encounter at Cohen Children's Medical Center is thinking about kids. Child life specialists play games in our playrooms and mimic medical procedures to alleviate fears of the unknown. Imaging technicians take children into outer space in our NASA-themed Children's Medical Fund Center for Diagnostic Studies. Siblings of our patients are cared for in Charna's Kids Club.

Thirty-five years ago, we built an entire hospital specialized in everything children. "We look at children's health care differently, because children see it differently," says Charles Schleien, MD, senior vice president and the Philip Lanzkowsky MD Chair of Pediatrics. "Everything we do is with a child in mind. We see it through their eyes."

Our latest project will create eight new operating rooms — four for specialized surgery (one cardiac, one neurological and two orthopedic) and four for general surgery — all dedicated and designed solely for children. The Pediatric Surgical Operating Complex will be in the Blumenfeld Family Pavilion at Cohen Children's Medical Center — an extension built in 2013 and recently named in honor of the Blumenfeld family's ongoing commitment to Cohen Children's Medical Center.

"The Pediatric Surgical Operating Complex was planned from the beginning and left as a shell with the idea that, through philanthropy, we'd be able to complete it," says Dr. Schleien. "With the cost of medical technologies and other capital projects, it is only through combinations of operational dollars and donor support that major projects like this can come to fruition."

Presently, surgery takes place in shared operating rooms at neighboring Long Island Jewish Medical Center. This project reduces wait times for pediatric and adult patients and transforms care for the more than 8,000 kids undergoing medical procedures from our Cohen Children's surgeons each year — patients like Zoe, Teddy and Donovan (read their stories on page 6).

"One of the most important aspects of this project is the recognition that children are not just little adults, and

we need specialized facilities to care for them throughout the hospital — in particular, in the operating room,” says Vincent Parnell, MD, surgeon in chief and chief of Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery at Cohen Children’s Medical Center.

Being treated in an adult space can increase a child’s fear. “We are committed to mitigating a child’s anxiety and seeing them fully to create the best experience possible during a scary time,” says Dr. Schleien.

“The Pediatric Surgical Operating Complex is a priority of our billion-dollar fundraising campaign, *Outpacing the Impossible*,” says Brian Lally, senior vice president and chief development officer at Northwell Health. “Support from our donors will advance care for children by setting this project into full motion once \$50 million is raised — a goal we’ve set to accomplish by the end of 2019.”

The new pediatric operating rooms will have the capacity to house the latest state-of-the-art equipment and technology required to support surgeries today and in the future. Each room will be equipped with multiple, 50-inch, 4K screens and wired for future 8K technology advancements. The video and photo capabilities enhance teaching opportunities, integration among the care team and visuals for surgeons who, in many cases, perform the latest minimally invasive procedures without seeing organs directly but instead through a camera.

“When you take care of children you have two patients — parent and child,” says Dr. Parnell. “When clinically appropriate, a doctor can use video to give a live update through a smartphone app to



The Blumenfeld family was recently honored at the dedication of the Blumenfeld Family Pavilion at Cohen Children’s Medical Center.

“We are committed to mitigating a child’s anxiety and seeing them fully to create the best experience possible during a scary time.”

ease parents’ fears and let them know the surgery is going well.”

Screens, sounds and lighting can be customized to appeal to each child. Before the child goes to sleep for the surgery, they will enter a room of their favorite characters with calming lights and music. With the push of a button, the patient’s profile and imaging appears on the screen, customized now to the preferences of the surgical team. The room transforms back before the child awakens.

“We want patients and their families to feel that, under medical circumstances they would rather avoid, they’ve received the finest pediatric care available anywhere, from an expert medical team, in an environment conducive to high-end care that is centered on the comfort of children,” says Dr. Schleien.

Support the Pediatric Surgical Operating Complex at Cohen Children’s by donating at bit.ly/SupportCohen



Dr. Joan “Rock Star” Germana by 6-year-old Charlotte

Children see us differently because we care for them differently.

At Cohen Children’s Medical Center our kids see their doctors, nurses and therapists as so much more. They see superheroes, rock stars and even broccoli. Because we see them differently, too. Their needs, their emotions, their fears — we see it all through their eyes and we feel it in our hearts. We believe the better you understand children, the better you can treat them.



Dr. Joel “Super Broccoli” Brochstein by 10-year-old James



Teddy finds the freedom to play

"A couple of weeks into Teddy's stay in the neonatal intensive care unit they told us they needed to operate or he wouldn't make it," says Andrea Moore, Teddy's mother. Born at 27 weeks with his twin sister, Teddy suffered a brain bleed that caused hydrocephalus, with dangerous amounts of spinal fluid rapidly collecting around his brain. Cohen Children's neurosurgeons drained the fluid and, in a subsequent surgery, inserted a shunt so the fluid would continue draining.

Before he turned two, Teddy endured 21 brain surgeries. But it was his fortieth surgery, at age 11, that made the impossible possible. Pediatric neurosurgeon Shaun Rodgers, MD, "did the thing that my whole entire family never thought would happen," says Teddy. "He made me shunt-free."

Removing the shunt delivered new freedom. "I think of things he can do that he couldn't do before and I've seen improvements," says Andrea. "Teddy hit a double on the baseball field and I was bawling my eyes out. Other moms were looking at me and I was like, 'You don't understand; they told me he wouldn't walk.' It was just amazing."

"I've said this all along, that Cohen Children's doesn't just treat the patient, they treat the whole family," says Andrea. "And it's so important because really nobody wants to be here. We're not here because it beats a day at the beach! We're here because we have to be here and know our children are getting the best care they can get."

Hear Teddy share his story at bit.ly/CohenHeroTeddy



Donovan gets his voice back and races forward

"I was at work and I got a call from my neighbor telling me my son was hit by a car," says Laura Garces. "I kept asking if he was okay, and nobody would tell me anything so I knew it was bad." Hit while walking home from school, 13-year-old Donovan was rushed to Southside Hospital. When Laura arrived, she learned that Donovan's injuries were life-threatening.

Donovan was transported to Cohen Children's. "We were very happy he was going there because we knew that was one of the best hospitals he can go to," says Laura. A team of orthopedic, vascular surgery, trauma surgery and neurosurgery specialists came together to save Donovan. "I just remember everybody working on him so rapidly to save his life. They did; they saved his life."

A portion of Donovan's skull was temporarily removed to relieve swelling. After multiple brain surgeries and nearly a month in a coma, Donovan moved his foot, then a finger, and then everything started moving. It took him six months to begin speaking again. "Once I started talking, I wouldn't shut up," says Donovan.

A spunky, funny young man, Donovan continues rehabilitation with specialists at Cohen Children's. "His biggest accomplishment so far was that he ran two 5K races last year," says Laura. "We are very, very proud of him because he wasn't even walking when we left here."



Zoe is ready for a big, cancer-free life

"While giving Zoe a bath, I found a lump on her shoulder," says Mark Carino of his daughter when she was 14 months old. Her mother Maria took Zoe to the pediatrician. "He told us to go to Cohen Children's hospital immediately," says Maria.

"She underwent so many tests. And then it was Sunday afternoon. I vividly remember every little detail. Dr. Lawrence Wolfe and a group of people sat us down. That's when they told us about Zoe's diagnosis."

Zoe had neuroblastoma, a rare cancerous tumor. "He told us that they're going to take care of not only Zoe, but our whole family as well," says Maria. Dr. Wolfe told them: "No matter how heartbreaking the diagnosis... you have a good fighting chance. And based on our experience here at Cohen Children's, if you have an excellent support system, the odds are even better."

"At that time that was really dark for us, it kind of gave us that light, that hope that there is something we can actually look forward to and that we're not alone in this," says Mark.

Following surgery, Zoe participated in a clinical trial and underwent chemotherapy. After more than five years of tests, the Carinos heard those wished-for words: cancer-free. "We no longer have to be defined by cancer," says Maria.

Zoe, now 10 years old, is a black belt in taekwondo and dreams of being a movie star. "I feel like I have so much power in me, and I can do this."

Hear Zoe share her story at bit.ly/CohenHeroZoe

Northwell Health Walk raises a record **\$1 million** and brings bright futures to women and kids

By Carol Cool

“We went for our anatomical ultrasound thinking we were going to find out the gender of our baby,” says Kathleen, who was cared for at Katz Women’s Hospital at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde Park.

Instead she and her husband, Mark, heard, “I’m very sorry, but your baby has about a 10 percent chance of surviving the weekend.”

“The whole world just went blank for me,” says Kathleen.

The doctor explained that baby Clementine had hydrops, a collection of fluid, in her chest and abdomen. “There was no medical intervention they could offer us to make sure she stayed with us,” says Kathleen.

Further testing revealed Clementine had Down syndrome and a heart defect.

“Everyone was so supportive,” says Kathleen, of their care team from the Katz Institute for Women’s Health and Cohen Children’s Medical Center. “The patient navigator took the reins, coordinating doctors and finding specialists and trying to schedule these appointments when I didn’t even know my own name.”

After a fetal echocardiogram at Cohen Children’s, “Dr. Denise Hayes gave us the most amazing words we have ever heard: ‘Clementine’s hydrops are not coming from the heart defect,’” says Kathleen. If the hydrops cleared up, they could repair Clementine’s heart.

“That moment right there — it was like, ‘Our team has this.’ That moment was just pure joy.”

Kathleen went into “protective mode,” to get Clementine closer to her due date. An ultrasound showed the fluid was almost gone.

At 38 weeks, Clementine was born with neonatal intensive care and cardiology teams on hand. Vincent Parnell, MD, surgeon in chief and chief of Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery at Cohen Children’s, later performed open heart surgery on baby Clementine.

“Every single doctor that we have seen has loved on our child, every nurse, everybody,” says Kathleen. “Today, I have a 4 ½ year old who’s just this bright and shiny, crazy little person, and it all started from an ultrasound that could have just gone so differently if it was anywhere else.”

Walking for the health of others

The 2019 Northwell Health Walk took place at three locations — Jones Beach, East End Long Island and Staten Island with more than 6,000 walkers and donors raising a record total of \$1 million.

Kathleen and Mark shared their story with thousands of walkers at Jones Beach and expressed gratitude

for the care Kathleen received at the Katz Institute for Women’s Health and that Clementine received at Cohen Children’s. Funds raised for the Jones Beach location support the Innovation Grant Program at Katz Institute for Women’s Health and the purchase of the latest generation echocardiogram machine at Cohen Children’s Medical Center,

“That moment right there — it was like, ‘Our team has this.’ That moment was just pure joy.”

providing children like Clementine with superior diagnostic cardiac care.

Funds raised for the Staten Island walk support the Gruppuso Family Women and Newborn Center at Staten Island University Hospital and the East End walk supports cardiac services and women’s wellness initiatives at Peconic Bay Medical Center.

Kathleen personally knows that walkers and donors make a difference: “You’re giving these babies and these children bright futures to look forward to, and you’re giving the parents so much peace of mind — it’s a priceless gift.”

Learn more about the Northwell Health Walk at bit.ly/NorthwellWalk

give.northwell.edu 7



Transgender care at Northwell: “I feel like I’ve come home”

By Lisa Davis

As a transgender man, Sebastian Flowers spent years looking for informed, culturally sensitive care. But when he discovered the Gerald J. Friedman Transgender Program for Health and Wellness, at Lenox Hill Hospital, he knew he could relax.



“I can be in the middle of the worst week and when I walk in they greet me like family,” says Sebastian. “I feel like I’ve come home.”

“Many transgender people have faced barriers to care,” says endocrinologist Leonid Poretsky, MD, who leads the Friedman Program. “There’s a lack of knowledge about their needs in many medical practices.”

Northwell Health has developed a robust program with two clinical hubs of integrated services for this community. On Long Island, Northwell benefactors Stacy and Steven Hoffman have been champions for the Center for Transgender Care, created in 2016. “Support from donors like the Hoffmans is critical to expanding education for Northwell employees and physicians, as well as care for the transgender community on Long Island,” says David Rosenthal, DO, PhD, the center’s medical director.

The Friedman Program, supported by longtime Northwell benefactor the Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman Foundation, is one of only a few comprehensive programs for transgender care in Manhattan, serving patients as young as 10 and as old as 79. An endowed estate gift from the Lorraine Allen Geriatric Research Fund will support research into the effects of hormone therapy for older patients, who may also have health issues like stroke and diabetes.

“Support from our donors allows us to provide a different kind of care for patients,” Dr. Poretsky says. “The Friedman Foundation’s commitment has allowed us to create an environment that feels welcoming the moment you walk through the door. That’s important for patients who may have had bad experiences in the past. And the estate gift will help us answer questions about the best ways to treat older transgender patients, who have really been overlooked by research up to now.”

Each hub offers the full spectrum of care, going beyond hormonal treatment and gender-affirming surgery. Primary care is central and social workers and mental health professionals are part of the care team. Gynecological services are available for trans men who retain their ovaries, uterus or both. Transgender health navigators or program coordinators act as concierges, helping to tailor individualized care plans.

The compassionate care and the personal relationships with the staff at the Friedman Program are both healing for Sebastian. “Now you have to wait a little longer for an appointment than when I started,” he says. “But that’s cool — it means the program is growing.”

Patient's daughter supports efforts to combat **ICU delirium**

By Carol Cool

Five months is a long time to spend in the intensive care unit.



When Tiffany Basdekis's dad, Dimitri, ended up in Northern Westchester Hospital's intensive care unit (ICU) with pneumonia, she moved with her young children to her parents' home to be nearby. As the days in the ICU turned to weeks and months, Tiffany spent her waiting hours researching long-term ICU complications.

"Patients, particularly those on ventilators, can end up with ICU delirium. They get delusional and it can be as severe as Alzheimer's," says Tiffany. "I wondered what could be done to make things better."

Tiffany read about innovations like getting patients up early and walking and exposing them to light or fresh air. Involving family members in the patient's care is important too.

She discussed her findings with Richard Stumacher, MD, chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, Northern Westchester Hospital. "He was so receptive," says Tiffany.

"Dr. Stumacher is the most incredible physician I've ever encountered, personally or professionally. He is a gifted clinician and an exceptional person."

"Tiffany opened our eyes to things we could do better," says Dr. Stumacher. "She has been a true partner in this journey." An educational program for nurses and mobility technicians is now being developed to help them care more effectively for patients experiencing ICU delirium.

The deep bond she established with Dr. Stumacher led Tiffany to make a \$25,000 gift to the ICU. The staff is pursuing projects Tiffany believes will help ICU patients, including a diary where family and staff can record personal or health events. Also, Northern Westchester Hospital is launching a research study to see if the diary lessens incidents of post-intensive care syndrome (PICS), which is similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

A bigger long-term goal is the establishment of a PICS-F ("F" for family) clinic — a place survivors of ICU delirium and their family members can go for care from doctors, psychiatrists and social workers as they work to return to normal function in their lives.

Tiffany and her mother, Karen, have also gotten behind the ICU comfort box, which was the idea of Angela Watts, an ICU nurse. Patients approaching the end

"Tiffany's donation will help other families going through a similar experience, providing them with the tools, support and comfort she and her family received."

of life are given handmade quilts that soothe them as machines are removed. A keepsake box might hold a lock of hair or a fingerprint card.

"I hope other patient families see they can take the \$50 or \$100 they might spend on a thank-you fruit basket and instead make a targeted gift to the ICU, helping future patients and families," says Tiffany. "Every gift matters and will ultimately result in a considerable sum."

"Tiffany's donation will help other families going through a similar experience, providing them with the tools, support and comfort she and her family received," says Dr. Stumacher. "She really is paying it forward."



Members of Pink Aid's leadership meet with Pamella.

Pink Aid surrounds underserved women with life-saving support

By Kerri Tortorella

When caring for a parent who is gravely ill, we tend to put their health care needs before our own.

That was the case for Pamella who was caring for her sick mother when she discovered a lump in her right breast. It was a trying time for her — now made more complex — and the thought of the financial burden also weighed heavily on her mind.

"I couldn't afford a mammogram, and I was focused on my mom's health," says Pamella.

Six months went by and Pamella had not received care. Then, she learned about the Dolan Family Health Center. "My sister told me there was a place that could help me and diagnose me," she recalls.

The relief she felt about finding help was quickly replaced with the shock of learning she had stage three triple-negative breast cancer.

Located in Greenlawn, New York, the Dolan Center provides high-quality health care for community members who often lack access to direct primary care and does so with cultural sensitivity and a predominantly bilingual staff.

Pink Aid Long Island — a nonprofit with the mission to "help underserved local women survive breast cancer treatment

with support and dignity"— has provided grants to the Dolan Center for five years. This critical support enables uninsured and underinsured women to receive screening and diagnostic testing, such as sonograms and mammograms.

"Dolan was a godsend. If it was not for the Dolan Center and the support from Pink Aid, I would not be here," says Pamella.

"Medically vulnerable patients incur barriers to care as they move through a very complicated healthcare system," says Kathy Giffuni, MSN, RN-BC, NE-BC, assistant director of nursing at the Dolan Family Health Center. "Programs like Pink Aid help us to address socioeconomic issues impacting patients'

lives that may prevent them from meeting their healthcare goals.”

In addition to the Dolan Center, Pink Aid supports two other Northwell locations — Monter Cancer Center and Peconic Bay Medical Center. In 2019, Pink Aid donated a total of \$105,000 to Northwell Health, of which the Dolan Center received \$45,000. Funds support breast cancer screenings and services that include transportation assistance to and from appointments, food-related expenses, house cleaning, childcare, wigs and post-mastectomy garments. Since 2014, the Dolan Center has received \$170,000 in Pink Aid grants, which has enabled approximately 850 women to obtain breast cancer screenings and follow-up care.

Members of Pink Aid’s leadership team recently had the chance to meet and get to know Pamela. “Meeting patients like Pamela and seeing the difference we can help make in providing care for patients who may not otherwise seek care is why we do what we do,”

says Rosemary Connors, co-president of Pink Aid. “It fuels our passion.”

“You find a lump or get a diagnosis and you panic; you don’t have the money,” says Pamela. “I want to be a voice so that other women know the care is out there. Assistance is out there. They don’t have to suffer in silence.”

Following Pamela’s diagnosis, Dolan Family Health Center staff coordinated her care across Northwell’s footprint, and her nurse practitioner, Angie Hylton, walked with her on her journey.

“Angie has been with me from day one,” says Pamela. “She encouraged and reassured me during my darkest moments, and I am so grateful to her. She treated me like family and always looked out for me.”

Pamela underwent a mastectomy at Monter Cancer Center in New Hyde Park and radiation treatment at Northwell’s Imbert Cancer Center in Bay Shore. Pamela is optimistic about her future.



Pamela with her nurse practitioner, Angie Hylton.

Katz Women’s Circle empowers women through education and camaraderie

By Tracie Saitta

Iris and Saul Katz, longtime supporters of Northwell Health, have always thought about women’s health differently. Their support established the Katz Institute for Women’s Health and the creation of Katz Women’s Hospitals at both North Shore University Hospital and Long Island Jewish Medical Center — fueling Northwell’s ability to see women fully.

The Katz Institute focuses on the specific health needs of women, connecting them to medical experts, information and programs and helping them navigate the complexities of health care. “Our desire

has always been to empower women and arm them with information to make the best decisions not only for their own health but also for their families,” says Iris.

The new Katz Women’s Circle gives women a community through which to explore health and wellness issues through member-only events and early access to Katz Institute health programs. Members can also call the Katz Institute Resource Center to speak with a women’s health navigator who can assist with physician referrals and appointment scheduling.

Membership is available for a gift of \$50 to Northwell Health. Memberships



can also be gifted to friends and family members, creating community as our mothers, sisters and daughters learn together.

“My husband and I helped establish the Katz Institute to ensure women receive care tailored to their needs,” says Iris. “I believe the new Katz Women’s Circle opens up another level of interactive care and community for women, empowering them to be well and live well.”

Learn what it means to be a member at bit.ly/KatzCircle

A family's legacy endows Northwell's first **Internal Medicine Fellow**

By Julie Robinson-Tingue

"Libby had a kind heart and a moral obligation to help other people. From the beginning of our marriage, she would squirrel away money for charity," said George Gottridge.

George endearingly shared how his wife of 66 years, Lenore — affectionately known as Libby — felt about supporting worthwhile causes. Libby, who died in 2017, committed herself to a lifetime of charitable giving. "Northwell Health was truly Libby's choice. If she were here, she would be cheering us in the wise way we are using her money."

Before his recent death, George, a 94-year-old World War II veteran, created an endowed fellowship for physicians as the next logical step in his family's legacy of paying it forward.

The Libby Gottridge Endowed Fellowship in General Internal Medicine was named in honor of George's beloved wife. The endowed fellowship program will rotate every two years and will enable selected fellows to develop programming and outreach initiatives designed to train future healthcare leaders in academic internal medicine at Northwell Health.

Amanda Simone, MD, is the annual program's first fellow. Dr. Simone will work to develop, implement and evaluate new curricula for medical students and residents, facilitate workshops in community health and engage in medical education research. Dr. Simone will share her findings through presentations at national and regional conferences and will submit manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals.

"I am extremely honored to be the first Libby Gottridge Fellow and thankful for this generous gift from the Gottridge family," Dr. Simone says. "I can't say



enough how meaningful it is to have the exciting opportunity to continue my work here at Northwell, while continuing to pursue my passion of primary care and further my knowledge of medical education. These years will be invaluable in developing my skills as a clinician educator."

Named fellowships carry significant prestige in the scientific, academic and medical fields and help in the recruitment of highly ranked researchers, physicians and educators in the early stages of their careers. "The Libby Gottridge Fellowship represents a lot of what we've been working toward," says Joseph Conigliaro, MD, vice chair of academic affairs for the Department of Medicine and chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine at

North Shore University Hospital and Long Island Jewish Medical Center. "Northwell Health is really moving in the direction of being a premier academic environment, preparing outstanding leaders and clinicians."

"This general medicine fellowship, established in her name, is a fitting tribute to my mother, who valued education and service," says Joanne Gottridge, MD, senior vice president of Medicine at Northwell.

Dr. Gottridge's brother, attorney Marc Gottridge adds, "I am proud of my father for generously endowing this fellowship, which will help Northwell fulfill its mission of improving the health of patients in Queens and Nassau counties and beyond."

A local supporter becomes a patient at the center bearing her family name

By Carol Cool

When they married 20 years ago, Susan and Rick Imbert captured their philosophy of life on their wedding invitation: “Let joy be your compass in life.”

“When we’ve been in the position of helping someone, it has given us greater joy than one would imagine,” says Susan.

Little did Susan know that one day she would benefit from their personal generosity in a way she could have never imagined.

The Imberts were introduced to Southside Hospital through a close friend. Already supporters of hospital events and fundraisers, as they became more informed of Northwell Health’s vision for Southside Hospital and plans for its expansion, they wanted to be a part of the transformation.

“Boaters rely on a compass to keep a steady course. Our moral compass led us to help Northwell Health build a cancer center here on the South Shore of Long Island as soon as possible,” says Susan. “We appreciated their foresight that our community was in desperate need of such a facility, and fortunately, we were in a position to help. So we did. We are happy to share our gift for generations to come.”

The ribbon-cutting ceremony to open Imbert Cancer Center was in



“When we’ve been in the position of helping someone, it has given us greater joy than one would imagine.”

October of 2016. “I can’t even describe the joy I felt at that moment,” says Susan. “Hearing the story of the young mom and what it meant to have this resource nearby for treatment — as she tried to balance raising her children while battling cancer — made it an even more fulfilling experience.”

The following October, Susan was diagnosed with stage IV ovarian cancer. “We had no cancer in our family before that we were aware of. I thought to myself, ‘Why me?’ But then, I adjusted my thinking. ‘Why not me?’” she says. “We are all in this world together. I told Rick, ‘Maybe my presence at the center could be an encouragement to others.’”

Susan entered the Imbert Cancer Center for treatment after surgery. “Walking in the front door, everyone was so kind,”

says Susan. “The center is designed to promote a calming experience, with windows looking out onto the lawn and gardens. Everyone makes you feel comfortable. It’s very reassuring, and it’s right here in our neighborhood. No need to go to the city or drive to the North Shore.”

Now cancer-free for a year and a half, Susan and Rick have an even greater appreciation for Northwell’s decision to support the South Shore with state-of-the-art medical care. “We are reminded almost every month through letters, phone calls and word of mouth stories of how the Imbert Cancer Center has helped others,” says Susan.

“Rick and I feel a sense of responsibility to our community. We hope to inspire others to do the same.”

Preemie twins inspire support for a **new women and babies center** on Staten Island

By Jamie Lynn Macchia and Jillian O'Hara



"I came back from work and saw my wife in pain," says Isaiah Avah, about his wife, Ngozi, who was 25 weeks into her pregnancy with twins. Isaiah immediately rushed her to Staten Island University Hospital.

"They found out my water broke for one of the babies," says Ngozi. Having delivered full-term twin boys without complications three years earlier, Ngozi never expected this could happen to them. The hospital staff discussed options with her and her husband. "They didn't want to take them out right away, so they told me to hold out as much as I can."

But four days later Ngozi was rushed back to the hospital. "The bleeding wouldn't stop. 'We have to take the babies out,' they said. We had no choice."

Ngozi gave birth to two baby girls through an emergency C-section on September 20. Daniella weighed 2 lbs. 1 oz. and Emmanuella was 1 lb. 11 oz. The girls were immediately taken to the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Working with the family to ensure thriving babies

It was a long and rocky road, but the family never gave up hope. "They did a great job," says Ngozi about the Staten Island hospital staff. "They were working with the babies, working with us as family."

"One of the doctors in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit told us, the most important part of the healing process is to be here for your children, as much as you can. My husband and I truly took that advice to heart."

Isaiah and Ngozi alternated daily shifts with the babies, and soon their prayers were answered. After three months in the NICU, the babies came home — just in time for the holidays.

"I've learned something like this could happen to anyone," Ngozi adds. "We need to support these programs and help other families in case it happens to them."

Creating a new center to care for women and newborns

Drawn by its compassionate and outstanding clinical care, generations of families like the Avahs have brought their children into the world at Staten Island University Hospital. However, with its maternity unit last updated in 1979, improved maternal and newborn units are needed so the clinical care team can do what they do best — deliver babies safely and provide comprehensive care so both mothers and newborns can thrive.

Michael Caridi, a longtime hospital supporter, is leading the charge to bring the Gruppuso Family Women and Newborn Center to life.

Michael is the founder of the Vincent Gruppuso Foundation, named after his father-in-law, whom he greatly admired. Last year, the foundation pledged \$2.5 million toward the center — the largest philanthropic gift ever made on Staten Island at the time.

The center, anticipated to open in 2021, features an expanded, 20-bassinet NICU, integrated units, and private labor and delivery rooms, all designed to increase comfort and healing.

Michael hopes the donation will help serve the community for many generations to come and motivate others to give back in their own way.

"This center is a much-needed resource to families here. My father-in-law adored children and was grateful for the care he received at Staten Island University Hospital," Michael says. "He was always working for the future, never content for today. That's the basis of all of the work we do with the hospital."

Hear the Avahs share their story at bit.ly/AvahsStory

Taking care of family caregivers

By Darrien Garay

After attending his brother's wake, Tim Hubbard suffered a fall. Two days later, he was in emergency trauma surgery for a ruptured spleen and internal bleeding. For the next week, Tim's wife, Lisa, a Peconic Bay Medical Center employee, stayed by his side while he recovered in the Intensive Care Unit.



Lisa and Tim Hubbard

At times, overwhelmed and exhausted, Lisa needed somewhere to rest and recharge. "My husband and I were here for the opening of the Caregivers Center in November," says Lisa. "Little did I know I would be a recipient of their wonderful and caring hard work firsthand."

Lisa is referring to Peconic's Caregivers Center, Long Island's first hospital-based caregivers center. It's a dedicated respite for family caregivers, who receive coaching, support and resources to handle the multifaceted situations they face while caring for loved ones. Peconic's center is based on the pioneering Ken Hamilton Caregivers Center at Northwell's Northern Westchester Hospital.

"The coaches always showed up at the perfect moment, just as I was feeling very empty and alone," Lisa shares. "It was almost like your mother coming up and giving you a hug while saying, 'You will get through this.'"

Peconic's Caregivers Center became a reality through a donation from local philanthropist Judith A. Jedlicka, a member of the hospital's Patient and Family Partnership Council and its foundation board. Her gift was in honor of her father, Henry E. Jedlicka.

"The need for support for family caregivers was dramatized for me when I was in that role caring for my father," says Judith. "I spent long hours with him in hospitals during his battle with lung cancer, and during his periods at home, I had to figure out how to find portable oxygen devices and other medical equipment for him. Those were daunting tasks for someone without a ready-made support system."

"It's about giving caregivers tender-loving care, empathy and active listening," says Tara Anglim, the director of Patient and Family-Centered Care. "Our coaches have been down the caregiving road themselves. We offer information and support, and let them all know they are doing the best they can with the tools they have."

Realizing the tangible benefits of caregiver centers, Northwell is working to expand these centers across its footprint and is also embarking on research that examines and quantifies how these centers benefit family caregivers.

"We are dedicated to fully caring for our patients, which means making sure their family members are supported as well," says Sven Gierlinger, Northwell's vice president and chief experience



Philanthropist Judith A. Jedlicka with Tara Anglim, director of Patient and Family-Centered Care.

officer. "Caregiver centers are funded by philanthropy and continued support from our donors will allow us to expand to hospitals across Northwell's footprint — all to provide the best possible care and patient and caregiver experience."

Thanks to the compassionate care of the staff and coaches, Lisa and Tim have returned to some much needed normalcy. Despite losing vision in his right eye, Tim has gone back to work.



2000 Marcus Ave
New Hyde Park, NY 11042



Your gift today can help advance care for the more than 2 million people we serve annually. Visit give.northwell.edu



Upcoming Events

Cohen Children's Circle Golf Classic

Monday, August 5, 2019
Fresh Meadow Country Club
Deerpdale Golf Club
Lake Success, NY

Contact: Allie Sheehan
(646) 766-7135
asheehan2@northwell.edu

Summer Hamptons Evening (SHE)

Saturday, August 17, 2019
Water Mill, NY

Contact: Jennifer Avedon
(646) 766-7134
javedon@northwell.edu

Peconic Bay Medical Center Benefit in Black & White

Friday, September 13, 2019
Westhampton Country Club
Westhampton Beach, NY

Contact: Candace Porter
(631) 548-6166
cporter3@northwell.edu

Northwell Health Seminar — NYC

Thursday, September 19, 2019
Marriott Marquis
New York, NY

Contact: Trisha Marasco
(516) 321-6339
tmarasco@northwell.edu

Katz Institute for Women's Health Luncheon and Fashion Show

Thursday, September 26, 2019
Old Westbury Gardens
Old Westbury, NY

Contact: Tamar Segura
(516) 321-6340
tsegura@northwell.edu

Staten Island University Hospital 136th Charity Ball

Saturday, October 19, 2019
Hilton Garden Inn
Staten Island, NY

Contact: Evelyn Fonseca
(718) 226-6331
efonseca@northwell.edu

Children's Medical Fund of NY's Garden City Chapter — Ghostly Gala

Saturday, October 19, 2019
Garden City Country Club
Garden City, NY

Contact: Michelle Gevirtz
(516) 624-1981
michelle@cmfny.org

Northern Westchester Hospital Gala

Saturday, November 2, 2019
Northern Westchester
Hospital Campus
Mount Kisco, NY

Contact: Gaby
Golod Greenwald
(914) 242-8392
ggreenwald@northwell.edu

The Constellation Gala

Tuesday, November 12, 2019
The Metropolitan
Museum of Art
New York, NY

Contact: Jennifer Avedon
(646) 766-7134
javedon@northwell.edu

Southside Hospital Food & Wine Experience

Thursday, November 14, 2019
The LakeHouse
Bay Shore, NY

Contact: Karen Blank
(631) 396-6784
kblank@northwell.edu

Huntington Hospital Annual Gala

Thursday, November 21, 2019
Paramount Theatre
Huntington, NY

Contact: Dolli Bross
(631) 470-5204
dbross2@northwell.edu

Children's Medical Fund of NY's Garden City Chapter — Brunch & Holiday Marketplace for Ladies

Thursday, December 12, 2019
Garden City Country Club
Garden City, NY

Contact: Michelle Gevirtz
(516) 624-1981
michelle@cmfny.org

Northwell Health is a nonprofit organization supported by the people and communities we serve.