

Building Healthy Communities Through

# PARTNERSHIPS

2024-25  
Special Report  
to the Community



christian hospital  
FOUNDATION  
BJC HealthCare

# A Commitment to Building Healthy Communities

At Christian Hospital Foundation, we believe everyone deserves access to high-quality, compassionate care—regardless of income or circumstance. In 2024, we invested **more than \$650,000** in community benefit programs—positively impacting the lives of **more than 10,000 people** across our region.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **\$95,000** directed to the Medical Indigent Fund, providing vital medications, antibiotics, and medical devices.
- **\$90,000** invested in the Community Health Access Program (CHAP) to connect high-risk patients with resources that improve health outcomes, reduce Emergency Department visits, and support chronic condition management.
- **\$70,000** allocated for patient transportation services.

**Investments like these help deliver direct, measurable results across our community:**

### 326 flu shots

provided to the community at our annual flu shot event



### Nearly 800 prescription medications

supplied to patients—helping them avoid choosing between life essentials and the medicine they need

### 88 mammograms

provided at little or no cost, because we know early detection can save lives

**3,000+ rides** to medical appointments ensuring access to surgeries, wound care, therapy, and emergency appointments



# Growing Partnerships for a Healthier Community



Dear Neighbors,

Over the past two years, Christian Hospital has made significant strides to build the health of the community. We're growing our services to bring leading-edge care closer to home as we reach beyond the four walls of our hospital.

For example, our innovative, donor-funded Mobile Integrated Health program brings health care directly to patients in their homes to prevent avoidable visits to the hospital.

Our groundbreaking Food Pharmacy Program is another proven way we're building a healthier community and keeping people healthier at home. This initiative provides nutritious food to patients with chronic conditions who face food insecurity at home. This program also reduces hospital readmissions and Emergency Department visits.

Much of north St. Louis County is a food desert. It's vital that we address food insecurity because it directly affects the health of our community.

However, we can't do this alone. That's why we've taken bold steps to partner with other organizations through our Food is Medicine program that brings healthy, garden-grown foods directly to patients. Our expanding list of incredible partners includes Aetna/ CVS, Lincoln University, R&R Marketplace, Schnucks, Midland States Bank, and Simmons Bank—and we're just getting started.

As a community hospital, we also have to stand as a community hub. It will take all of us to create true community collaboration to achieve our vision to end food insecurity. It will take the dedication and focus of all of us at Christian Hospital and our generous donors. It will take the innovation of our food distributors. It will take the schools that are nourishing the minds of the next generation. And it will take the passionate leaders in our churches and other organizations to help us engage our community members and connect them to the resources we offer.

More than ever, we need each other. Standing together and partnering with other mission-minded organizations helps our roots grow wide and deep to strengthen our entire community.

Thank you for helping us build momentum as Christian Hospital expands its important services in our community. We're excited to see what we can accomplish together in this important mission.

With gratitude,



Rick L. Stevens, FACHE  
President, Christian Hospital



Necole Cheung  
Executive Director, Christian Hospital Foundation

# Food Pharmacy: A Fresh Mindset for a Healthier Community



“Let food be thy medicine” is often attributed to Hippocrates, the father of medicine. While it may not be his exact quote, the philosophy remains the same: nutritious food plays an essential role in maintaining health.

And healthy eating is an essential part of building a healthy community.

“Christian Hospital’s strategic focus is providing accessible health care and our Food is Medicine program is part of that,” says Rick Stevens, FACHE, Christian Hospital president. “This is a pillar that’s here to stay because healthy eating makes a difference in health outcomes.”

## Fighting food insecurity

Food insecurity is a significant issue for many in north St. Louis County. In addition, the area has become a food desert as major grocery stores have closed, especially since the 2020 pandemic.

“Street corners mainly just include fast food restaurants and liquor stores,” explains Connie Douglas, ANP-BD, a nurse practitioner at Christian Hospital. “You don’t see any fresh food markets nearby.”

She explains that when patients go home from the hospital with nothing nutritious to eat nearby, their health suffers and they often end up back in the hospital.

“Food insecurity has always been a social determinant of health but it’s just one piece of the puzzle,” Connie says. “Food insecurity, finances, and transportation are the top three issues we see in the community. But food is the most important of the three because eating healthy is necessary for survival.

“Now food is more expensive than ever and many people are on a fixed income. Some people have to ration their health care and decide that one week they will spend money

**From left: Dan Smith, lead garden volunteer; Dr. Grant Winrow, Lincoln University vice president of advancement; Cenia Bosman, Christian Hospital Foundation board member; Rick Stevens, Christian Hospital president; Necole Cheung, Christian Hospital Foundation executive director; Sherry Maxwell, Lincoln University program assistant; Victor Pasley, Lincoln University board of curators president.**

on food, and the next week it will be on medication. They don’t have the budget for both.”

## Connecting the community to resources

As a former college athlete, Connie channels her determined spirit and medical expertise with a healthy dose of compassion and empathy to help her community as co-leader of Christian Hospital’s Community Health Access Program (CHAP). She has been with CHAP since it began 13 years ago.

Connie’s empathy for people living in the area is deeply rooted and personal. “I think I’m so passionate about helping others because I experienced food insecurity myself growing up in Mississippi,” she says.

CHAP connects patients to the resources they need to improve their overall health and well-being. CHAP partners with Christian Hospital Foundation to help pay for patient medications, transportation to the hospital, utilities, and other needs that impact patient health.

While CHAP focuses on patients with diabetes, Christian Hospital Foundation also supports a Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program that provides on-site, in-home direct services for patients with congestive heart failure.

Connie says the health issues the CHAP team sees today are multiplying and are often tied to diet. “We still see diabetes, but it has become more than that, with more patients with congestive heart failure and other health issues.”

CHAP was a major driver behind a successful Diabetes Pilot Program funded by Christian Hospital Foundation that laid the groundwork for the Food is Medicine program.

The Diabetes Pilot Program provided patients food, and taught them how to prepare it in healthy ways. Many patients reduced their A1C (which measures blood sugar levels) through the program.

“We’re continually incorporating what we learned through the Diabetes Pilot Program,”



“If we didn’t have support from leadership and Christian Hospital Foundation, none of this would be possible. I’m excited about being able to provide food to people who are hungry and helping the community get healthier through the Food Pharmacy.”

—  
Connie Douglas, ANP-BD,  
nurse practitioner

Connie says. “Nutrition is the building block of everything. If you help people eat healthier, you improve other issues such as lowering their A1C and their need for additional medications. If you tackle food insecurity, you will cross off a lot of other health issues.”

#### **Growing health from the roots up**

Two key components of the Food is Medicine program is the new Food Pharmacy and the

growing number of community gardens—including one at Christian Hospital. The goal of the program is to slow readmissions and help the community be healthier.

#### **Part 1: Food Pharmacy**

“The hospital is committed to addressing urgent dietary needs through our innovative Food is Medicine program,” explains Necole Cheung, executive director of Christian Hospital Foundation and Community

Engagement. “By integrating nutrition into health care, we aim to reduce the burden of chronic disease by tackling diabetes and congestive heart failure directly. Those are the two diseases our high-risk patients struggle with most. We know that because they have the highest readmission and revisits within 30 days of any patient population and a lot of that is linked to food.”

This summer, Christian Hospital became the first and only hospital in the St. Louis area to introduce an on-site pharmacy with prescription food.

While patients are in the hospital, the CHAP team assesses them to find out if they are food insecure.

“The goal with Food Pharmacy is that any patients in the hospital who share they can’t afford food will leave with food and be connected to community health resources,” Connie says. “Every person deserves equal opportunity access to healthy food.”

CHAP will deliver some of the food through the Food Pharmacy program in collaboration with Christian Hospital paramedics in the MIH program.

The Food Pharmacy includes shelf-stable foods, as well as fresh produce. “We can prescribe fresh produce and have it delivered right to patient homes,” Necole says.

“We believe in growing health from the roots up. That’s why we’re investing in a local community garden here at the hospital, as well as in gardens throughout the community.”

—  
Necole Cheung, executive director,  
Christian Hospital Foundation

“By having an on-site prescription Food Pharmacy and using digital tools, especially post-discharge, we believe we’ll see these high-risk patients revisit the hospital a lot less—that’s the goal.”

### Part 2: Community Gardens

Community gardens with a bounty of fresh produce play another pivotal role in building a healthier community. In partnership with Lincoln University, Christian Hospital Foundation planted a community garden on



**Growing wellness from the ground up. The Christian Hospital Community Garden supports the hospital’s Food is Medicine initiatives, bringing fresh, healthy produce to our neighbors.**

the grounds of Christian Hospital this spring. (See page 8.)

“We believe in growing health from the roots up,” Necole says. “That’s why we’re investing in a local community garden here at the hospital, as well as in gardens throughout the community.”

Necole enjoys gardening at her home, so seeing the garden come to life where she works at Christian Hospital has become a

full-circle experience that she can't wait to share with the community.

"I'm so excited," she says. "This garden is a first in this area on a hospital campus and we have the perfect space for it on the hospital grounds. We also hope to establish a garden club with the hospital Auxiliary and will offer classes for the community to learn container gardening."

Phase 1, installed this spring, is an all-season raised bed garden that includes tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, sweet potatoes, cabbage, onions, carrots, and more. Partners, including R&R Marketplace, also grow fresh produce for children and families in the community. (See page 10.)

### Building life-changing partnerships

"The Food is Medicine program is in its infancy and there is still room for partnership," Necole explains. "This program is not just a food distribution effort—it is an integrated, evidence-based strategy to break the cycle of food insecurity and chronic illness."

In addition to partners such as R&R Marketplace and Lincoln University, current partners include:

- Aetna/CVS, which is providing significant financial support for the Food Pharmacy program to address the intersection of food insecurity and chronic disease management for patients with diabetes and congestive heart failure (CHF) in north St. Louis County.



From left: Olga Basilio (front), Tyson Gigen, Necole Cheung, Rick Stevens, and Maurice Allen.

- Schnucks, which will provide digital grocery incentives, access to the Healthier Habits app, nutrition education and funding
- Midland States Bank and Simmons Bank, which are valued financial supporters of Christian Hospital's community investment efforts

"We are also investigating ways that we can collaborate with local food banks to secure shelf-stable items, and we're looking into refrigeration capabilities as well as building more partnerships with schools for gardens," Necole says.

### Empowering patients at home

All these partners working together are necessary to build a healthier community.

"Good health starts with what you put in your mouth," Connie says. "That's why this Food as Medicine concept is so important. It gives the community the necessary nutrition resources to be healthy and happy at home. Patients are empowered in their health care journey to do the right things for themselves to stay healthier. We have to change our mindset and think of food as medicine—it's not just pills."

She praises Christian Hospital Foundation for their continued efforts to support the community.

"Hunger hurts," Connie says. "We often see people cry and break down when we offer them help. This is a 'heart job.' People trust us and we show them that we won't give up on them. If we didn't have support from leadership and Christian Hospital Foundation, none of this would be possible. I'm excited about being able to provide food to people who are hungry and helping the community get healthier through the Food Pharmacy."

Necole says the Food Pharmacy and community gardens are additional ways that Christian Hospital is planting the seeds of hope and health to strengthen the community.

# Lincoln University

Sherry Maxwell experienced two dramatically different worlds growing up. She started life in Chicago and then later grew up surrounded by her parents and grandparents in the bootheel of Missouri.

Her chores as a child included tending the garden. “Gardens teach you about caring and teamwork,” Sherry says. “Gardening is also therapeutic.”

Guided by a nurturing soul, she has applied her skills and lessons from every seasonal garden to help the struggling youth in her small town while she also advocated for

community-based housing. In 1990, her passion for bringing community together caught the attention of Lincoln University of Missouri in Jefferson City where she was hired in the extension office.

Designated as a land-grant university in 1890, Lincoln University has a long history in agriculture and agribusiness education.

“Lincoln helped me find my superpower and taught me how to help people help other people,” Sherry says.

Thirty years later, Sherry is still advocating for others as the assistant area coordinator for the Southeast Missouri Region at Lincoln University.

Today, she’s responsible for planting sustainable community gardens across the state to reduce food insecurity, coordinating life-changing programs for youth and seniors, and mobilizing efforts to help “the people who are forgotten,” she says.

Last year, the nearly 30 gardens that dot the state under her green thumb created a bounty of 16,000 pounds of produce that was distributed to communities in need.

Sherry Maxwell and students from the Lincoln University Cooperative Extension Charleston Outreach Program at the Christian Hospital Community Garden.



### **Growing a healthier community**

Even after several decades in her role, she's still sharing her wisdom about gardening, most recently with Christian Hospital for its new community garden.

Sherry has provided guidance and grants to Christian Hospital that resulted in two raised bed gardens on hospital grounds, two assigned gardeners, plus a local certified master gardener who is coordinating the upkeep of the community garden.

The garden is an affordable, sustainable way to grow a healthier community, right here in north St. Louis County.

“The space at Christian Hospital is ideal for the garden,” Sherry says. “We also have another area for Phase 2 that will be even more accessible. Gardens are more important than ever today. If you grow your own food, you know what you're eating, plus with grocery prices today, it's a more affordable way to eat healthier.”

Sherry says this is the first time Lincoln has worked directly with a hospital on a garden.

“It was a fast-paced project that came together in less than six months with something tangible,” Sherry says. “Christian Hospital moved swiftly and was decisive because they really care about the community. I'm excited to see where this goes as the gardens create a steady flow of produce for the community.”



## R&R Marketplace

R&R Marketplace started as a “seed about people.” Over the past 11 years, pastors Ken and Beverly Jenkins, president and CEO of Refuge and Restoration, cultivated that seed to better their community through careful planning and partnerships.

Phase 1 of their dream was completed in October 2023 when they redeveloped an abandoned strip mall in Dellwood as a thriving multipurpose economic hub. So far, the redevelopment includes a center for innovation, coworking space, a restaurant, a bank branch, an addiction treatment center, a pharmacy, and an early childhood center.

An unexpected conversation Beverly had with Neco Cheung at Christian Hospital Foundation about the Food is Medicine program opened the door to a new partnership in January 2025.

“We have been very interested in the Food is Medicine concept because we have always supported the idea that it takes more than just medicine for people to thrive,” Beverly says. “Our partnership brings that out because we are the other arms that deal with the social determinants of health.”



Beverly Jenkins partnered with Christian Hospital Foundation so R&R Marketplace can grow fresh vegetables and teach young children healthy habits for life.

“Gardens build community as we work together. Gardens teach us to go back to our own roots and grow our own food. They are not a handout. They are a resource in the community and a solution.”

—  
Beverly Jenkins, president and CEO of Refuge and Restoration

The partnership is centered on building a healthy community through healthy eating. Christian Hospital Foundation is funding the expansion of a community garden at R&R Marketplace.

“We weren’t able to fund the garden and realize its potential until Christian Hospital Foundation came along,” Beverly says. “They have been a complete blessing for us to put this in place.”

### **An idea takes root**

The gardens align with the organization’s mission. “We didn’t know how we were going to do it, but we’ve always had this dream of being able to deal with food insecurity in our community,” Beverly says. “Then we realized we have this new early childhood learning center at R&R Marketplace and decided to build it with gardens, and build it where kids get natural food and natural resources from Mother Earth every day.”

Brilliant Angels Academy, a high-quality early childhood program, opened its doors in September 2024 at R&R Marketplace. It now serves nearly 30 families with a goal of serving about 90.

Children are served breakfast, lunch, and two snacks a day—and every morsel is healthy and wholesome.

“We eat homestyle together around the table,” Beverly says. “This builds a sense of community around food.”

That sets the stage for healthier eating habits, too.

“Even before the garden, the program focused on healthy eating,” Beverly says. “Two chefs cook everything from scratch, from baby food to pasta. We purposely put a window in the early childhood center so kids can see the idea of how to eat healthy and how they make the food. They see the chef take a tomato and scallion and turn it into spaghetti sauce.”

She continues: “We’re helping children develop five-star palates and healthy eating habits,” she says. “We say food is love.”

#### **A garden of love**

Previously, boxes of fresh produce were delivered daily to the early childhood center





for the chefs to prepare gourmet-quality foods. Blueberry compote, couscous, steamed broccoli, and whole-grain noodles have all been on the menu.

Now the partnership with Christian Hospital Foundation is enabling some of those key fresh ingredients—like carrots, lettuce, and tomatoes—to be grown and harvested right at R&R Marketplace.

By showing young children the science behind their food and creating interest, the partners in this project hope to create lifelong healthy habits that carry over to families and into communities.

“We want to show children that how they eat matters,” Beverly says. “If you’ve never seen how a tomato plant or a potato grows, you have no desire for it. We show kids where real food comes from. Some of us take it for granted, but some kids don’t ever see food come out of the ground. We hope the data shows the positive impact of these gardens on lives, and shows the garden matters. And we hope the kids go home with knowledge and spread it to their families.”

The Christian Hospital Foundation partnership also allowed the early childhood center to add indoor hydroponics that allow plants to grow year-round without dirt.

“We’re going to put our herbs on hydroponic stands so everything will be natural,” Beverly explains. “The goal is to educate people and hope they are curious enough to even try hydroponics in their own home. It’s a neat concept. We first saw them at Disney World, which grows all its own produce. Hydroponics will allow us to expand what we can grow.”

#### **An uplifting community resource**

Ovella-Peaches Lott, director of the Brilliant Angels Academy, has 40 years of experience in early childhood education. “Peaches is a powerhouse and is doing incredible, innovative things,” Beverly says. “She says the families are ecstatic about the garden and the fresh foods. Families hearing an organization is intentionally caring for them is very uplifting.”

Beverly says the gardens at R&R Marketplace are for all the children and families in the community. She is excited about the impact the gardens will have on food insecurity. “A lot of families live along the corridor in

Dellwood where there is a food desert. This healthy, fresh food from the gardens will go home with families.”

With the current economic uncertainties in our nation, Beverly says there’s no better time for gardens.

“It’s time for the community to pull in and take care of one another. Gardens build community as we work together. Gardens teach us to go back to our own roots and grow our own food. They are not a handout. They are a resource in the community and a solution.”

#### **Collaborating for the future**

This summer, construction began on additional, larger, raised bed gardens at R&R Marketplace that could lead to expanding the garden-to-table concept with local restaurants. A commercial kitchen is also in the works where chefs will teach cooking classes to families using fresh, healthy ingredients.

“Christian Hospital has always been on our radar,” Beverly says. “I’m glad we’ve finally found a space where we could collaborate. This is a big deal for us as we do important work in the community together.”

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# Growing More EMTs to Strengthen the Community

To meet the growing demand for emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and open the doors to opportunities for community members, Christian Hospital EMS Academy has launched a successful “Earn While You Learn” program.

It’s a win-win as students who are accepted into the program are hired by BJC HealthCare and earn an income as they build their skills and knowledge and fill vital roles in caring for our community.

“The trend in the trades are paid apprenticeships,” explains Ian Breden, CCEMTP, Christian Hospital EMS Academy program director. “This is our version of that. We’re growing our own EMTs. We put them on the first rung of the career ladder. It’s like a feeder program where we develop them and know our training excellence.”

## How it works

Qualified applicants must be 18 and have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED/HiSET). Applicants go through typical BJC hiring processes with background checks and interviews.

Student EMTs are hired at BJC’s entry-level full-time position rate of \$15 per hour. They make a one-year employment commitment.

“Their job for 11 weeks is EMT school, which includes clinical experience and working in the Emergency Department,” Ian says. “After students are hired, we also do learning style assessments to help them be successful as they go through the program. We want people to succeed.”

Once students complete their classwork and training and are approved for testing, they take a national exam. After they pass, they

obtain their EMT-B license and then transfer to an EMT role with Christian Hospital EMS.

## Unparalleled education

The Christian Hospital EMS Academy was launched in 2015 with a mission to provide the highest quality EMS education, rooted in industry leading evidence-based research, with a focus in critical thinking, safety, excellent bedside manner, and unmatched customer service.



Ian says the education and training at Christian Hospital EMS Academy are unparalleled.

“We’re growing our own EMTs. We put them on the first rung of the career ladder. It’s like a feeder program where we develop them and know our training excellence.”

—

Ian Breden, CCEMTP, Christian Hospital EMS Academy program director

“Our philosophy is to provide the best education we can to create the best entry-level EMTs and paramedics. We offer the best experience EMTs can get anywhere. Because we have one of the busiest ambulance services in the state of Missouri with around 45,000 calls for service a year, working at Christian Hospital for six months is the equivalent of two years of experience

elsewhere. And our instructors are active paramedics who share real-world knowledge and experience with students.”

A unique aspect of Christian Hospital’s EMS Academy is that the classroom and hands-on skills are integrated. “As students are learning in the classroom, they’re using their skills in the field at the same time,” Ian says. “And

because Christian Hospital has its own EMS service, students have access to the field and hospital-based care. Students experience shifts in the emergency room as well as on the ambulance.”

As a BJC facility, Christian Hospital offers a variety of resources for students to tap into before they even step foot in an ambulance as provider. “They benefit from having subject matter experts right here to learn from,” Ian says. “For example, they can learn from experienced respiratory therapists in the hospital-based setting so they can take those lifesaving skills to the field as an EMT.”

### **The sky is the limit**

Ian considers working for BJC another advantage that leads to multiple career pathways.

“Students in the Earn While You Learn program are working for BJC, the best and largest health care employer in Missouri,” he says. “It opens the door to other health care opportunities. When you work at BJC, the sky is the limit.”

He continues: “Through the Earn While You Learn program, students know we have an investment in them and vice versa,” Ian says. “They can have a prolonged career at BJC, where they get a great experience and excellent education. There’s no better place to be than here.”



### Positive results

Since the program began in fall 2023, the Earn While You Learn program has resulted in a significant increase in EMS Academy enrollment and more EMT positions filled.

The sixth class began in May 2025. The first five classes saw a total of 44 students, 36 of which completed the program (82% retention). Thirty of those graduates have obtained their EMT license (83% pass rate).

“Before COVID, we often had the bare minimum of six students in each class,” Ian says. “Now we have double that with even more applying for each term. It’s also addressing staffing shortages—we’re nowhere near as short as we used to be. And our students are succeeding in their careers and telling others. We’re also starting to see EMTs coming back to enroll in the Academy’s paramedic program.”

Ian explains that working EMTs who want to become paramedics can use BJC’s tuition assistance program to pay for the paramedic class at Christian Hospital EMS Academy.

### Changing lives with a career choice

Ian is passionate about his career as a first responder and frequently gives motivating talks to high school students about their career plans.

With a background in broadcasting and family members in health care, Ian took an unexpected career turn and landed in hospital security. That’s where he had a front-row seat to the work EMTs and paramedics do every day. In 2001, he took the leap to become an EMT and found a fulfilling career with Christian Hospital EMS caring for the community and educating future generations.



After obtaining his paramedic license, Ian continued his education with leadership courses and instructor certifications. He has held several positions with Christian Hospital EMS, including field training officer, duty officer, captain, and deputy chief. Ian is a National Association of EMS Educators (NAEMSE)-certified lead instructor and has been instrumental in teaching and training development for the EMS Academy. He is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

“I tell high school students all the time it’s OK to not know what you want to do or to change your mind along the way,” he says.



### Interested in the Earn While You Learn program?

- Christian Hospital EMS Academy offers three classes per year in January, May, and September.
- Classes meet Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. for eight weeks followed by three weeks of clinicals.
- For more information, call 314-681-8003 or email [chemsacademy@bjc.org](mailto:chemsacademy@bjc.org)
- <https://www.christianhospital.org/Careers/EMS-Academy>

His outreach into the community of future caregivers continues to make a difference in young people's lives. He recalls one success story of a high school student who initially told Ian she felt she had "nowhere to go." After talking with Ian, the student decided to become an EMT. She later went on to nursing school, a role she proudly continues today.

"Her EMT role bridged the gap and got her out of a rut," Ian says. "For some people, becoming an EMT is a first step into health care and other opportunities."

He says most people in EMS are driven to help others. "EMS is for people who want to help others in their community and who are looking for a fast-paced job with a lot of autonomy and excitement. But the calls that are most fulfilling are often the simplest calls where we help people and can see immediate results. It may be assisting an elderly person take the next step to get back into the health care system."

## Berges Family Foundation Boosts Christian Hospital EMS Team Safety

Christian Hospital Foundation was awarded a generous \$300,000 grant from the Berges Family Foundation to support the safety and preparedness of the Christian Hospital EMS (CHEMS) team. This incredible investment will provide protective turnout gear and essential supplies for the entire EMS department, reinforcing our ongoing mission to protect those who protect others.

CHEMS responds to over 45,000 emergency calls annually, serving a broad area of north St. Louis County. These emergencies include everything from car accidents and shootings to fires and traumatic injuries. EMS professionals often find themselves in unpredictable and hazardous environments, exposed to bloodborne pathogens, sharp debris, broken glass, and high-impact trauma scenes. The new turnout gear—jackets and pants built with durable, reflective material—will help shield first responders from these dangers, offering both physical protection and enhanced visibility, particularly during nighttime and roadside incidents. Reflective safety gear not only reduces risk of injury but could save the

lives of those delivering care in the most critical moments.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Berges Family Foundation for this transformative gift. Their commitment ensures that our EMS heroes are equipped, protected, and empowered to continue delivering lifesaving care, day and night.



From left: Rick Stevens, Kelly Pollock, Brian Hokamp, Necole Cheung.

## Prioritizing Women's Health: *Empower Her*

The Christian Hospital Foundation's *Forward Thinking Medicine* series provides a unique platform for Christian Hospital physicians to share their expertise as thought leaders and engage with the community in meaningful ways.

In 2024 and 2025, the Foundation launched a segmented series entitled *Empower Her: Prioritizing Women's Health*. This installment specifically featured women physicians and offered an opportunity to connect with community members, health care professionals, and women's health advocates in a non-clinical, intimate setting to discuss the importance of prioritizing women's health.

The first *Empower Her* session took place in October 2024, and featured a distinguished panel of physicians:

- Tiffany Adams-Holmes, MD, MPH-Primary Care
- Tabassum Ahmad, MD-Breast Imaging
- Kelly Currie, MD-Plastic Surgery
- Margaret R. Gray-Swain, MD-OB/GYN
- Nicole Shen, MD-Gastroenterology



**2024 *Empower Her* panelists pictured from left: Dr. Tabassum Ahmad; Dr. Tiffany Adams-Holmes; Dr. Margaret R. Gray-Swain; Dr. Nicole Shen; Dr. Kelly Currie; and moderator Necole Cheung, executive director of Christian Hospital Foundation and Community Engagement.**

The panel was moderated by Pooja Vyas, DO, MBA, and Necole Cheung, executive director of Christian Hospital Foundation and Community Engagement.

### Event's success prompts encore

Attendees were invited to engage in an enlightening discussion about advances and needs in women's health, and the importance of advocating for their personal health. The response was so overwhelmingly positive

that it prompted a second installment in May 2025.

The May session continued the series' mission to amplify expert voices and create a safe space for meaningful connection. The evening was moderated by Emmy-winning media producer Jade Harrell, who encouraged attendees to wrap themselves in self-care rather than feeling the pressure to be superheroes at all times.



2025 *Empower Her* panelists pictured from left: Dr. Toniya Singh; Dr. Miranda Lindburg; Dr. Nicole Shen; Jade Harrell, moderator; Dr. Moyosore Onifade; and Dr. Katherine Glover-Collins.



Community members reconnect at *Empower Her* event.

This second installment featured another powerhouse lineup of physicians who practice at Christian Hospital:

- Katherine Glover-Collins, MD, PhD—Surgical Oncology
- Miranda Lindburg, MD—Otolaryngology (ENT)
- Moyosore K. Onifade, MD—Internal Medicine
- Nicole Shen, MD—Gastroenterology
- Toniya Singh, MD, FACC—Cardiology

Both panels led a dynamic discussion, highlighting the importance of early detection, regular check-ups, and proactive health management. Physicians shared personal insights on overcoming challenges in prioritizing self-care while addressing topics such as breast health, GI health, chronic disease management, gynecological care, proper nutrition, primary care needs, and much more.

The *Empower Her* events were created to encourage women of all ages, caregivers, health care professionals, and women's health advocates to come together, enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, and gain valuable knowledge to take charge of their health. The Christian Hospital Foundation is honored by the opportunity to provide this much-needed space of conversation and empowerment.

# Honoring a Powerful Legacy and Lifting Bright Futures

On Jan. 17, 2025, the Christian Hospital Foundation hosted the 8th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Embracing the Dream Celebration Luncheon, bringing together community leaders, hospital staff, and supporters to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. King.

Held in the Paul F. Detrick Building Atrium on the hospital campus, the event featured a moving conversation between Christian Hospital president Rick Stevens and special guest Lou Brock Jr. Their discussion reflected on justice, service, and the role of leadership in creating lasting change.

A highlight of the event was the presentation of the 2025 Drum Major Awards, honoring individuals whose work echoes Dr. King's call to serve:

- Laurna Godwin, owner/president, Vector Communications
- Ashley Harris, senior manager of Community Outreach and Employee Engagement, World Wide Technology
- Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Olympian and founder, Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation
- Martez D. Moore, deputy scout executive, Greater St. Louis Area Council Scouting

2025 Drum Major Award winners: Laurna Godwin, Ashley Harris, Martez Moore, and Jackie Joyner-Kersey.



These honorees exemplify excellence in advocacy, community engagement, and transformative leadership across St. Louis and beyond.

The MLK Celebration also was the runway to launch bright futures through scholarships, which donors to Christian Hospital Foundation make possible.

In a powerful show of community investment, Christian Hospital Foundation awarded more than \$35,000 in scholarships to aspiring health care professionals from across north St. Louis County.

Twelve high school seniors from schools including Lutheran High School North, Hazelwood Central, McCluer, Riverview Gardens, and Pattonville each received \$2,000 scholarships to support their college journeys into health care. Many are headed to institutions such as Loyola University Chicago, Jackson State University, Maryville University, Prairie View A&M, and Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, to pursue careers in nursing, emergency care, veterinary medicine, and health sciences. The students' motivations are as diverse as they are inspiring. Some are driven by personal experiences, others by a passion to be the first sign of hope in a crisis. Many expressed a deep commitment to serving and representing their communities in the health care system.



**Jaylen Stokes was one of 12 high school students who received a scholarship from Christian Hospital Foundation.**

Beyond high school honorees, two college students received \$5,000 scholarships for their academic excellence. In addition to the scholarships, students will receive signing bonuses and become eligible for the hospital's Loan Forgiveness Program—offering up to \$20,000 in support as both recipients have committed to bring their health care talents to Christian Hospital for at least one year.



**Bob Cannon, BJC Health System East Region president; and Rick Stevens, Christian Hospital president.**



**BJC and Barnes-Jewish College Goldfarb School of Nursing leaders with Leslie Vasco, nursing scholarship recipient.**



#### **Donate to make a difference**

Nursing scholarships have a ripple effect. They change the life of the student who receives the scholarship, which can have a generational impact, as well as the thousands of lives touched when the student becomes a nurse. To support nursing scholarships, use the enclosed envelope, call 314-653-5162, or scan this code.

# Welcome New Board Members

## **Cenia D. Bosman** **Leadership Consultant/Strategist**



Cenia D. Bosman is a seasoned business professional with more than 30 years of leadership experience spanning the corporate and nonprofit sectors. She successfully led the local office of a nationally recognized nonprofit focused on advancing economic empowerment and social equity.

Cenia's leadership style blends strategic vision, operational excellence, and a passion for fostering community development. She has spearheaded initiatives that delivered impactful programs, achieved significant revenue growth, and expanded organizational reach. As a certified National Community Action Professional (CCAP), Cenia is committed to driving innovation and excellence in nonprofit leadership.

Cenia uses her wealth of experience to enhance board leadership and organizational success. She specializes in philanthropic

strategy development, managing cross-functional teams, and leading transformative initiatives on both domestic and global stages.

Her board leadership portfolio encompasses nonprofit, academic, and philanthropic organizations, with expertise in health care, financial services, and social impact. She has held prominent board roles, providing strategic guidance in governance, planning, and community engagement.

Cenia's dedication and impact have been recognized with numerous prestigious awards honoring her leadership and contributions.

She holds an MBA from Webster University and maintains strong ties to her community. In her personal time, Cenia enjoys exploring culinary adventures and cherishing moments with her family.

## **Christina Reynolds** **Insurance Agency Owner**



Christina Reynolds is a community leader committed to helping families thrive and prosper. After graduating from University of Missouri with a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor's degree in journalism, Christina pursued positions to empower people financially, physically, and spiritually.

For over 20 years, Christina has worked with local churches and nonprofits to provide families with needed services. Early in her career, she held credit repair and homeownership workshops. She often eliminated or reduced her fees to help first-time homebuyers with funds for their down payment.

More recently after opening Christina Reynolds State Farm in 2019, she has focused on teaching techniques for wealth building. She encourages the use of life insurance as a way to advance generational wealth.

As a licensed Missouri, Indiana and Illinois insurance agent, she also discusses ways to protect a family's existing assets along with protecting their future. Christina believes in the concept of giving back to receive your blessings. She did not stop her "give back" efforts during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, Christina partnered with a local chef to feed 100 families. She offered food and prayers to those families in need. It is not unusual to hear Christina offer prayer to her customers or anyone who needs it.

She continues to work with nonprofits and local churches to sponsor and participate in events. Christina not only helps the community at large but is also devoted to her immediate family and friends.

**Scott Zola**  
**President, Integrate Construction Partners**



Scott Zola joined Lawrence Group Projects as Director of Construction Services in 2014. In recognition of his leadership and success in that role, Scott became a partner in the business in 2021.

In 2022, Scott led and oversaw the re-branding of the company to Integrate Construction Partners, a stand-alone construction firm focused on true project partnerships and advanced delivery models for a Superior Building Experience. During his tenure, Integrate Construction Partners' annual revenues have grown 1,000% while seeing employee growth of almost 600%.

Scott has a B.S. in civil engineering from University of Illinois Chicago and is a 2022 graduate of the Leadership St. Louis program through FOCUS St. Louis. In 2023, Scott became founder and CEO of Integrate Community, the charitable arm of Integrate Construction Partners focused on community impact initiatives. He also has served on various boards and committees throughout the St. Louis region.

With 30 years of construction experience, Scott has completed a variety of projects in the health care, senior living, experiential hospitality, industrial, and office markets. In addition to leading the business, Scott spends most of his time in the business development and preconstruction phases while still checking in on projects in progress and following closeout.

# Tribute to Dedicated Board Member, Don Zykan



North St. Louis County and Christian Hospital has lost a deeply rooted, dedicated voice and volunteer. Don Zykan, a former board member of Christian Hospital and co-founder of the hospital's Foundation, passed away July 26, 2024.

A Florissant native and businessman, his commitment to community led him to serve on the hospital and Foundation boards for 21 years, along with many other civic organizations. He believed a hospital and good health care is as important as good school districts and fire and police departments. And he believed if you have good health care, the community is a stronger, safer place to be.

Driven by those beliefs, he was instrumental in growing the Christian Hospital Foundation from the time he joined the board in 1999. He played key roles in fundraising for the hospital's comfort care suites, a hybrid operating room, and an increasing number

of community outreach efforts. Don was a man of action and his intention was always to be a catalyst for change.

He was especially proud of his efforts in advocating for the establishment of Siteman Cancer Center at Northwest HealthCare Campus to make cancer care more accessible to the area. In 2022, Don was awarded the Paul Detrick Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes significant contributions and service to healthcare delivery at Christian Hospital.

"Don's kindness, leadership and infectious laughter will be missed," says Necole Cheung, Christian Hospital Foundation & Community Engagement executive director. "On behalf of Christian Hospital and the Foundation, I would like to thank his family and loved ones for being generous enough to share him with us for so many years. We're committed to doing our absolute best to continue his legacy of advocacy, action, and commitment to empowering his beloved North County community."

# Tribute to Advocate and Donor, Dr. Smita Parikh



Women everywhere lost a physician and a caring, generous advocate with the passing of Smita Parikh, MD, on Dec. 1, 2024.

Dr. Parikh was a distinguished radiologist focused on breast imaging at Christian Hospital. She saw firsthand the troubling statistics that found that St. Louis has the highest late-stage breast cancer diagnosis rate in the country, with some of the highest mortality rates in certain north St. Louis County zip codes. She also knew that women who don't have health insurance are much less likely to get a mammogram.

Always dedicated to her patients, she and her husband, Sharad Parikh, MD, decided to do something about it on a personal level.

With their compassionate hearts, they established a \$100,000 endowment through Christian Hospital Foundation to support mammogram assistance for women in need. The Breast Cancer Prevention Fund supports uninsured and underinsured women living in Christian Hospital's community. Dr. Parikh was determined to save more lives by encouraging more women to come in earlier for mammograms.

"Dr. Parikh was a hard-working and dedicated provider who served her patients with honesty and integrity," says Helen Blair, Christian Hospital breast health navigator. "She was a tireless advocate for addressing breast cancer disparities. Her passionate vision for a community where early detection and prevention are accessible to all will continue to guide and strengthen our mission."

# Ways to Give

**The Christian Hospital Foundation is committed to building hope, health, and community** by delivering vital support that directly enhances the health and wellness of our region.

With your help, we can continue making this generational impact and advance **Christian Hospital's mission of helping people enjoy life by improving health.**

Not sure where to start? Take a look to learn more about how you can help us build healthy communities.



**Scan here  
to donate  
online**

## Mail checks to

Christian Hospital Foundation  
11133 Dunn Road, Suite 300N  
St. Louis, MO 63136

## Donor Advised Funds (DAF)

A gift to the Christian Hospital Foundation through your Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) is a powerful and tax-smart way to support lifesaving programs, including preventative health screenings, nutrition assistance, and chronic disease care for underserved patients in our community. By recommending a grant from your DAF, you not only help deliver critical support to those who need it most, but you also benefit from significant tax advantages. These may include an immediate income tax deduction at the time you contribute to your DAF, tax-free growth of your fund's assets, and the ability to avoid capital gains tax when donating appreciated securities or assets—allowing you to make a greater impact over time.

This type of giving is not only simple and efficient but also deeply meaningful. Your support helps Christian Hospital extend care beyond the bedside by removing barriers, restoring dignity, and bringing wellness into everyday life. To learn more, call 314-653-5162.

## Stock Donations

Christian Hospital welcomes gifts of publicly traded securities, closely held securities, mutual funds, real estate investment trusts, and bonds. This is a simple and efficient way to make a meaningful gift, often with minimal delay or expense—and offers valuable tax benefits to donors.

To initiate a transfer of securities, please share the following information with your broker:

Account Name:  
Christian Hospital Foundation  
Account Number: 001050985250  
Depository: The Depository Trust  
Company (DTC)  
DTC Participant Number: 2803  
Tax ID Number (EIN): 43-1947644

If you have any questions or would like to notify us of your gift, please contact the Foundation office at 314-653-5162. Your generosity helps us continue advancing health, hope, and healing in our community.

## Planned Giving

**Did you know?** Making a planned gift to Christian Hospital not only creates legacy of care, compassion, and community, but can also offer significant tax benefits for you and your loved ones. Whether through a bequest, trust, or retirement assets, planned giving can reduce estate taxes, provide income tax deductions, and even generate lifetime income in some cases. Most importantly, your gift ensures that future generations have access to lifesaving care, critical resources, and the dignity of health. If you are interested in learning more about this meaningful opportunity to support your values—now and for years to come, please contact Necole Cheung at 314-653-5035.

## Employee Matching Gifts

To find out if your company participates in a matching gift program, contact your HR department or visit your employer's intranet. If you need assistance, we're happy to help complete any required forms or provide confirmation of your gift.

## Honor, Remember, and Give Thanks

A tribute gift to the Christian Hospital Foundation is a powerful way to honor someone special in your life—whether in celebration, remembrance, or gratitude. These gifts not only recognize the people who matter most to you, but also support vital programs that improve health and change lives across our community.

Whether you're honoring a loved one's legacy, memorializing someone special, or expressing gratitude for care received, your tribute gift makes a lasting difference—bringing hope, healing, and wellness to those who need it most.

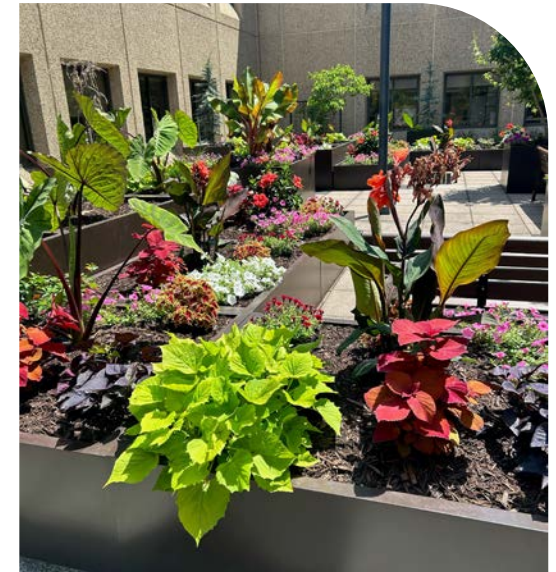
To learn more about making a tribute gift, please call us at 314-653-5162.

## Join the Christian Hospital Auxiliary

Make a difference in our community while connecting with others who share your passion for service.

Since 1964, the Christian Hospital Auxiliary has provided vital volunteer support and raised funds that directly benefit patient care, scholarships for future health care professionals, and community health initiatives. If you're 50 or older and looking for meaningful ways to give back, learn, travel, and build friendships—the Auxiliary welcomes you.

Be part of something greater.  
Call 314-653-5032 to learn more.



## Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are a vital part of Christian Hospital's commitment to compassionate care. From greeting patients and supporting hospital teams to assisting with special events, volunteers enhance the experience of everyone we serve.

For more information about volunteering at Christian Hospital, please call the Volunteer Office at 314-653-5032, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., to submit your application today.

# Save the Date

9th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration  
*Friday, Jan. 16, 2026*

Christian Hospital Foundation Golf Outing  
*May 18, 2026*