



# BUILDING HOPE + HEALTH + COMMUNITY

SPECIAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY **CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL FOUNDATION**





## THE LINK BETWEEN THE HOSPITAL **AND THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES**

**53 grateful community members** provided relief from Deaconess Foundation's Equitable Relief and Recovery Fund grant to Christian Hospital Foundation.

**3 truck and trailer loads of cleaning supplies** donated to patients so they could safely quarantine at home.

**1 truck and trailer load of water bottles** donated by the community to Christian Hospital frontline.

**75 meals a day** delivered to community members over three months by Black Jack Fire Department, other fire departments and Christian Hospital EMS team.

**More than 400 community members** received financial assistance with medications they could not afford.

**5 truckloads of PPE** donated by community members.

**1,500 free flu shots** provided to community members

**175 lives touched by Christian Hospital Community Health Workers.** This included scheduling virtual primary care visits and delivering fresh produce and blood pressure cuffs to residents in partnership with Operation Food Search, American Heart Association, and the Urban League.

**50 + local businesses and friends** provided food to Christian Hospital's HealthCare Heroes.





Dear Neighbors,

The arrival of COVID-19 to our region earlier this year presented the Christian Hospital Foundation with unforeseen challenges. As our community was disproportionately affected by the pandemic—revealing disparities in health care and access—more neighbors, colleagues, family members and friends than ever were in need of help.

We are sincerely grateful for the heartfelt support the Foundation received in response to the pandemic, which continues to adversely affect our community and our organization. Many individuals and area restaurants donated food, personal protective equipment and money to assist our frontline heroes. Our mission to improve the health and wellness of our community would not be possible without the ongoing generosity of our donors.

Through this community report, we're sharing stories of the impact we're making together, as we strive every day to provide vital support to Christian Hospital in the areas of patient care, advanced medicine and technology, community benefit programs and staff education.

Every day, we're honored to play a part in the positive experiences of real people who entrust their care to Christian Hospital. Our patients are receiving world-class care right where they live. We're able to provide the most advanced treatment and procedures available because of our compassionate and experienced health care professionals. And we're able to make such a significant difference in people's lives because of our generous donors.

Our commitment extends beyond hospital walls, ensuring everyone in our community receives the necessary resources for improved health. To further this effort, we've built partnerships with other organizations who share this same mission.

In this community report, we're pleased to recognize our generous donors whose support enhances our ability to provide compassionate care and clinical excellence. Together, we're making our community stronger, better and healthier.

Thank you for your continued meaningful support of the Christian Hospital Foundation.

With warmest gratitude,



Rick L. Stevens, FACHE  
President, Christian Hospital



Rick L. Stevens, FACHE



*"In our community, we have all the social determinants of health that make COVID-19 spread and make North County uniquely vulnerable to the virus."*

- Sebastian Rueckert, MD, MBA, FACEP, FACHE  
Vice President & Regional Chief Medical Officer  
Christian Hospital, Northwest Health Care, & Alton Memorial Hospital.

## COVID-19: **CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL BECOMES THE PORT IN THE STORM**

Sebastian Rueckert, MD, Christian Hospital vice president and chief medical officer, vividly remembers the March weekend when the COVID-19 surge hit Christian Hospital. The weekend started quietly with just a handful of patients with COVID-19. By Sunday evening, patients were pouring in.

“We had plans in place for equipment and procedures but we couldn’t have anticipated the scale and scope of the patients who arrived,” he says. “In our community, we have all the social determinants of health that make COVID-19 spread and make North County uniquely vulnerable to the virus.”

He says many community members are at higher risk for spread because they live in multigenerational housing, rely on shared transportation and may not have the option to work from home in their jobs. They also have poor access to preventive care and medications.

“These factors combined with so much misinformation about the virus in the early days led to exponential spread of COVID-19 in North County,” Dr. Rueckert says.

### **The Fast and The Furious**

Christian Hospital teams sprang into action in the face of COVID-19. “We needed to invent new things on an hourly basis,” Dr. Rueckert says. “For example, our team converted dozens of rooms into negative pressure rooms in less than a week. We also switched entire floors to dedicated COVID-19 floors. And the number of those

floors kept growing because our community was so hard hit with the virus.”

On any given day, Christian Hospital cares for about 220 patients. During the outbreak, that number dropped to about 150. At one point, the hospital was treating 92 COVID-19 patients—more than half of the patients at the hospital. All non-essential procedures were stopped so the team could concentrate on patients with COVID-19.

Team members were using 7,000 protective gowns every 24 hours because they had to be changed between each patient contact. The hospital was down to its last 150 gowns when a team member drove to Alton Memorial Hospital to pick up another 400 to last until morning when the next shipment was due from BJC HealthCare.

To maximize resources and skill sets, the teams created pod nursing for patients who were on ventilators. The strategy allowed the critical care nurses to focus on specialized ventilator care while other nurses cared for patients’ additional needs.

Meal distribution also had to be reimaged to keep patients and team members safe.

“We adapted and innovated on the fly,” Dr. Rueckert says. “I learned we have the expertise and staff to do anything. Our team was truly impressive and cares deeply about serving our community.”

One example is the team members’ commitment on the remaining dedicated COVID-19 floor. The hospital leaders thought maybe the team on that floor needed a break after so many months. The plan was to shift COVID-19 patient care to another floor instead. “However, given the option, the dedicated team turned us down,” Dr. Rueckert says. “They had pride in their work and had become experts in caring for these patients. They wanted to continue being the key COVID-19 caregiver team.”

### **Restoring Calm**

Today, most community members in north St. Louis County are vigilant about wearing masks and social distancing because they witnessed the devastation caused by the virus. “Everyone knows someone who had the virus or died from it,” Dr. Rueckert says.

The community also stepped forward with meals, masks, water and other donations to help the hospital team through the crisis. (See Thank You on page 21.)

Thankfully, north St. Louis County seems to be through the worst of the virus. Unfortunately, some areas have relaxed their safety precautions and the virus is flaring on the perimeter of the St. Louis metro area and in more rural areas.

Currently, the hospital is treating about a dozen patients with COVID-19 each week. Their symptoms have tended to be less severe than the initial wave of patients. Dr. Rueckert emphasizes the importance of continuing safety precautions as we head into the winter.

Treatments such as Remdesivir, convalescent plasma and steroids have been working well in patients with COVID-19. However, the long-term health effects of COVID-19 are still unknown.

### Remaining Vigilant

While a vaccine is on the horizon, Dr. Rueckert believes it won't be widely available until mid-2021. Aggressive testing and contact tracing are vital for now, he says. Dr. Rueckert leads a physician operation task force that continues to meet twice a week to brainstorm and stay current on the latest treatments for COVID-19. They remain vigilant in case a second wave occurs.

"The good news is we're better prepared and know how to best care for these patients now," he says.

He continues: "If you work in health care, your instinct is to run toward the fire, not away. Our teams showed up every day during this crisis and will continue their dedication to our community no matter what comes our way."

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## PATIENT GRATITUDE: IN HER OWN WORDS

Vicky Jude spent 15 days on a ventilator at Christian Hospital due to COVID-19. She was immensely grateful for the care, attention and compassion she received from the Christian Hospital team.

"The ICU staff was wonderful—they prayed with me and held my hand—I thought that was really awesome to take the time to pray with me. I also was able to communicate with my sister every day—the nurse would call her and Dr. Close was so wonderful.

The care and attention I got was unbelievable. Everybody made sure I had everything I needed. When I went to the 8th floor, everybody said 'I'm here to take care of you.'

When I moved to the hospital's Comprehensive Medical Rehabilitation (CMR) Unit I couldn't comb my hair. Pat in CMR gently combed it out and told me everyone was praying for me. Every day I had therapy and they had me up walking. They told me I was doing great and that

they loved me. That really touched me because I missed my family so much and really felt at home here.

It was an awesome experience for someone so sick. I did not have one bad experience while I was at Christian Hospital."





# CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL

*"We adapted and innovated on the fly. I learned we have the expertise and staff to do anything. Our team was truly impressive and cares deeply about serving our community."*

- Sebastian Rueckert, MD



## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION **CREATES INNOVATIVE TUTORING HUB**

Beyond health, children have been affected in multiple ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their education has been interrupted and virtual school can leave some students behind.

Thankfully, community organizations, along with Christian Hospital Foundation, have stepped in to make sure students have the resources they need to succeed as schools navigate new ways to educate students in a pandemic.

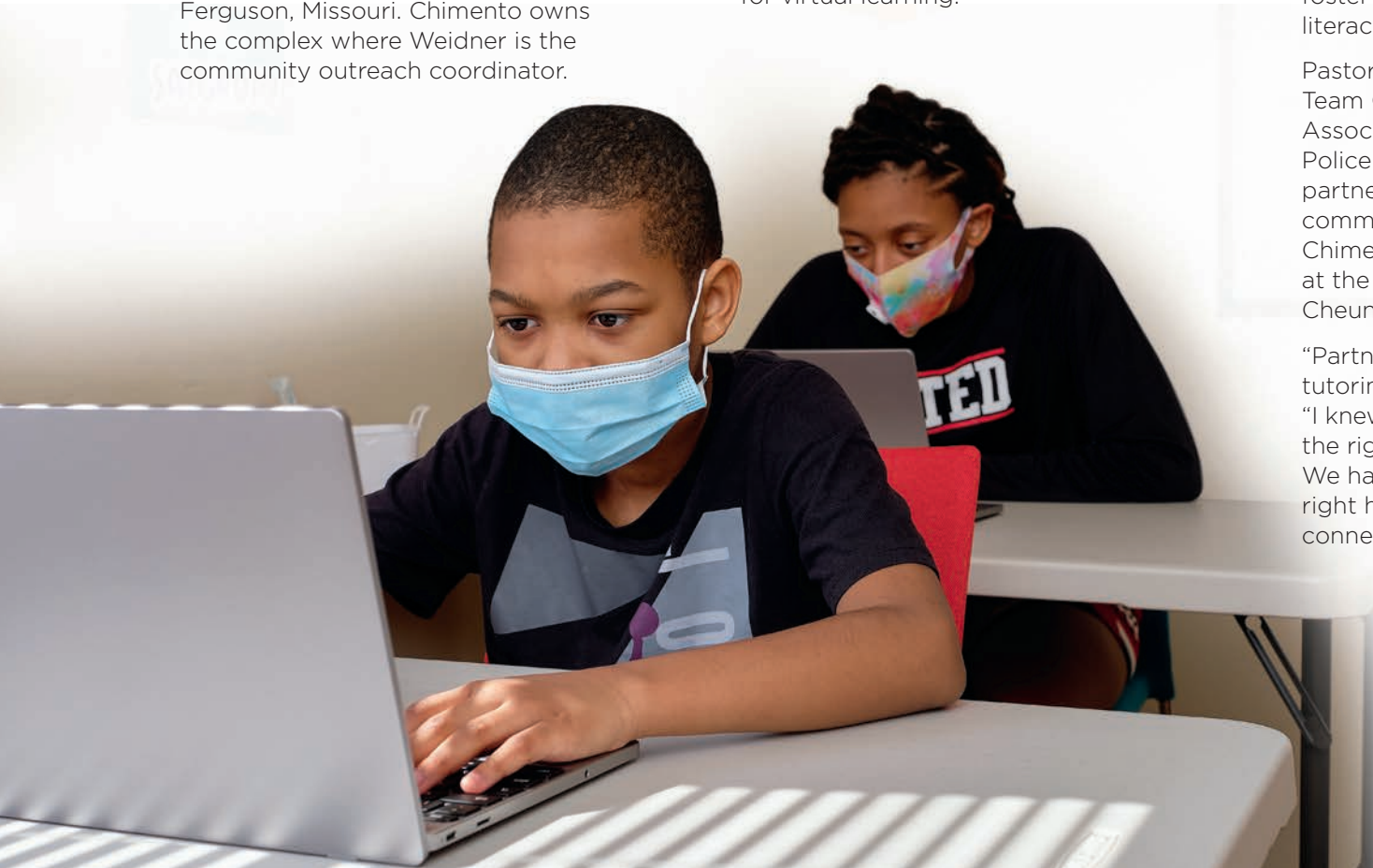
It started with two moms. These moms, Anita Chimento and Joy Weidner, worked together at Oakmont Townhomes in Ferguson, Missouri. Chimento owns the complex where Weidner is the community outreach coordinator.

They soon realized the children who lived in the Oakmont complex were facing tremendous education challenges due to the pandemic. Many students attended Riverview Gardens School District, which didn't initially have computers for each student to accommodate virtual learning. In addition, many students didn't have internet service in their homes necessary for virtual learning.

Recognizing the needs, Chimento decided to establish a tutoring hub in one of the Oakmont community's townhomes. She developed the idea with the help of Pastor José Aguayo, who lives in the complex and has established Adopt-a-Block in the community. Through door-to-door visits, the Adopt-a-Block program connects residents, assesses needs and builds trust to foster a variety of outreach efforts such as literacy programs and youth mentorship.

Pastor José also is the Rapid Response Team Chaplain with Billy Graham Evangelical Association and chaplain for the Ferguson Police Department. He has built numerous partnerships through his work in the community. As a result, he introduced Chimento and Weidner to LaKricia Cox at the Little Bit Foundation and Necole Cheung at Christian Hospital Foundation.

"Partnerships were essential for the tutoring hub to succeed," Chimento says. "I knew there were a lot of non-profits with the right programs looking to serve people. We had the people who needed them right here in our complex. So we were the connecting cog thanks to Pastor José."





## Partners in Success

"Pastor José has been pivotal in this tutoring hub project," Weidner adds. "When we explained our idea to LaKricia and Necole, they were enthusiastic and asked what we needed to get started. They were more than generous."

It was a natural fit with the Little Bit Foundation, which partners with several area schools to remove barriers to education. That includes coordinating tutoring resources, a vital part of the Oakmont Tutoring Hub.

Cox is the Project Graduation manager with the Little Bit Foundation. The goal of the tutoring hub complements her goals of helping students succeed and graduate.

"The Little Bit Foundation is focused on removing barriers to help families," Cox says. "COVID-19 has become a barrier to learning. We don't want our kids left behind in their school work. The Oakmont Tutoring Hub is a perfect opportunity to engage students in an innovative way."

Christian Hospital Foundation is providing COVID-19 guidance and thermometers for screenings as well the technology components, including a desktop monitor and ChromeBooks.

"We were thrilled to be able to play a part in this solution for the community," Cheung says. "The children are our future and we're proud to invest in them and our community."

Chimento recognizes the value Christian Hospital Foundation brings to the Oakmont Tutoring Hub. "Christian Hospital Foundation invests in the community's health through a holistic approach. We're happy to be a bridge and hopefully start something bigger where we can connect our residents to more health and wellness resources. Our tutoring program also has a mentoring piece to improve all aspects of life for the students and families. We want to see kids thriving in all ways."

## Helping Children and the Community Blossom

The Oakmont Tutoring Hub opened at the end of September. To keep children and volunteers safe, desks are appropriately distanced and the number of people in the townhome is limited. The hub is thoroughly cleaned between sessions. Volunteers from Oakmont screen children with temperature checks before they enter the hub. Students are required to wear masks, which are provided.

Cox envisions flexibility at the tutoring hub to accommodate fluctuating school schedules going forward. "We'll provide academic support to help children blossom no matter what their schedules. Some people think you have to do big elaborate things to make a difference. With the tutoring hub, we can start small, create success and build relationships. Who knows what the possibilities will be then?"

Weidner emphasizes how important the collaborations have been to make the Oakmont Tutoring Hub a reality.

*"Working collaboratively encourages innovation and helps us all recognize where the unmet needs are to build and support our community."*

- LaKricia Cox, The Little Bit Foundation

"We can't do this alone," Weidner says. "When we say it takes a village, it truly does to make this tutoring hub a success. Helping these kids is all about community. Even if we reach just one person, that's one more than we would have without trying. We hope to keep the tutoring hub going for a long time and for the idea to catch on in other communities."

Cox agrees. "Working collaboratively encourages innovation and helps us all recognize where the unmet needs are to build and support our community."

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## PARTNERSHIPS CREATE **LIFESAVING IMPACTS ON THE COMMUNITY**

One gift can multiply into many blessings.

That sentiment came to life through a generous \$25,000 grant from the Deaconess Foundation to Christian Hospital Foundation to support COVID-19 patients and their families as they address unplanned expenses and/or lost revenue due to the pandemic.

The relief aid through the Equitable Relief and Recovery Fund grant was dedicated to improving health outcomes by eliminating social determinants of health barriers that prevent people from becoming healthier.

Because of the Deaconess gift, Christian Hospital Foundation was able to award grants ranging from \$472 to \$5,926. This vital funding kept families above water

by helping them pay for basic household needs, medications, rent and mortgage, utilities, food, behavioral health, masks and cleaning supplies.

“Through one generous grant, we directly helped 53 grateful community members,” says Necole Cheung, executive director of Christian Hospital Foundation. “We made a significant difference for them and for our community that will have a lasting impact beyond this pandemic.”

Because of the dynamic partnership between Christian Hospital’s case management team and the Foundation, the team was quick to identify those who needed help most.

“Long before the pandemic, we recognized the health disparities in our community, especially in certain zip codes,” explains Alisha McCoy, RN, BSN, ACM-RN, manager of case management. “Many of those affected were already struggling with food insecurity, mental health and unemployment. Then when COVID-19 showed up, we really saw how hard these zip codes were impacted. It was a real aha moment.”

In the early weeks of the pandemic, Christian Hospital was the hardest hit hospital in BJC HealthCare.

“We realized the needs surrounding health disparities quickly and asked for the grant from the Deaconess Foundation so we could assist our community,” McCoy says.

*“Many of those affected were already struggling with food insecurity, mental health and unemployment. Then when COVID-19 showed up, we really saw how hard these zip codes were impacted. It was a real aha moment.”*

– Alisha McCoy, RN, BSN, ACM-RN, Manager, Case Management

### **Lifting Up Those Who Need It Most**

Christian Hospital case managers and social workers routinely perform in-depth, holistic assessments to identify patients who need help most due to food insecurity, rent, utilities or transportation issues. Their goal is to ensure patients can transition safely home after they have been hospitalized.

This complements Christian Hospital Foundation’s mission, explains Cheung. “The Foundation creates opportunities to provide vital support to improve the health and well-being of the community.”





Left to Right: Necole Cheung,  
Dana Ballinger, Alisha McCoy

*“Through one generous grant, we were able to directly help 53 grateful community members. We made a significant difference for them and for our community that will have a lasting impact beyond this pandemic.”*

– Necole Cheung, Executive Director of Christian Hospital Foundation

“We’re natural partners with the Foundation,” McCoy adds. “My team is the frontline that reaches out to the most vulnerable people. We are always looking for resources to help. This time, during the pandemic, those resources were right at Christian Hospital through the Foundation.”

Even before the pandemic, this patient population was burdened with chronic health issues such as diabetes or high blood pressure. “Unfortunately, they often have to make decisions such as paying for insulin this month or paying their rent,” says Dana Ballinger, LCSW, MPH, ACM, director of care coordination and population health at Christian Hospital. “Now compound these health issues with a pandemic and people really struggled. The support from Christian Hospital donors was clearly critical to so many in our community.”

### **Relief and Rescue in a Crisis**

During COVID-19, the community’s needs were catapulted to crisis level.

Because of the generous Deaconess grant and other donor support, Christian Hospital Foundation was able to reach deep into the community to offer relief.

One north St. Louis County man already had decreased hours at work due to the pandemic. With six people living in his home, including three dependents, the bills climbed as his income decreased. Then he was hospitalized at Christian Hospital with COVID-19.

Soon he was three months behind on his mortgage, and owed \$900 each for gas and electric bills. “How do you recover from that without help?” McCoy says. “Because of the Foundation funds, we were able to help him with those expenses and ease his worries.”

The patient later called McCoy and was extremely grateful for the help. He said as a foreigner who has lived in St. Louis 12 years, this was the first help he had received.

He also praised the hospital for how welcoming and kind the staff was.

“He told me that the help we provided was ‘truly a miracle,’” McCoy says. “Now he wants to give back to Christian Hospital by volunteering.”

As the leader of the hospital’s Foundation dedicated to helping the community, Cheung says it’s heartwarming to hear those stories. “This feels good,” she says. “While we’ve always supported our community, this direct impact on individuals is the start of what we’ve always wanted to do. Our generous donors are making a powerful difference in people’s lives.”

She continues: “Through philanthropic support and strategic grant making and the partnership among social workers, community health and the Foundation, we’re dedicated to building healthy communities.”

### **Shining Hope in the Darkness**

During the pandemic, it was all hands on deck. Roles and titles were blurred. Cheung worked with Ballinger and McCoy to call patients after discharge to screen them for any needs they had. Cheung also personally delivered items to homes along with other team members. The experience directly connected her to the purpose and importance of philanthropy work.

“Working with Dana and Alisha and their teams doing life-changing work in our community has been my most rewarding experience at Christian Hospital,” Cheung says.



One of the patients the team helped was a mom who had just adopted a relative's 9-month-old baby from the foster system. Soon after the adoption, both mom, baby and another daughter were diagnosed with COVID-19. The mother became unemployed due to her illness. She also fell behind on her mortgage and utilities. In addition, the team learned the baby had been sleeping in a car seat with no crib of his own.

When the mom went home after being hospitalized, the Christian Hospital team offered assistance on all fronts. They purchased a new baby bed and personally delivered it. They also provided formula, diapers and clothes and connected the mom to other resources to help the family get back on their feet.

"It feels great to tell people don't worry, we can help," Cheung says. "It's moving to see their faces and their tears of gratitude. Many of them just need a break and are so appreciative for the help. We provided people with hope."

### Improving Health Beyond the Pandemic

The pandemic has allowed Christian Hospital to care for patients beyond the hospital walls. Cheung wants to build on the relationships and trust that have emerged from this horrible virus to create a healthier community.

"We hope to touch more lives beyond the hospital because we have such a vulnerable population," Cheung says. "During the pandemic, I think we've shown how we are truly committed to building a healthier community."

Ballinger agrees. "We give patients our best while they're in the hospital but the beauty and uniqueness is we have a community health program to follow patients once they leave us. Christian Hospital is building bridges for patients. We are establishing a relationship with them where they live, work and play. We walk the journey alongside patients to support them beyond the hospital walls to build a healthier community. Ultimately, our goal is to empower people to be in control of their health and wellness."

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## URBAN LEAGUE AND SYSCO FOODS HONOR CH **HEALTH CARE HEROES**

The Urban League partnered with Sysco Foods to present 1,700 box meals on June 23 from Marco's Catering for all staff at Christian Hospital and Northwest HealthCare. They also presented cards from school-aged children in the Urban League's Head Start Program in north St. Louis County thanking the hospital staff for their hard work during the pandemic.

Melissa Vann, RN, BSN, CMSRN, assistant chief nursing officer, patient care services, was honored as health care hero "Woman of the Year."

Paul Drake, MHA, community health manager, Community Health Access Program (CHAP) from the hospital's Pathway to Health program at the Urban League's Ferguson Empowerment Center, was honored as health care hero "Man of the Year." The ceremony included remarks from Rick Stevens, Christian Hospital president; Michael McMillan, Urban League president and CEO; and Rob Kirkland, Sysco Foods president.

**THANK YOU** Urban League, Sysco Foods and Marco's Catering!





*"The frontline workers had to continue going to work to keep all of us healthy and safe so our church members wanted to honor, thank and show them love."*

- Pastor Trevor Barnes, Northside Seventh Day Adventist Church



## SPRINGING A **FOUNTAIN OF KINDNESS**

What began with hundreds of water bottle donations overflowed into a river of compassion and heartfelt generosity from the community.

When COVID-19 swept into St. Louis, particularly north St. Louis County, Pastor Trevor Barnes of Northside Seventh Day Adventist Church witnessed the devastating impact it had on frontline workers and put plans in motion to help.

“The frontline workers had to continue going to work to keep all of us healthy and safe, so our church members wanted to honor, thank and show them love,” Pastor Barnes says.

The first step was collecting and delivering a larger trailer full of water bottles for the teams at Christian Hospital.

Pastor Barnes believes health care workers often go unappreciated. “Their work during COVID-19 was beyond the work they normally do. They had to go back to their families every night fearful they would give their family the virus. We empathized and wanted to show appreciation for what they were going through. The work they do keeps us safe and makes life easier for others.”

He adds the water bottles were important for the health and safety of nurses and doctors since they had to avoid water fountains at work.

### **Generosity Keeps the Community Safe**

While the health care teams were grateful for the water bottles, Pastor Barnes soon learned of another pressing need at the hospital. “I discovered patients were being released from the hospital but they didn’t have the supplies at home needed to remain safely quarantined for 14 days,” he explains. “This put the rest of the community at risk since the patients may have gone to stores to get supplies while they were still possibly contagious. It also put the patients at risk since they weren’t fully recovered.”

The challenge inspired Pastor Barnes to spring into action again. He made another call to the community and other Adventist churches in the area, including Berean Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Tabernacle of Praise.

“I was overwhelmed by the amount of support and kindness of the community,” Pastor Barnes says. “They all made donations so we could create care packages of toilet paper, wipes, paper towels, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer and other essentials for these patients to take home so they could safely quarantine.”

The generosity of the community filled three vehicles with trailers. Pastor Barnes and deacons from other churches helped deliver the items. “Our church members take care of one another, minister to the

sick and oppressed, and share hope, inspiration and love. Doing good in the community is one of our core values.”

While COVID-19 has brought many dark moments, it also has inspired a few silver linings. One of them is a stronger relationship between Christian Hospital and the community.

“We built a bridge that could benefit our community’s health and well-being even more in the future,” Pastor Barnes says. “If we have a need, Northside will reach out. And we will be there for the hospital and community. We adopted Christian Hospital as part of our family. Our church will do anything we can to help patients and staff through this pandemic.”

“We’re grateful for Pastor Barnes’s leadership and for the community’s generosity,” says Necole Cheung, executive director of Christian Hospital Foundation. “It’s incredibly inspiring to see how we take care of each other in this community.”

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## THROUGH THE EYES OF A **HEALTH CARE HERO**

Mandy Pickett, RN, BSN, patient care manager at Christian Hospital, has always been determined to make a difference. She strives to inspire her team members to be as engaged and excited about their jobs as she is about hers.

It's no surprise her colleagues nominated her to receive The DAISY Award that recognizes nursing clinical excellence and compassion.

So when a tsunami of COVID-19 patients arrived at Christian Hospital in the spring, Pickett drew on her compassion and leadership strengths to rally her team as they became the designated unit to care for extremely ill patients through uncharted territory.

In the early weeks of the pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) was unsure how the disease was transmitted and how to best protect health care workers. Fear was palpable among the frontline staff and in the community.

As a “fixer,” Pickett was committed to do all she could to find the best way to care for patients and her team.

“Everything was evolving then and recommendations were constantly changing,” she says. “Our team was scared at first. They weren’t sure if they were protected enough. Every day, we saw

something new and we were trying something different for our patients.”

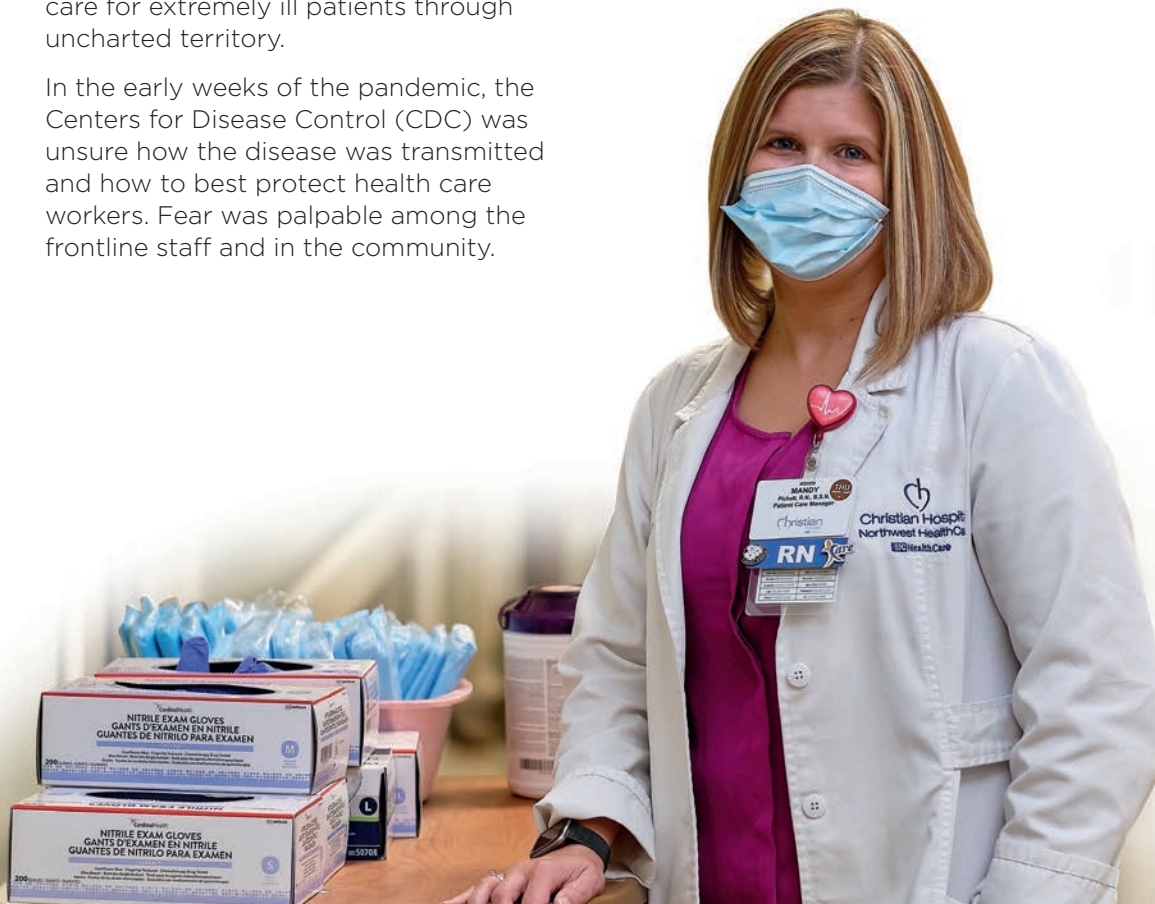
Pickett frequently accessed the hospital’s Command Center to gather as much current information as she could to relay to her team.

“I was constantly educating myself and teaching my team about proper mask wearing, isolation gowns and other safety precautions so they felt safe and confident they wouldn’t take the virus home to their families. There was so much unknown and so much misinformation in the news at the time.”

At one point, several floors of the hospital became designated COVID-19 units. This separation ensured the safety and peace of mind for both patients and staff.

“It hit so fast,” Pickett says. “At first, we were trying to figure out what to do. We were in survival mode with all hands on deck, including doctors, nurses, technicians, everyone. Now we know how to best help patients. We’re using different medications, positioning patients differently. We learned a lot since the beginning and I hope as studies go on, we will learn more.”

Mandy Pickett, RN, BSN





## Offering Families Compassion and Comfort

During the heat of the pandemic, families were separated and couldn't visit sick loved ones. Pickett's team did all they could to accommodate and comfort families during that difficult time. Some patients were in the hospital for several weeks.

"We made sure they stayed connected, whether through FaceTime, Zoom, iPads or phones so the family could see the patients were OK," Pickett says.

The teams on the COVID units also tried to put husbands and wives or other relatives in the same rooms or move beds closer together so it felt more like home and brought comfort. In addition, the staff stayed longer hours so they could care for more patients.

During the most intense months of COVID-19, the rest of the hospital became caregivers of the caregivers.

"Other units in the hospital reached out to teams on the COVID units to see how we were doing," Pickett says. "The whole tower bonded and did well-checks on each other."

In addition to well-checks, the hospital took care of their own. One Christian Hospital technician became sick with COVID-19. She was a working mom with several children at home. After she left the hospital, she had ongoing complications from the virus that prevented her from returning to work for two months. That meant no paycheck. Meanwhile her bills continued to mount.

Pickett contacted the Christian Hospital Foundation for assistance for this struggling employee. Through the Employee Help Fund, the Foundation helped the employee catch up on her utilities and mortgage.

When the initial surge of patients slowed, Pickett's unit became the primary COVID-19 unit.

"Our team became closer and showed extraordinary teamwork," Pickett says. "I saw how truly resilient my team is. They didn't bail out. We even onboarded new team members during the pandemic. I'm so proud of them all."

She continues: "Ultimately, our team took COVID-19 care head on. We saw it as a challenge and took ownership. These are our patients, our community members. Now we're proud to be the COVID experts in the hospital and our team is teaching others."

## Giving Back from a Heart of Gratitude and Service

Pickett was born and raised in north St. Louis County so caring for her community members was personal to her. "I've served this community for 16 years. It is a blessing to serve and give back. This is why we're here."

The intensity of caring for extremely ill COVID-19 patients with rapidly changing guidance tested the entire health care team. And it highlighted the fragility of life and importance of teamwork, Pickett says.

"This experience made me stronger. But it also reminded me that tomorrow is never promised and to live life to the

*"I'm so thankful for the gracious outpouring of support from the community. It inspired the team and made us want to push harder. They gave back to us as much as we gave to them. I love serving them every day."*

- Mandy Pickett, RN, BSN, Patient Care Manager

fullest today. I'm thankful to wake up each morning looking forward to a great day. This also taught me how to adapt quickly to change. I used to be highly structured and organized. Now I'm very flexible and am ready to roll with whatever comes my way."

Pickett continues to be driven by the appreciation for her community. "I'm so thankful for the gracious outpouring of support from the community. They gave us so much including masks, food, water bottles and more. It inspired the team and made us want to push harder. They gave back to us as much as we gave to them. I love serving them every day."

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## STEPPING UP AND **STANDING STRONGER TOGETHER**

With 23 years as a nurse leader, Lori Weatherspoon, RN, BSN, MHA, has led hospitals around the country through major hurricane evacuations, power outages and ice storms. Two years after arriving at Christian Hospital as chief nursing officer and vice president of patient care services, Weatherspoon's emergency training, experience and leadership were put through the pandemic gauntlet.

It began with a phone call from Christian Hospital President Rick Stevens on a Sunday in early March. He issued a dire warning: "It's coming," he told her. "Let's stand this up."

"It" was COVID-19 and it was about to hit St. Louis after devastating the West and East Coasts. Stevens charged Weatherspoon with establishing an Incident Command Center at Christian Hospital to provide guidance on processes and responses throughout the pandemic.

As Incident Commander, Weatherspoon and newly appointed Deputy Incident Commander Kathy McMullen, MPH, interim director of quality and analytics, moved swiftly. By March 16, the physical Christian Hospital Command Center was fully operational.

"Then the flood gates opened," Weatherspoon says. "COVID-19 spiked first in North County. It hit hard, fast and heavy. I've never seen anything like this virus. Things were changing minute by minute. At times we were bursting at the seams at capacity. Everyone was pitching in to wipe down surfaces and help wherever

they were needed. People stepped up and out during that time."

The hospital treated 90 extremely sick patients in the first month. At one point, 40 patients were on ventilators.

### **The Right Team at the Right Time**

The Command Center was the hub of all COVID-19 information. "Getting communication out has been key," Weatherspoon says. "The Command Center structure, with representation from all departments, helps everyone in

the hospital know what to do and who to go to if they have questions."

The Christian Hospital Command Center is connected to the BJC Incident Command Center as well as command centers at other BJC hospitals. Daily phone conferences relayed policies and protocols and allowed for insights and ideas to be shared system-wide.

While she knew she had strong team members, Weatherspoon says the teamwork at Christian Hospital was an eye opener. "We all played important roles and I saw how

*"It was important to Rick Stevens, our hospital president, that we keep our community's patients here with us and not transfer them elsewhere. This is where they live, this is where their families are."*

– Lori Weatherspoon, RN, BSN, MHA, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Patient Care Services



perfectly linked we are. We built relationships on a different level. To watch people step up and give all is when you really see people. We were working 14-16 hours a day and people continued to show up.”

By the end of August, about 300 COVID-19 patients had been discharged to the background music of “Celebration” by Kool and the Gang.

“I never fully realized until this pandemic how important we are to the lives we serve,” Weatherspoon says. “We were literally like the next of kin at times because loved ones couldn’t be there in the hospital. There were many heart-wrenching moments.”

### **Generosity Inspires Fighting Spirit**

Early in the pandemic, other BJC HealthCare hospitals didn’t have the wave of patients that Christian Hospital had. “Hats off to BJC,” Weatherspoon says. “We were never short of personal protective equipment or ventilators. Our sister hospitals were supplying us with all we needed. It was important to Rick Stevens, our hospital president, that we keep our community’s patients here with us and not transfer them elsewhere. This is where they live, this is where their families are.”

Weatherspoon was deeply moved by the community’s generous support during the height of the pandemic. “As a team, we sometimes felt like we were on an island. We couldn’t go to the cafeteria and we couldn’t go out for meals. But the community fed us like none other. Jason Tatum delivered Imo’s Pizza to us. McDonald’s and Jimmy John’s brought us food, and parents of staff members sent us brownies and cookies. Everything was so appreciated and we realized we hadn’t been forgotten.”

She said many people also made cloth masks for the teams that allowed the in-demand N95 masks to be directed to best protect the teams at the bedside and in the ER. They also received face shields from community members.

“We didn’t even have to ask for things, the community just stepped up,” Weatherspoon says. “They cared that we were in the line of fire. This support made us fight harder because people were fighting for us.”

### **Always Standing Ready**

Thankfully, the COVID-19 patient numbers came down through the summer to more manageable levels. However, the team stands ready if the virus has a strong resurgence. The Command Center is still activated to address the needs of patients, staff and the community during this crisis.

“We know more today than yesterday,” Weatherspoon says. “More precautions are taken. If you saw what we saw, you would always wear a mask. People lost loved ones so fast. COVID-19 doesn’t know who or what you are. Everyone is at risk.”

Despite the challenges COVID-19 has brought and continues to bring, Christian Hospital remains devoted to the health and well-being of north St. Louis County. “We recognize all the community has done for us and continues to do,” Weatherspoon adds. “We couldn’t do this without them. In return, we are committed to providing them selfless care. And we will continue to fight this horrible disease for our community. We’re not going anywhere.”

### **DONATE to Make a Difference**

Every gift of every size matters to our community. Please donate by using the enclosed envelope, calling 314-653-5162, or visiting [christianhospital.org/Giving](https://christianhospital.org/Giving).



## RESCUERS RESCUE **MEALS ON WHEELS**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the shut-down of businesses, stores, restaurants and services all over the St. Louis area. For seniors, it also closed off a lifeline of meal deliveries during a time when they were at high risk to go to grocery stores or were physically unable to make meals themselves.

The Florissant Meals on Wheels program has been serving the disabled and elderly since 1975. For more than 40 years, Christian Hospital has made the meals onsite that Meals on Wheels volunteers deliver. The COVID-19 outbreak made it unsafe for these volunteers to make those deliveries, which also served as wellness checks.

“When I learned Meals on Wheels had to suspend services, I couldn’t sleep,” says Necole Cheung, executive director for Christian Hospital Foundation. “The thought of seniors being hungry troubled me. I knew people counted on these meals for their health. I had to find a solution.”

Determined, Cheung asked Brian Hokamp, director of EMS at Christian Hospital, for guidance on how the meals could be delivered another way.

“Our hospital already collaborated with the Black Jack Fire Department,” Hokamp says. “I thought they would be an ideal partner since they have knowledge of the community and addresses. It was an opportunity for them to connect with community members as they delivered vital meals.”

Chief Ken Corbin of the Black Jack Fire Department didn’t hesitate to step up to help. “We have a tremendous working

relationship with Christian Hospital and we immediately saw the value of face-to-face time with our community.”

### **Delivering a Commitment to Community**

While the first responder teams thought the meal deliveries would be for a three-week period, the coronavirus had other ideas. It turned into a three-month commitment where the teams delivered nearly 75 meals a day on about 10 different routes. But Hokamp and Corbin say they have no regrets.

“It has been rewarding and fulfilling to deliver the meals,” Corbin says. “It’s one more opportunity to serve the public.”

Making, organizing and delivering the meals required intense coordination of numerous people at Christian Hospital.

Hokamp coordinated the firefighters, EMS teams and others who were willing to deliver the meals. Meanwhile, Janet Hinrichs from Christian Hospital Foundation and Jill Brownfield of the Office of the President submitted a daily roster of who was receiving meals to the food staff. The food staff then organized the meals by routes for the

*“When things happen in North County, it’s personal because this is my town. It’s great to partner with Christian Hospital and share our mutual commitment to North County.”*

– Brian Hokamp, NREMT-P, MBA, Director of EMS





Chief Ken Corbin, Necole Cheung, Brian Hokamp  
Photo taken earlier this year.



*"When I learned Meals on Wheels had to suspend services, I couldn't sleep. The thought of seniors being hungry troubled me. I knew people counted on these meals for their health. I had to find a solution."*

- Necole Cheung, Executive Director of Christian Hospital Foundation

firefighters who met at the hospital's staging area to pick up the food boxes and coolers for their route.

Several local fire departments joined Black Jack, including fire departments from Hazelwood, Ferguson, Spanish Lake, Riverview, as well as the Florissant CERT team. Christian Hospital EMS team members also delivered meals.

Hokamp and Corbin were impressed at the hands-on approach Christian Hospital leadership took with delivering meals in the community. On several occasions, the hospital president, Rick Stevens, helped coordinate meals for delivery and Cheung, the Foundation executive director, helped deliver meals.

"They led by example and were in the thick of it," Corbin says.

### **Nourishing Community Ties**

The meals delivered by the first responder teams are vital to the health of the community.

"Many people can't get out to buy meals themselves or can't cook for themselves," Hokamp says. "If they went long periods without meals, their health declines and they are more at risk. We found a solution so it didn't come to that. While we're not arriving with sirens, delivering meals is still lifesaving work."

The benefits of the meal deliveries go far beyond nourishment.

"We established relationships with residents and got to know them by name," Corbin says. "We stopped and talked with them at each visit. For one 92-year-old man, we were the only human interaction he had during the pandemic. These deliveries were important for seniors' mental health and well-being."

Hokamp says the Meals on Wheels deliveries promoted positive relationships among the community, paramedics and firefighters. "Our crews usually get emergency calls on someone's worst day in high-stress situations. When we're

delivering meals, we're providing nourishment and we build trust and get to know our community in a different way."

Born and raised in north St. Louis County, Hokamp sees delivering meals as a way to show his gratitude. "I'm giving back to my community that helped me get to where I am today."

Corbin was also born and raised in north St. Louis County. "When things happen in North County, it's personal because this is my town. It's great to partner with Christian Hospital and share our mutual commitment to North County."

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Jill Brownfield (left) and Janet Hinrichs



## THANK YOU TO COVID-19 RELIEF DONORS

During the intense wave of COVID-19 that hit our north St. Louis County community, dozens of thoughtful, generous individuals and area restaurants rallied behind our frontline heroes to donate food, money and PPE, including masks.

The Christian Hospital team is forever grateful for this outpouring of support that sustained them through the most difficult days and nights. Donated meals were organized for rotating groups of patient care areas. Vital donated money went directly to helping the community through the funds for Employee Help, COVID Response and Building Healthy Communities.

Thank you for your heartfelt gifts and sentiments. We're honored to recognize the organizations and individuals who have shown appreciation and support through donations:\*

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\*NOTE: Because of the community's  
overwhelming generosity, we sincerely  
apologize if we inadvertently missed  
listing anyone's thoughtful donation.



Don Zykan



## DON ZYKAN: **A LASTING LEGACY OF ACHIEVEMENTS**

When Don Zykan commits to an organization, he gives his all.

This dedication is in his genes. As residents of Florissant, and business owners based there, his parents were both involved with Christian Hospital for decades. His father was on the hospital board and his mother was a long-time volunteer. His three children also were born at Christian Hospital. His daughter even became a candy stripper there.

“Christian Hospital has been part of my life for years,” Zykan says.

He has chosen to stay in Florissant because of these deep family and community roots.

Recognizing Zykan’s close ties with the community, former Christian Hospital board chair Paul McKee asked Zykan to join the hospital board in 1999. Zykan was honored but he wanted to be clear on his position. “I told Paul that I don’t sit on the sidelines. I will be vocal and if I can’t help, I don’t want to be involved.”

Zykan’s dedication to his community drove him to serve on the board for the next 21 years.

“Being part of the community means being part of the community,” he explains. “Just living here is not enough. You have to participate.”

Since 1999, Zykan served on several board committees, became vice chair of the hospital board for five years and was the Foundation board chair for three years. In addition, he served on the BJC HealthCare board.

The COVID-19 pandemic led Zykan to reevaluate his future. As a result, he has decided to retire from the Christian Hospital Foundation board to spend more time with his family.

“Serving on the board has been truly fulfilling,” Zykan says. “I will continue to be there to support and guide. But it’s time for me to step back so others can step in.”

### **A Voice for the Community’s Needs**

While Zykan leaves big shoes to fill, he also leaves a lasting legacy.

“The most important lesson I learned on the board was how much Christian Hospital is needed in our community,” Zykan says. “Our goal is to make sure we can offer the best health care for everyone in the community, no matter what their needs. A hospital and good health care are as important as good school districts and fire and police departments. If you have good health care, the community is a stronger, safer place to be.”

*“Being part of the community means being part of the community. Just living here is not enough. You have to participate.”*

– Don Zykan, retiring Christian Hospital Foundation Board Chair

Zykan has been instrumental in growing the Christian Hospital Foundation.

“The Foundation board was activated in 2010 and expanded into a good network of people who see the needs and are all willing to help,” Zykan says. “The money the Foundation raises goes right back to our own hospital and the community we serve. It’s a full-circle effort.”

In addition, the Foundation board partners with the Christian Hospital Auxiliary in fundraising efforts. “We are two groups working toward the same goal,” Zykan says.



*"Don's leadership and enduring commitment have made a tremendous impact on our hospital, our Foundation and our community. We're grateful for his guidance that has positioned us to better serve our community for years to come."*

– Necole Cheung, Executive Director of Christian Hospital Foundation

He says one of the hospital projects that most impacted the community was Christian Hospital Northwest HealthCare and the emergency department on that campus.

"Christian Hospital decided to focus on what we do best and who needs us most," Zykan says.

"By being flexible and listening to the community, we're able to give the community what it needs."

### Sparkling Successes

One of the first major projects funded by the Foundation was a comfort care suite in the hospital for critically ill patients and their families to find privacy and solitude during a difficult time.

The success of that project sparked a capital campaign that funded a \$5.5 million hybrid OR at Christian Hospital. This type of operating room is the only one of its kind in north St. Louis County, and it's in only 2% of hospitals nationwide.

The hybrid room combines the best of both surgical and interventional technologies, including advanced medical imaging technology. It allows surgeons and medical teams to perform multiple complicated procedures in one location at the same time.

Another essential part of the Foundation's mission is to support community outreach efforts.

One of these is an innovative School-Based Health Center in the Hazelwood and Riverview Gardens school districts. "We're going into the community to offer a program that addresses health disparities and provides access to care and services to keep students healthier," Zykan says. "Better health opens the door to better school participation and more opportunities overall."

The cherry on top of Zykan's board service came when Siteman Cancer Center opened a 37,000-square-foot location at Christian Hospital's Northwest HealthCare in 2020.

"We have a high incidence of cancer and an aging population in North County so we needed better access to cancer care in our area," Zykan says. "I was very vocal about the need and we finally have our jewel in health care. Once Siteman opened here, we quickly exceeded expectations for the number of patients we're serving."

Necole Cheung, executive director of Christian Hospital Foundation, admires the many contributions Zykan has made over the past two decades. "Don's leadership and enduring commitment have made a tremendous impact on our hospital, our Foundation and our community. We're grateful for his guidance that has positioned us to better serve our community for years to come."

Zykan says the many achievements over his board career have been rewarding. "We've brought the best doctors from around the country to practice medicine here. The most rewarding part is that we can offer the highest level of health care here so people don't have to leave their community."

Even as Zykan retires, he continues to support Christian Hospital Foundation. "My family and I have been very fortunate in this community. From owning and operating various businesses to being enriched with great friendships and opportunities, Florissant is our home. We take care of home. And giving is always better than receiving."

### **DONATE** to Make a Difference

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# WELCOME NEW CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

## David P. Weiss

David P. Weiss is a St. Louis lawyer who brings more than 30 years of practical experience in counseling for-profit and non-profit enterprises, including HOAs and professional associations, in ownership and management structure, governance, corporate, contract, commercial, real estate, tax, succession planning and employment law matters.

A native St. Louisan, Weiss has taken an active role in numerous civic organizations in the St. Louis area. Currently he serves on the board of the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis, Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce and the St. Louis County Parks Foundation.

His talents extend to co-hosting a radio program on “How to Promote Your Business” as well as presenting seminars on the topic. Before he became a lawyer, he worked for six years in various capacities in theaters around the county. In addition to his expertise in legal matters, Weiss is known for his trademark bow ties, which he wears every day.

In 2019, he was honored with the Webster University Leigh Gerdine College of Fine Arts Outstanding Alumni Award. He also received the Individual Service Award from the Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce in 2016.

He received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, his master's degree from University of Michigan, and his bachelor's degree from Webster University's Conservatory of Theatre Arts.

## Herschell Drake Randall

An Air Force veteran, Herschell Drake Randall is now a federal civilian employee with one of the 17 agencies of the intelligence community.

After the Air Force, Randall was employed at the Pentagon's Office of the Deputy for Information Technology & Communication. He later transferred to Lockheed Martin Aeronautics in Marietta, Georgia. The company is known for building the finest military aircraft in the world with the most advanced IT systems.

After six years, Randall became a Technology Strategy Consultant for International Business Machines (IBM). As a consultant, he worked with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as their Business Risk Manager and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) as the IT Risk Manager.

After transitioning from consultant back to government, Randall provided technical oversight to the Special Operations Task Forces where he was involved in missions as the NGA representative to GEOINT-IT customers and partners within Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC).

Randall is a native of Macon, Georgia. He earned a master's degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix. In addition to being an Air Force veteran, he has formal training in Jeet Kune Do. Randall enjoys basketball and golf. He and his family reside in Ballwin, Missouri.



David P. Weiss



Herschell Drake Randall

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Mary Trice  
David P. Weiss, *Counsel*



## KELVIN WESTBROOK: **A BEACON OF LIGHT TO BUILD HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES**

Standing by Christian Hospital's side, Kelvin Westbrook is a beacon of light in north St. Louis County.

More than 20 years ago, Westbrook, president and CEO of KRW Advisors LLC, shared his leadership expertise as a member of Christian Hospital Foundation's board. He chaired Christian Hospital's gala three times over the years.



His reputation for strong leadership grew along with Christian Hospital's parent company, BJC HealthCare. Westbrook eventually was appointed the first Black chair of the BJC HealthCare board. He was one of BJC's longest serving board members and retired as board chair in December 2019.

"Kelvin is a health advocate for all and this shows in his commitment to Christian Hospital and BJC HealthCare by influencing us to be aspirational, inspirational and motivational," says Rick Stevens, Christian Hospital president. "This trickles down to living our BJC values."

### **Dialing Into Success**

Established in 2007, KRW Advisors provides strategic and general business and consulting services to companies in telecommunications, media and other industries.

Earlier in Westbrook's career, he was a partner in the national law firm of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker in New York City, where he specialized in mergers and acquisitions and corporate finance, and served as co-chair of its Telecommunications Practice Group.

Westbrook has a long history of launching companies. In 1993, he founded LEB Communications, his first venture into the telecommunications industry. After partnering with Charter Communications, LEB soon branched out into broadband communications. By 1997, Westbrook and three other partners co-founded Millennium Digital Media, a cable company providing broadband services. Within seven years, the company was one of the top 30 cable providers in the United States.

Westbrook and his wife, Valerie Bell, moved with their three children to St. Louis for business purposes, but quickly immersed himself in many organizations, boards, projects and charities.

### **Funding a Visionary Path**

In 2019, Christian Hospital Foundation presented Westbrook with the MLK Drum Major Award. The award recognizes leaders whose path has furthered the life and mission of Martin Luther King.

Just as Martin Luther King used his platform to speak out on justice and equity, Westbrook has used his platform as a community leader to speak out about improving access to quality health care.

"I've been staying with Christian Hospital for more than 20 years," Westbrook says. "We have great health care assets and resources in this community. But there are a lot of people who don't know how to access these services. So if I can be part of the bridge that provides information or opportunities to access these services, that's what it's all about for me."

Over the past year, Westbrook has been instrumental in building that bridge to services.

In 2020, Christian Hospital Foundation received a \$150,000 gift from BJC HealthCare in honor of Westbrook and Bell. Westbrook designated the gift to the Foundation's Building Healthy Communities Fund, which provides outreach and direct relief to community members.

Because of Westbrook's desire to improve the community overall, he also arranged for BJC to help several other non-profits in St. Louis. That included an endowed scholarship fund established at St. Louis Community College Foundation to encourage and inspire deserving students to earn a degree in a health care career path. The gift was made to recognize Westbrook's longstanding board service to BJC HealthCare and to support the vision of Bell and Westbrook to improve opportunities for young people.

Westbrook and Bell married after meeting at Harvard Law School. A respected attorney, public policy expert and civic volunteer, Bell applies her legal skills to community projects such as education, race relations, and economic development. She is a former member of the St. Louis Community

*"Kelvin is a health advocate for all and this shows in his commitment to Christian Hospital and BJC HealthCare by influencing us to be aspirational, inspirational and motivational. This trickles down to living our BJC values."*

- Rick Stevens, Christian Hospital President

College Foundation Board of Directors and a current member and past chair of the St. Louis Public Schools Foundation. She is also the first African American to chair the board of trustees at John Burroughs School.

Westbrook is a member of several public company boards, including Archer Daniels Midland Company; Camden Property Trust (Lead Trust Manager); The Mosaic Company; and T-Mobile US, Inc.

In addition, he serves on the boards of Commerce Bank (St. Louis), N.A and the St. Louis Internship Program. He is a member of the Washington University School of Medicine National Council and the Business Program Advisory Council of Harris Stowe State University, and devotes energy to other community projects and charities in St. Louis.

Westbrook holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Washington and a Juris Doctor degree from Harvard School of Law.

"Not all health care heroes wear scrubs," says Necole Cheung, executive director of Christian Hospital Foundation. "We're fortunate to benefit from Kelvin's ongoing vision and drive to improve our community. He was an invaluable mentor to me when I began my career at Christian Hospital Foundation two years ago and continues to offer guidance and inspiration. I'm forever grateful for his support and service to our community."



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Mark your calendar for the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Virtual Celebration, “Embracing the Dream” on Friday, Jan. 15, 2021. Proceeds from the event support Christian Hospital Foundation’s community activities including awarding Drum Major scholarships to local high school and junior college students who aspire to careers in health care and to improving the health and wellness of our community.

Invitations will be sent in the near future. Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information or to register, please contact 314-653-5162 or [chfoundation@bjc.org](mailto:chfoundation@bjc.org).

