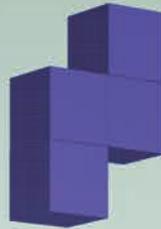


SAINT JOHN'S

THE MAGAZINE OF SAINT JOHN'S HEALTH CENTER FOUNDATION

Fall 2019



SAINT JOHN'S HEALTH CENTER FOUNDATION

**EMPLOYEES WHO GO
THE EXTRA MILE**

JOHN WAYNE CANCER INSTITUTE

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CANCER TREATMENTS
IMPROVE OUTCOMES**

PROVIDENCE SAINT JOHN'S HEALTH CENTER

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HEALING MINISTRY**

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A novel program to exercise
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PACIFIC NEUROSCIENCE INSTITUTE



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KOSTLAN AND
THE THOMAS &
DOROTHY LEAVEY
FOUNDATION

For your generous gift to Saint John's Health Center Foundation in support of the Cancer Research Initiative. Your legacy of philanthropy in service of helping others is an inspiration to us all.

Gifts like The Leavey Foundation's \$1 million donation will ensure that patients on the Westside have access to groundbreaking clinical trials at John Wayne Cancer Institute and Pacific Neuroscience Institute. When you give a gift to Saint John's Health Center Foundation, you can help fund the kind of innovative health care that results in cures and improves quality of life. Whether your gift is to Providence Saint John's Health Center, the John Wayne Cancer Institute or Pacific Neuroscience Institute, it is vital to our ability to continue to serve you, your family and the local community we all love. Your gift will make a lasting change and help others, which is something we can all take pride in.



Please give now at [SaintJohnsFoundation.org](https://www.SaintJohnsFoundation.org)
or call 310-829-8424, Monday through Friday,
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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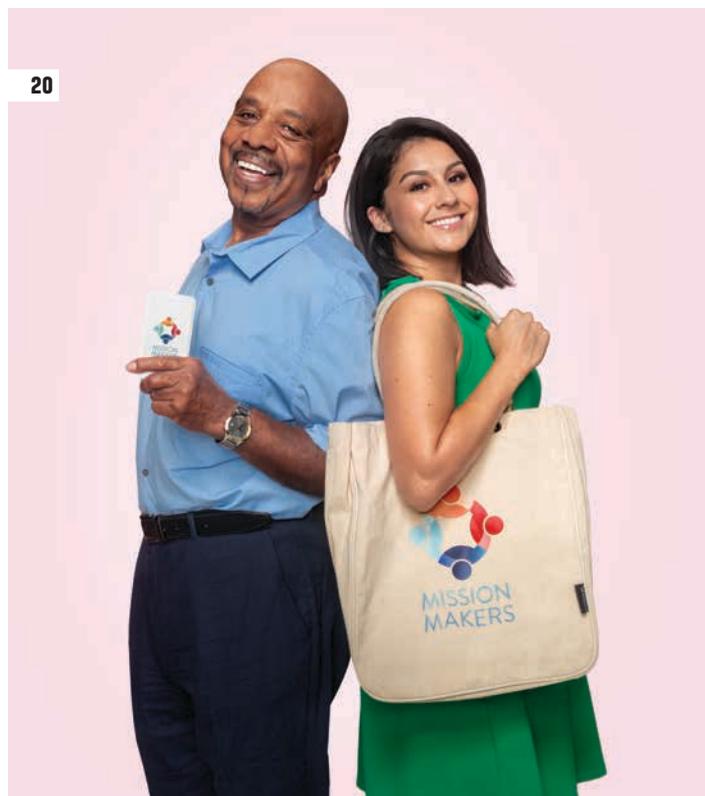
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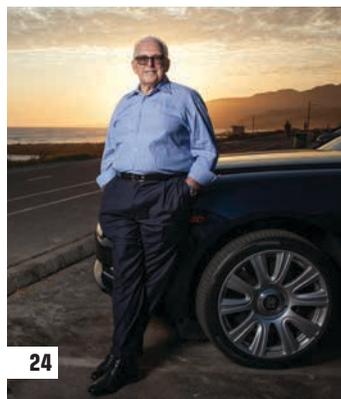
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» Reading through these pages, I could not be more proud of the advances we're making in the care we provide to our community, the people we are so fortunate to work with on a daily basis, and our commitment to giving back in ways large and small. The stories of cutting-edge research in cognitive brain health and the latest in prostate cancer treatments—coupled with profiles of giving from our very own Mission Makers, community donors and our spiritual mentors—are bittersweet reminders of everything I will miss about the health center campus I've called my professional home for five years.

As you know, after months of discussion with my wife, Jane, and our board, I officially announced my retirement plans in July. It has been a blessing to serve with all of our caregivers, our boards, our volunteers and, most importantly, the community. However, the weight of saying goodbye is lightened with the knowledge that my successor is of similar heart and mind, dedicated to our mission, and ready to lead Saint John's and the John Wayne Cancer Institute into the next bright chapter. Michael Ricks will join us on September 30. Part of the Providence family, Michael spent four years as executive vice president and chief operating officer for Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian in Newport Beach.

With more than 23 years of health care leadership experience, Michael brings a wealth of knowledge. He served in a variety of roles, including president and CEO, chief operating officer, vice president of operations/business development and service line administrator for nationally recognized organizations such as Sentara Healthcare and Dignity Health. With his most recent tenure at Hoag, Michael was responsible for the day-to-day operations of its Newport Beach and Irvine campuses and its health centers across Orange County.

I hope you will join me in welcoming Michael and his family to Saint John's and the John Wayne Cancer Institute and extend to him the same partnership and cooperation you've all shown Jane and me over these five years. We are truly grateful to have served this community, and we look forward to witnessing a very bright future for all of you. Thanks for allowing us to have this awesome experience.

God bless you all.



MARCEL LOH
Chief Executive
Providence
Saint John's
Health Center
John Wayne
Cancer Institute



MICHAEL RICKS
Future Chief Executive
Providence
Saint John's
Health Center
John Wayne
Cancer Institute



Robert O. Klein

ROBERT O. KLEIN
 President and CEO
 Saint John's Health Center Foundation

Mary E. Flaherty

MARY FLAHERTY
 Chair
 Saint John's Health Center Foundation Board of Trustees

» As we embark on a new chapter for Saint John's, it seems fitting that our current issue reflects the immense amount of giving and gratitude that occurs on our campus. From our very own employee donors (Mission Makers) and volunteers to our longtime, generous trustees and donors featured in this issue (Kathleen McCarthy and Dominic Ornato), our individual service to a greater calling is the tie that binds us together. It's also our shared mission that makes possible the cutting-edge medicine and research at Saint John's and its research affiliates.

For these reasons, we join Marcel Loh in his expression of pride—not just for all we've accomplished together but also for his years of service, leadership and collaboration as chief executive of Saint John's. Walking the halls of the health center, Marcel truly embodies the spirit of Saint John's with a warm smile and genuine love for the community he serves. His calm stewardship transitioned us into the Providence family with grace and compassion, proving that he was just what we needed in a leader—when we needed it. We feel confident that Marcel is leaving Saint John's a better health center and are grateful that his successor, Michael Ricks, comes to us with an impressive background in health care and a contagious, positive energy for the future of Saint John's.

Michael's collaborative leadership style and passion for driving best-practice initiatives resulted in growing Hoag's five nationally ranked clinical institutes, expanding Hoag's ambulatory footprint through coastal Orange County, and working with caregivers to improve the quality and financial performance of Hoag. Michael has also been a strong philanthropic partner throughout his career. Equally important is his personal alignment with our mission and values and his dedication to the caregiver and patient experience.

It is with full hearts that we wish Marcel the very best and warmly welcome Michael into our Saint John's family. We look forward to partnering with him on leadership and philanthropic initiatives to take Saint John's into a very bright future.

» MEASLES MENACE

California, along with much of the rest of the country, experienced a surge of measles cases this year. The outbreaks are due to poor vaccination rates in areas of the country, including low rates in pockets of Los Angeles County. For the sake of everyone, educate yourself on measles prevention.

U.S. MEASLES OUTBREAKS

Source: CDC



MEASLES CASES IN CALIFORNIA, 2019 (THROUGH JUNE 26)



* Other counties have three cases or fewer

Source: California Dept. of Public Health

» MEASLES IS HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS

- Spreads through coughing and sneezing
- Will infect 90% of unimmunized people in the airspace
- Can live in airspace for up to two hours
- Can spread to others during the window of four days before rash to four days after

» WHO SHOULD BE VACCINATED? Source: CDC

- Babies on or after their 1st birthday but not before
- Second dose between ages 4 and 6; before school entry
- Adults who haven't been vaccinated: two doses
- Most adults vaccinated at birth do not need a booster shot

» LANDING HARD AFTER CHILDBIRTH

For many women, the miracle of childbirth is followed by unexpected feelings of anxiety, sadness and fatigue. Providence Saint John's Health Center can help. A new Perinatal Wellness Program Postpartum Support Group is available to provide support and connection during the postpartum period.

*Providence Saint John's Health Center, 3rd Floor
Women's Health
Second and Fourth Fridays of the month, 10 a.m.*



Register by calling Rebecca Lara, 310-829-8538, or Luisa Amighetti, 310-829-8495.

» **NEW LOCATION FOR
PALISADES PRIMARY CARE**

Palisades Primary Care is now located at 881 Alma Real Drive, Suite 101, in Pacific Palisades. Convenient parking is available under the building. The office is home to six physicians who specialize in family medicine or pediatrics.

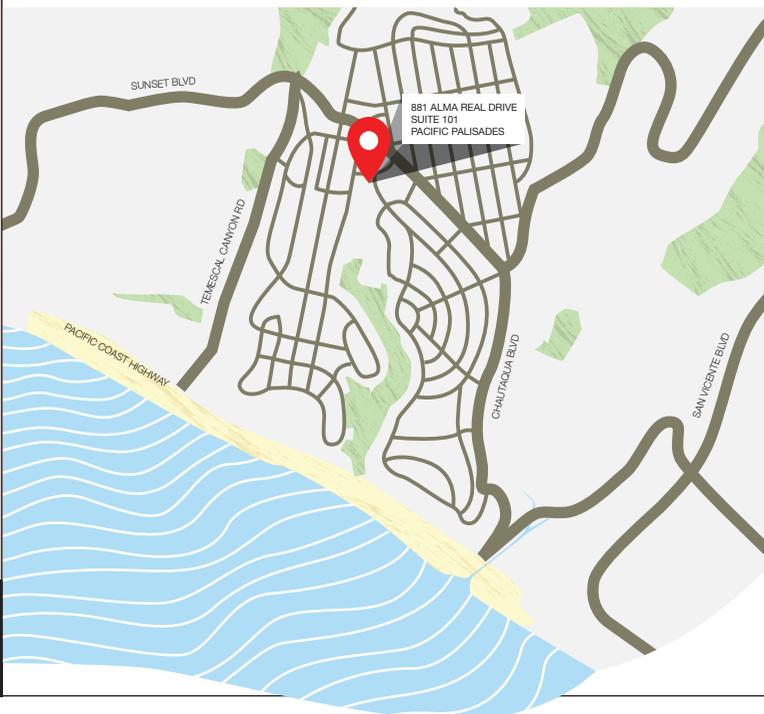
For more information please contact us at providence.org/sjpp or call 310-829-8923 (Family Medicine) or 310-454-2296 (Pediatrics).

Santa Monica Family Physicians Family Medicine:

- Julia Blank, MD
- Devora Cohen, MD
- Grace Tassa, MD

The Doctors of Saint John's Pediatrics:

- Alisa Bromberg, MD
- Vania Nguyen, MD, PhD
- Caroline Mimi Shim, MD



ACT FAST DURING A STROKE

KEEP THIS INFORMATION HANDY
TO RECOGNIZE A STROKE:



Face Drooping



Arm Weakness



Speech Changes



Time to Call 9-1-1

Source: American Stroke Association

* Also look for confusion, sudden numbness or weakness on one side of the body, trouble seeing, or sudden severe headache.

Providence Saint John's Health Center recently earned the 2019 Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award and also qualified for recognition on the Target: Stroke Elite Plus Honor Roll. The awards, issued by the American Heart Association, recognize Saint John's Health Center's commitment and success in implementing a high standard of stroke care by ensuring stroke patients receive treatment that meets nationally accepted, evidence-based standards and recommendations.



Saint John's Earns National Recognition

Providence Saint John's Health Center was recently recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* for high performance in six service areas: orthopedic, neurology, neurosurgery, lung cancer, colon cancer, and hip and knee replacement surgery. The honors, part of the magazine's Best Hospitals rankings, include evaluation of more than 4,500 hospitals for their handling of nine surgical procedures and chronic conditions. The ratings are designed to help patients and health care consumers make informed decisions about where to receive care for specific medical needs. Congratulations to these outstanding caregivers.

Welcome to the New Trustees

Saint John's Health Center Foundation is pleased to announce the addition of Carolyn B. Minchin and Marian H. Craver to the foundation board of trustees. We thank all of our trustees for their time, effort and dedication to making our hospital one we can be proud of.



Carolyn B. Minchin was born in Rhode Island but came to Los Angeles to pursue her passion for the arts and her desire for adventure. She is the widow of Michael M. Minchin Jr., an advertising executive and native Angeleno, and has two sons. Minchin has served on the parent association board at Harvard-Westlake School and has been on the board of several

charitable organizations, including the Orphanage Guild Juniors, Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS) Foundation and the founding associates of the John Douglas French Alzheimer's Foundation. As the current president of the Carolyn and Michael M. Minchin Jr. Foundation, Minchin oversees philanthropy mainly in the areas of education and Christian ministry. She enjoys gardening, sharing her faith and spending time with her children and four grandchildren.



Marian H. Craver is a native Californian with a long history of community service. She has been a volunteer at the Autry Museum of the American West since 2005 as well as in Arizona at The Orme School. At the Autry, she has worked on committees dealing with strategic planning, nominating and governance, development, the gala, visitor experience, collections and the Masters.

At The Orme School, Craver focused on admissions, marketing and development. Additionally, she co-chaired a successful capital campaign as well as three executive searches. She served as board chair for six years. Craver and her husband, Ted, have lived in Pacific Palisades for 44 years. They have three grown children and six grandchildren. Craver can be counted as a "grateful patient," and all three of her children were born at the original Saint John's Hospital. Two of her grandchildren were born at Saint John's as well.

Secure Medications Around Grandkids

Parents aren't the only ones who need to be mindful to keep prescription medications out of the hands of curious children. A new study shows that many grandparents are unaware that their medications may be within reach of grandchildren.

The study, by researchers at the University of Michigan and supported by AARP, found that more than 80% of grandparents polled say they keep their medications in the same place as usual when grandchildren visit the house. About 72% say they keep their medications in their purse or bag when they visit their grandkids. About one-third say they store prescription drugs in something other than the original pill bottle, with many saying they use easy-to-open containers.

The survey of 2,000 adults ages 50 to 80 is important because nearly 40% of children treated in emergency departments for medication-related poisoning took their grandparents' medication, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The data shows that many grandparents provide regular child care for their grandparents. One in 10 grandkids lives with a grandparent.

No matter how old your grandchildren are, medicines should not be within reach, the authors say. Keep your pill bottles, pill organizers or pill sorters in a locked cupboard. Keep the national Poison Control number, 800-222-1222, stored in your phone, memorized or available.

WHERE OLDER ADULTS KEEP MEDICATIONS:

CUPBOARDS OR CABINETS: **61%**

COUNTERTOPS OR TABLES: **18%**

LOCKED CUPBOARD OR CABINET: **7%**

PURSES OR BAGS: **7%**

OTHER LOCATIONS: **15%**



Those Doggone Fractures

in the journal *JAMA Surgery*, found that bone injuries such as fractures associated with walking leashed dogs have increased significantly in people age 65 and older in the last decade.

The study analyzed data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission that included about 100 U.S. emergency departments. Researchers found the number of patients 65 or older with fractures associated with walking leashed dogs increased from 1,671 in 2004 to 4,396 in 2017. Most fractures occurred in women and most patients had hip fractures, although the upper extremity from the shoulder to fingers was the most frequently fractured area overall.

The authors, from the University of Pennsylvania, said their study probably underestimates the actual number of injuries sustained by walking leashed dogs because it just focused on emergency department cases and fractures. They suggest seniors consider owning smaller dogs and investing in dog obedience training in order to protect themselves from possible dog-walking injuries.

Having a dog is a wonderful thing; dogs provide companionship, unconditional love and an excuse to go for walks. However, a study published recently



OCT. 13

Native Sons Brunch, Mass and Check Presentation

Providence Saint John's Health Center

OCT. 19

Saint John's Health Center Annual Gala Celebration

Beverly Hilton Hotel



NOV. 23

ABC's Talk of the Town Gala

Beverly Hilton Hotel



For more information on these and other upcoming events, please contact Tess Csiszar at 310-829-8168 or Theresa.Csiszar@stjohns.org

Q & A

Chairman of the Board

A Conversation with Jim Fordyce

BY SHARI ROAN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL NEVEUX

In January, James H. “Jim” Fordyce was named chairman of the board of Providence Saint John’s Health Center. Fordyce is cofounder and CEO of Stone Canyon Industries Holdings, a global industrial holding company based in Los Angeles. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Lake Forest College and his MBA from Fordham University before launching a successful career in business management and economics. We asked Fordyce, who joined the Saint John’s Health Center Foundation board of trustees in 2010, about his experience serving as chairman of the board and his thoughts about the continued development of Providence Saint John’s Health Center.

How did you become acquainted with Providence Saint John’s Health Center?

It all started with my wife, Stella Hall, who became involved with the Irene Dunne Guild—a great organization with a long history at Saint John’s. In 2010 Chris Newman proposed me as a trustee, and in 2014 Donna Tuttle asked me to join the hospital board. I served as treasurer of the board from 2014 to January 2019. When the board asked me to take over as chairman, foundation trustee Lee Ault and board member Tom Geiser were very supportive and made the transition very smooth.

Why did you decide to accept that responsibility?

I had been treasurer for nearly five years and acquired a deep understanding of the hospital and of Providence. I also felt that with my experience running

other companies and boards, I could make a meaningful contribution.

What interests you about the health care field?

Health care is a very complicated, multifaceted business. I particularly like working in this capacity with Saint John’s because the trustees, employees, physicians and caregivers all really love this hospital. They care deeply about it as an institution and about providing the best health care they can to the community. And that, in turn, is important to me. I’ve never seen an organization like this, and I’ve been in business for 40 years now.

What is your primary role as chairman of the board?

The chairman of the board is there as a lead spokesperson for the board members. Our board is made up of doctors, community leaders and trustees, bringing the various voices of the hospital to the group. Our goal is to provide a voice for the community to Providence.

What are some of your goals for your tenure?

One of the primary responsibilities of the board is to ensure we have the best leadership we can possibly have. With the upcoming retirement of Marcel Loh, we believe we’ve found that with the incoming chief executive, Michael Ricks. Also, one of the things I hope to do for my tenure is to work with the board and the hospital to set the strategy for the next 10 years. That involves identifying the key areas in which we want to excel. Health care is a rapidly evolving industry where many treatments are moving to outpatient versus being done in the hospital. So we need to properly position the

hospital for peak performance without sacrificing our compassionate care, and the Saint John’s Health Center Foundation is an integral part of that.

How do you describe CEO Marcel Loh’s legacy?

Marcel did a wonderful job in the five years he’s been at the hospital, laying a wonderful foundation for future success. We thank him for all of his accomplishments and dedication to Saint John’s.

What are some accomplishments of the past five years?

We have expanded and excelled in neurosciences with the addition of Pacific Neuroscience Institute, which has attracted a lot of world-class doctors. We have seen the growth of the John Wayne Cancer Institute and the addition of Dr. Janie Grumley in the area of breast health, with her innovative cancer treatments. We’ve expanded our heart health service line through our strategic partnership with USC Keck Medicine. And our Hip and Knee Replacement Center, led by Dr. Andy Yun, attracts patients from around the country and the world. We’re going to continue to build in these areas as well as our primary care network.

What is your greatest satisfaction in serving on the board?

I’m at the hospital a lot, and it’s truly enjoyable being involved with all of the people here. This is an organization that really cares about the hospital and cares for each other. I see firsthand how our caregivers function and operate. There is a level of dedication to provide the best services they possibly can for the community, and that’s something I’m very proud to be a part of. 🍷







A WIN FOR THE AGES

**HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL COACH CURT
YARRINGTON TURNED TO SAINT JOHN'S WHEN
DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER DURING
HIS TEAM'S CHAMPIONSHIP RUN.**

BY SHARI ROAN / PHOTOGRAPHED BY BETH HALL

When Curt Yarrington learned he had prostate cancer in the spring of 2015, he told only his immediate family members. The high school baseball team he was coaching in Bentonville, Arkansas, was making a run toward the state championship, and there was no way Yarrington was going to divulge his news and throw the team and fellow coaches off their stride.

But Yarrington and his wife, Glenna, were burning up the phone at night. Dissatisfied with their choices for treatment in Bentonville, Yarrington's sister, a nurse in Los Angeles, connected him to Timothy Wilson, MD, director of the Urologic Oncology Research Program and professor and chair of urology at the John Wayne Cancer Institute at Providence Saint John's Health Center. Quietly, as his players won game after game, Yarrington made plans to travel to Santa Monica for prostate cancer surgery at the end of the season.

Today he's happy he made the choices he did during those anxious days. The team won the state championship, and Dr. Wilson made sure Yarrington returned home cancer-free and without any debilitating side effects from surgery.

"We had good mojo going, and I didn't want to ruin that mojo. I didn't want the kids thinking about me. I wanted them to think about baseball," says Yarrington, 60, an elementary school teacher who now coaches high school golf after 15 years of coaching the baseball team. "It was kind of a roller-coaster. I look back now and think about how lucky I am."

It has been four years since Yarrington underwent robotic prostatectomy at Saint John's to remove the cancerous prostate gland. Dr. Wilson, a pioneer in the use of the da Vinci robot for prostate cancer surgery, says Yarrington's good outcome is typical of what men with the disease can expect today when treated at a state-of-the-art clinic and by experienced physicians.

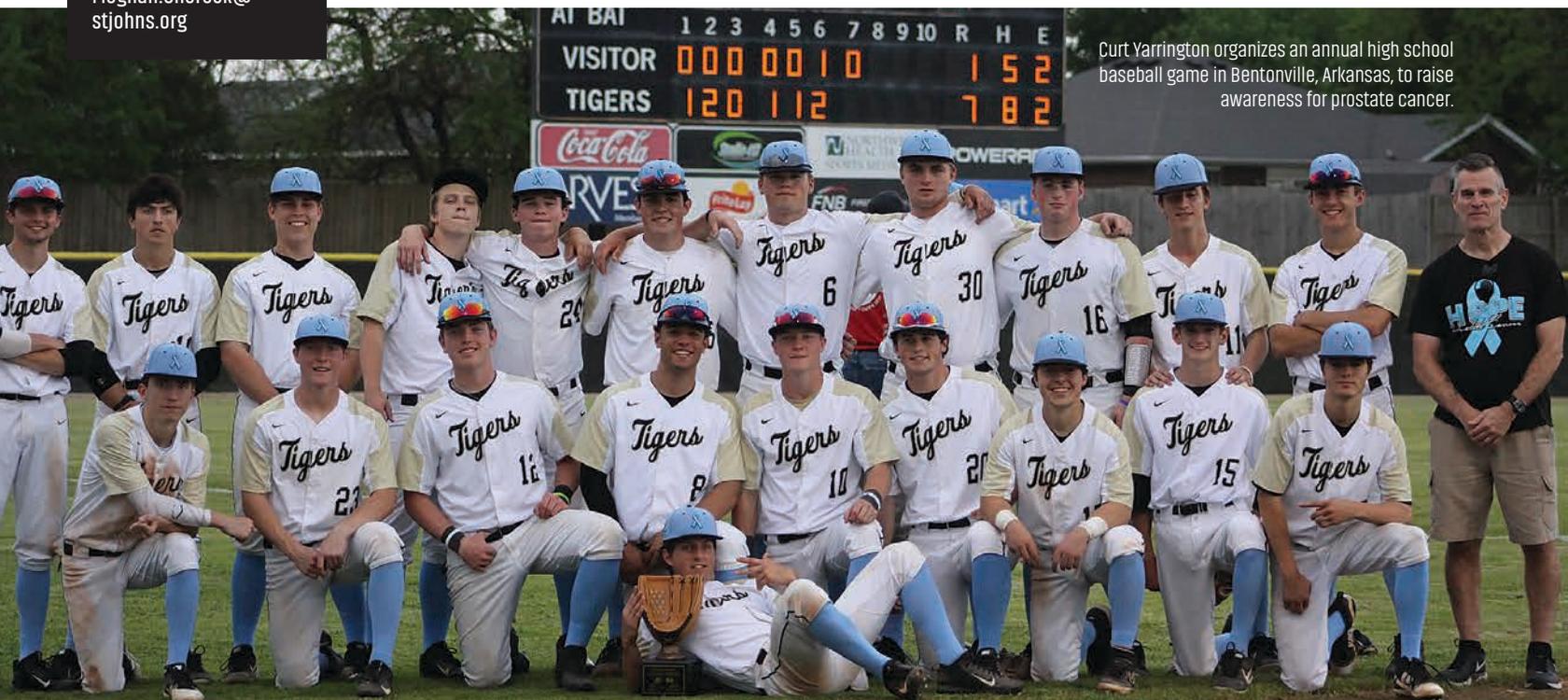
"When we catch the disease early, like with Curt Yarrington, men can live normal lives," Dr. Wilson says. "They function just fine."

The days of worrying about making the "right" choice for prostate cancer treatment—and worries over potential debilitating side effects from treatment—have begun to fade for many patients. While prostate cancer remains a stunning and disheartening diagnosis for everyone who receives it, a range of new advances are helping doctors like Dr. Wilson guide their patients toward the most appropriate treatments without so much angst.

Simplifying treatment choices

Yarrington's personal physician in Bentonville, James Byrum, MD, had been ordering prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood tests every year during Yarrington's annual checkup. The test measures the PSA protein made by the prostate gland, and Yarrington's levels had been ticking up slightly for several years. A rising PSA level can indicate the presence of cancer.

For more information on how you can support urologic oncology, contact Meghan Chereck at 310-829-8394 or Meghan.Chereck@stjohns.org



Curt Yarrington organizes an annual high school baseball game in Bentonville, Arkansas, to raise awareness for prostate cancer.

Curt Yarrington chose robotic surgery to treat prostate cancer.



“It was nothing very significant—just little by little,” Yarrington says. “After I had a physical, he said, ‘Curt, this is probably nothing, but I’d feel better if you see a urologist.’ That was a testament to him in having me do that. I feel very fortunate that he did that for me.”

After further testing, Yarrington underwent a biopsy in April 2015 in Bentonville and was told he had cancer. However, he and Glenna were not pleased with their experience during the biopsy and noted that there were no experts in robotic prostate cancer surgery in their area at the time. Yarrington contacted his wife Glenna’s brother, Gary, in LA, who had undergone surgery to remove a brain stem tumor at Saint John’s years earlier under the care of Daniel F. Kelly, MD. Dr. Kelly, a neurosurgeon at Saint John’s and the director of Pacific Neuroscience Institute, referred them to Dr. Wilson. Within weeks, Yarrington was in Santa Monica.

Men with the kind of localized, early-stage cancer that Yarrington had have several options, Dr. Wilson says,

but their decisions should be based on numerous tests to better characterize the disease. “Overall we’re much more sophisticated in how we evaluate men,” he says.

Dr. Wilson explains that the PSA test is still used as the initial screening test, and men should still be screened annually starting at about age 50. Men with a first-degree relative with prostate cancer, African American men or men who have a genetic risk, such as BRCA gene mutation, should be screened at an earlier age.

In addition to the PSA test, Dr. Wilson orders a test called the 4Kscore test that looks for other proteins related to PSA. “This can tell us the likelihood that a gentleman has prostate cancer that requires treatment,” he says. “It can help us decide if people should have a biopsy or not.”

An MRI can also be performed. Although not reliable by itself, the results of the MRI, PSA and 4Kscore tests can provide evidence upon which to make a decision to have surgery or monitor the cancer and do nothing for the

time being—a strategy called active surveillance or watchful waiting.

If a biopsy is recommended, Dr. Wilson and his colleagues use an innovative approach called fusion biopsy that's guided by merged digital images of the MRI and real-time ultrasound. For men whose cancers are determined to be unlikely to grow quickly, active surveillance is an option as is a new minimally invasive procedure called high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) to kill cancer cells (see page 17).

The John Wayne Cancer Institute is also offering enrollment in a novel clinical trial to some qualified patients who have chosen active surveillance. These patients can receive a vaccine called Sipuleucel-T (Provenge) as part of the ProVent trial conducted by Przemyslaw Twardowski, MD, a medical oncologist at the John Wayne Cancer Institute.

Patients in the trial have blood drawn to remove immune system cells called dendritic cells. The cells are treated in the lab to sensitize them to a specific enzyme and then are infused into a patient. The vaccine is designed to find and kill prostate cancer cells. Researchers at the Institute will study the results of the treatment over a three-year period.

"This is a vaccine that has been available for about a decade but used, up until this point, for men with end-stage prostate cancer," Dr. Wilson says. "Now they are moving it into the early-stage realm. It gives men an option, and they might be doing something helpful. Roughly 50% of men on active surveillance require treatment in five years or so. We're optimistic about this vaccine treatment."

Setting high standards with robotic surgery

Yarrington chose to have robotic prostatectomy because his tumor, although confined to the prostate, was larger than initially thought. "Robotic surgery means the outcome is more reliable and reproducible," Dr. Wilson says. "It takes a lot of guesswork out of surgery. It's a very controlled surgery.

It's not without risk, but it minimizes risk. It allows men to feel more comfortable about having surgery."

Dr. Wilson pursues the most innovative strategies to obtain the best possible results. After removing the tumor, he uses a stem cell product made from placentas and umbilical cords (donated by maternity patients) that facilitates healing of the surgical wound.

"The inflammatory healing response can, in some cases, be a shock to nerve bundles and tissues around the prostate," Dr. Wilson says. "We've shown if we use this material on nerves after surgery, it helps patients recover bladder control and sexual function more quickly."

Overall about 95% of men eventually regain full bladder control after robotic prostate cancer surgery, and most younger men fully recover sexual function. Full recovery of sexual function is less certain among older patients, Dr. Wilson says.

"It was uncommon years ago to operate on men above age 75, even if they have aggressive cancer," he says. "We are still cautious—but even older men can have surgery and expect to have good sexual function."

Men whose cancers are severe enough to warrant treatment can choose among surgery, HIFU, cryosurgery (performed by Mark J. Kelly, MD, chief of urology at Saint John's) or several types of radiation therapy including a newer, shorter-course radiation protocol, Dr. Wilson says. "It really depends on how much cancer there is, how aggressive it is and whether it's on both sides of the prostate or just one side."

For men whose cancer has spread beyond the prostate gland, several choices are also available. "There are a lot of changes and research on systematic treatments for prostate cancer, such as more advanced kinds of hormone treatments that suppress the effects of testosterone on prostate cancer to slow it down even if it has spread," Dr. Wilson says.

Chemotherapy, hormone therapy and even systemic radiation treatment to treat bone metastases can be

tried. "Men can have one treatment after another—even with metastatic disease—and they can live for many years," he says.

Treated like a member of the family

The advances add up to eliminating guesswork and simplifying the range of choices patients with prostate cancer face, Dr. Wilson says. Add that scientific prowess to the compassionate care Saint John's is known for, and it's easy to see why Yarrington chose to travel out of state for treatment. "I tell men I will treat them like I would treat my brother," Dr. Wilson says.

Through his sister and brother-in-law's connections to Saint John's,

WHEN YOU NEED ANOTHER OPTION

A NEW ULTRASOUND TECHNOLOGY GIVES MEN WITH PROSTATE CANCER ANOTHER CHOICE.

When Steve Michaud was diagnosed with prostate cancer, he didn't like either of his treatment options. The suggested options for men like him with a small, nonaggressive prostate cancer tumor were (1) to do nothing unless the cancer began to grow—or (2) surgery or radiation treatment to remove the tumor.

Active surveillance didn't feel right to Michaud, 72, a retired management consultant. What if the cancer became worse? Surgery and radiation, on the other hand, carry the risk of nerve damage. "It was a trade-off between doing nothing and risking side effects from a procedure," he says.

His doctor, however, is well-versed in the latest advances, and that meant Michaud was soon presented with a third choice: high-intensity

Yarrington felt like he was already a member of the family when he arrived for surgery in July 2015. The surgery was successful; he was walking the next day and returned to his sister's house in Pasadena the second day after surgery. He required no further treatment.

"From the nurses to Dr. Wilson to the insurance office staff, everyone was really incredible," Yarrington says. "Honestly it was like I had been a patient there forever. They made me feel welcome. Dr. Wilson, to this day, will email me within a day if I have a question."

Yarrington says his bladder and sexual function returned, and he is proud to share that information

with other men in his quest to raise awareness about prostate cancer screening, detection and treatment. After he recovered, he launched an annual Prostate Cancer Awareness baseball game between Bentonville and Bentonville West high schools. The teams wear special light-blue caps and the winning team receives a special trophy. Yarrington hands out literature provided by the Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation.

"They give me a few minutes before the game to speak about prostate cancer and awareness and how this is a curable disease if it's caught in time," he says.

Yarrington also got a tattoo on his forearm with images of the blue

prostate cancer awareness ribbon, a cross and a Bible verse (Isaiah 41:10): "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous hand."

Yarrington shares, "The baseball game is not about how much money I raise. It's about awareness. If one man gets tested and is helped, it's worth it." 📞

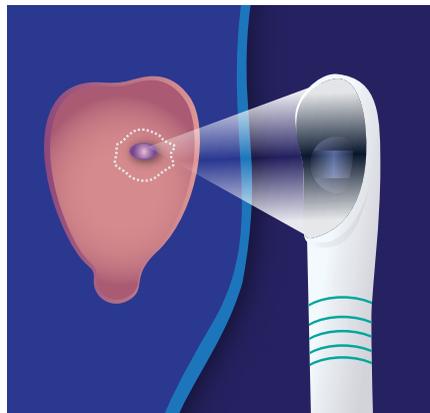
For more information on how you can support the Men's Health Program and other technological advances, please contact Mike Avila at 310-829-8351 or michael.avila@stjohns.org.

focused ultrasound (HIFU). HIFU is a noninvasive procedure that directs high-frequency sound waves to ablate diseased prostate tissue through a probe inserted into the rectum, says Michaud's physician, Mehran Movassaghi, MD, an assistant professor at the John Wayne Cancer Institute and director of Pacific Men's Health at Providence Saint John's Health Center. No incisions are required. The sound waves heat and destroy only the diseased portion of the prostate while sparing other parts of the gland, thereby reducing the risk of side effects common with the other two procedures.

"For patients like Stephen, HIFU offers a middle ground," Dr. Movassaghi says. "Focal therapy represents the perfect balance between active surveillance and radical treatments."

It was the right "fit" for Michaud. "I probably would have gone with active surveillance if not for this," he says. "But this seemed to be much less risky than any of the choices. It's noninvasive. No cutting. It was like having a colonoscopy. The worst part is being prepped, getting the IV in. I woke up, and it was like nothing happened."

Saint John's is one of the first hospitals in the U.S. to use the new Focal One



HOW HIFU WORKS

- HIGH-FREQUENCY SOUND WAVES ARE DIRECTED TO THE TUMOR THROUGH A PROBE INSERTED INTO THE RECTUM.
- THE ENERGY HEATS AND DESTROYS THE CANCER WHILE SPARING HEALTHY PROSTATE GLAND TISSUE.
- NO INCISIONS ARE REQUIRED.

system to perform HIFU. Focal One fuses ultrasound images with images imported from an MRI and biopsy data. The doctor views integrated 3-D images on a monitor and directs the ultrasound waves with greater precision to ablate only the cancerous tissue. Because Focal One allows for precise targeting, it avoids damaging healthy tissue—one reason prostate cancer patients experience fewer side effects.

"I did a lot of research on it before I chose it," Michaud says. "They've been doing it in Europe for years. The new technology is able to target the tumor a lot more precisely."

While HIFU may not be appropriate for all patients diagnosed with localized prostate cancer, Dr. Movassaghi says, it is a viable option for those who find active surveillance stressful as well as those seeking to avoid the side effects of radical surgery and radiation.

HIFU was made available to Saint John's patients through the generosity of philanthropic donors, including Bob and Birdie Feldman. "We think Saint John's Health Center and the John Wayne Cancer Institute are doing good things for the community," Bob says. Adds Birdie: "We just want to help whenever it's needed."

MEET KATHLEEN MCCARTHY KOSTLAN

Family Circle of Giving

Kathleen McCarthy Kostlan inherited her passion for philanthropy, which she shares with her family.

BY MELANIE ANDERSON / PHOTOGRAPHED BY PHILLIP GRAYBILL



Kathleen McCarthy Kostlan's family has always given back to the community. Nearly 70 years ago her parents established the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation, which has made an enormous impact in Southern California—including at Providence Saint John's Health Center.

"Way back when they first started the foundation, it was just assumed and a given that my sister and I would continue with it," says Kostlan, who chairs the Leavey Foundation and serves on the Saint John's Health Center Foundation board of trustees. "We were part of it as soon as we were old enough to make a contribution by serving on the board. Our parents set a great example for us."

Kostlan's mother and father, a co-founder of Farmers Insurance, believed in doing their part to bolster their community. "We try to do our giving locally as much as possible," says Kostlan, a lifelong resident of the Westside who graduated from Marymount High School and USC.

Since its inception in 1952, the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation has given more than \$200 million to medical, educational and Catholic institutions. In 1976 the Leavey Foundation made its first gift to Saint John's—a contribution for the Continuing Medical Education program and the cardiac catheterization laboratory in honor of John Opdyke Jr., MD, who was the Leaveys' family physician.

The Leavey Foundation's extraordinary generosity to Saint John's has continued for more than 40 years, with gifts totaling \$11.7 million. Several years ago the hospital's diagnostic center was named the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Diagnostic Center in their honor.

"Saint John's is our local hospital," says Kostlan. "It's the one that we receive the benefits from, so it's a two-way street. It's important to help the hospital establish itself on the Westside in the best way possible, and it should have the latest of everything, therefore making it available to the community."

The Leavey Foundation's most recent gift to the Health Center—a generous \$1 million contribution supporting the Cancer Research Initiative—will ensure that patients on the Westside have access to groundbreaking clinical trials at the John Wayne Cancer Institute and Pacific Neuroscience Institute. The gift was matched with a \$1 million contribution from the Louise A. Tarble Foundation. With the Cancer Research Initiative, the world-renowned researchers at JWCI and PNI aim to make advances that will lead to cures for cancer.

Kostlan has had many joyful experiences at Saint



Thomas and Dorothy Leavey set an example of philanthropic giving that their family follows today.

John's—10 of her 14 grandchildren were born there—and appreciates the quality of care she has received over the years. "I think the personnel and the management are very dedicated to the patients' health. Providence has been great since they've stepped in, and I think that the Health Center's outreach to the community—in addition to caring for their in-hospital patients—has been terrific and very, very meaningful to the Santa Monica and Westside communities."

Kostlan is thrilled that the third generation—her four children and her late sister Terry Lemons' five children—have embraced the mission of the Leavey Foundation and are continuing the family's legacy of generosity. She is confident that the fourth generation—which includes her 14 grandchildren and Lemons' nine grandchildren—will also carry on the Leavey Foundation's meaningful work.

"It's very rewarding to see change, and if you can do anything to help that along, it's the best we can do while we're here," says Kostlan. "Now that all of my parents' grandchildren are involved, that's very promising that they'll continue it on."

Kostlan and her family also share a commitment to supporting Saint John's in other ways. Her daughter, Colleen Pennell, has served on the committee for the JWCI's Odyssey Ball multiple times. Kostlan's family joined in the celebration when Kostlan, along with the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation, was presented with the Spirit of Saint John's Award at the Caritas Gala in 2016.

"I'm very proud of all that Saint John's has accomplished and what they're going to do," she says. "I'm excited about the future because of the long-term master plan with the city. It's important that they have a big imprint in the West Los Angeles area. Saint John's should be front and center." 🍷

THE GENEROUS



ROBERT WHITE
Grill cook
MISSION MAKERS MEMBER

SPIRIT OF SAINT JOHN'S

**EMPLOYEES
SHARE A PASSION
FOR GIVING BACK
TO SAINT JOHN'S.**

*WRITTEN BY
MELANIE ANDERSON*

*PHOTOGRAPHED BY
KREMER JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY*

Every day, Providence Saint John's Health Center employees pour heart and soul into supporting the mission of providing high-quality, compassionate care. In honor of Mission Maker Month this September, meet two extraordinary employees who go above and beyond to make a difference in our community.

Grill cook Robert White serves up smiles.

To call Robert White an early riser would be an understatement. His alarm goes off at 3 a.m. to ensure he's ready for customers when the Providence Saint John's Health Center Cafeteria opens at 6:30 a.m.

"I'm there about 4:45 every morning," says White, who has manned the grill for 28 years. "When I get up it's a feeling of, 'What good can happen today?'"

White greets each customer with a smile as he whips up made-to-order breakfast burritos, omelets, quesadillas and more. "It's a joy to see people—the employees, the administrators and the visitors who are there for their family members," he says. "Some of them tell me, 'Rob, you know I can't get my day started until I get my quesadilla.' That's a fulfilling feeling."

White, who has been compared to a bartender for his willingness to listen to and chat with everyone who stops by the grill, observed early on that his customers deserved extra kindness. "Some of the nurses would come down, and they'd be in a sad mood. They would tell me, 'I had a patient that I really liked and cared for, and I lost them.' Talking to the visitors, I started to understand that you never know what they're going through, so for everyone who would come in I would try to give them a positive energy."

White knows what it's like to lose a loved one to a devastating illness. His first wife was only 33 when she passed away due to breast cancer. "I've been through the trauma, and so I feel for people," he says. "Throughout my journey there have been many people who have helped motivate me and kept me focused, and I try to give back."

A few years ago, he befriended a visitor whose husband was hospitalized. "One morning, I told her, 'Oh, how you doing?' trying to

pump her up,” he says. “She told me, ‘Well, he passed away this morning, but I just had to come and see you and let you know that I couldn’t have gotten through this without you.’”

A Saint John’s administrator overheard the conversation and contacted White’s employer, Aramark, which provides food services at Saint John’s. As a result, Aramark invited White to Arizona for special recognition.

White, who has six daughters, six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter, has also shared many joyful experiences with customers. “I can’t even count how many nurses have come in with cravings, such as pancakes during their pregnancies,” he says. “Then to see years later these kids coming in taller than their moms, and the moms tell me, ‘Robert, you did this—those pancakes.’”

White recently joined the committee of employees working with the Saint John’s Health Center Foundation to determine how funds will be used. “I want to help in any way that I can because Saint John’s has given me so much. I really feel that it is a blessing to be here and to be able to make people smile—and that’s the Saint John’s way.”

Business data analyst Jeanette Villegas is a team player.

Jeanette Villegas has been a Mission Maker since February 2019 when she began her employment at Saint John’s. “I felt so fortunate to have the job. It’s such a good job, and it came at the perfect time,” says Villegas, who agreed to contribute \$10 per paycheck. “I try to practice being grateful



For more info about the Mission Makers employee giving program, visit MissionMakers.SaintJohnsFoundation.org or contact Pamela Davis-Kuhr at 310-829-0203 and Pamela.Davis@stjohns.org

for all the opportunities that come into my life, so I thought that’s a way that I can show I am grateful and give back.”

As a business data analyst for Saint John’s Physician Partners, Villegas helps keep an eye on the operations and finances of Saint John’s clinics. “What I love about my job is that every day is different and that I get to work with my leadership team,” she says. “It’s very hands-on. I get to see not only how we’re running right now but also the vision for the future, which is really nice because then you feel like you’re part of it.”

Villegas contributes to the Saint John’s community in a number of ways, including serving as a facilitator for an employee training program called Own It. “It’s basically a mindset training, just to keep the patient and caregiver experience

in the forefront,” she says. “A lot of people who work in health care do so because it’s part of giving back to your community and being part of something bigger. Own It provides a reminder that it’s important to be present and to show compassion to the patient and your fellow caregivers and employees.”

Giving comes naturally to Villegas, who serves meals to the homeless once or twice a month through a program called New Friends. When she learned about Mission Makers at orientation, she signed up on the spot. “It was a simple check on a paper,” she says. “It’s easy to do that, and then I know it’s going toward something good.”

Villegas also volunteered to join the Mission Makers committee. “I thought that would be nice to be involved,” she





JEANETTE VILLEGAS
Business data analyst
MISSION MAKERS MEMBER

says. “Being part of the committee, I can actually see where the money is going and have more of a hands-on approach to what I’m giving.”

She appreciates that committee members are encouraged to consult

with colleagues in their departments about how employee contributions should be used.

“I love the culture at Providence, and I love what we’re doing as it pertains to the patient and caregiver experience.

We’re all one and the same, and there’s a nice mutual level of respect throughout the organization,” she says. “I felt that on day one in orientation. It’s faith-based. It feeds that human nature of giving back.” 

On the Right Road

Foundation trustee Dominic Ornato is thankful he crossed paths with Saint John's.

BY SANDI DRAPER / PHOTOGRAPHED BY PHILLIP GRAYBILL

Throughout his life, Dominic Ornato has come to many forks in the road. He feels content that he chose the right path when confronted with those forks. For example, he knew exactly where to turn when he developed a rapid heartbeat in January: Providence Saint John's Health Center. He was successfully treated by Peter Pelikan, MD, medical staff president and medical director of the cardiac catheterization laboratory.

It was a reminder of Ornato's longtime generosity to Saint John's where he serves as a Saint John's Health Center Foundation trustee. Ornato made a \$2.5 million commitment to the foundation. While many people donate with specific targets in mind, Ornato's gift is a proverbial blank check. "There's need in everything," he says. "I'll let the foundation decide the best place for the money."

The gift has been recognized with the naming of the donor wall in the hospital as the "Dominic Ornato Inspiration Hall." Ornato's gift follows a 2014 donation to establish the Ornato Family Garden, a place of tranquility and comfort for patients and families. The garden is next to the Jimmy Stewart Garden. "So I'm in good company," he says.

Ornato has been surrounded by good company his whole life, beginning with his parents. Both of his parents had to drop out of school during the Great Depression, although his mother returned to high school and graduated at age 78 with classmates six decades her junior. Ornato remembers his factory laborer father displaying his callused hands and saying, "You don't want these calluses on your hands; you want them on your brain."

So at the fork in the road after high school, Ornato turned to Saint Peter's College—a private Jesuit university in Jersey City, New Jersey. He graduated in the midst of the Vietnam War "when if you weren't sick, you were drafted," he recalls.

It was another fork, and Ornato chose to apply to the Coast Guard's officer candidate school. He was one of 80 people nationwide to be admitted. After commissioning, he served four years of active duty, stationed in Mobile, Alabama.

At the end of his commission, he faced another decision: move to California or return to New Jersey. After a month-long visit to his hometown of North Plainfield, New Jersey, he moved to San Francisco, living in Tiburon, and began a job with the Hartford Insurance Company.

He trained for one year with Hartford in San Francisco and was then transferred to Los Angeles, eventually moving into the brokerage business. He was co-owner of The Levitt/Kristan Co. insurance brokers and became co-president of Arthur J. Gallagher international brokers. He was also partner and treasurer of Budget car rental of the five mountain states. Through his business partner, Dennis Kristan, Ornato met Robert O. Klein, president and chief executive of the foundation. In 2007 Ornato joined the foundation as a trustee.

Though raised protestant, about five years ago Ornato converted to Catholicism, with Kristan and Klein serving as his godfathers.

In addition to the foundation, Ornato's good works include involvement in Catholic Big Brothers and Sisters of Los Angeles. He is a former board member and treasurer of Los Angeles Zoo, where he sponsors a program that allows animal keepers to travel worldwide for educational conservation programs.

His love of animals is a close second to his love for Saint John's. Ornato, who is also a director of the John Wayne Cancer Institute, says the size of Saint John's is one of its best attributes. "It's a manageable size," he says. "Some L.A. hospitals are like navigating a small city. Saint John's is big enough to have all the disciplines but small enough to be manageable. It attracts lots of young doctors who are experts in their fields. It just has a good feeling about it." 





Dominic Ornato made Los Angeles his home and made Saint John's his passion.

SWEAT AND THINK

THE NEW COGNITIVE FITNESS GYM AIMS TO REVOLUTIONIZE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF COGNITIVE DISORDERS.

BY VICTORIA CLAYTON / PHOTOGRAPHED BY KRISTIN ANDERSON

If it's Wednesday at 4 p.m., there's only one place you'll find Pacific Palisades resident Joseph Spector.

That's at the Pacific Neuroscience Institute (PNI) Cognitive Fitness Gym— a 1,000-square-foot, third-floor space at the Pacific Brain Health Center in Santa Monica. It may look like any other mirror-walled boutique fitness studio, but to anyone who understands what's happening there it's nothing short of revolutionary.

"A gym is great for the heart, great for the muscles, but what they have us do here is very different. The exercises are stimulating the brain," explains Spector, 76, a current patient of the Cog Fit Gym.

Cog Fit, as the studio is affectionately known, is based on mounting peer-reviewed scientific evidence on the toll cognitive disorders are taking on our society and what can be done about it. The Alzheimer's Association says that by 2050 up to 14 million Americans could be suffering from the disorder. The World Health Organization has said that the intangible cost of dementias—including Alzheimer's—will tally hundreds of billions of dollars. A 2016 *Lancet* study called an effective treatment for dementias perhaps the "greatest unmet need facing modern medicine."

Those assessments are why the brain health experts at PNI, which is affiliated with Providence Saint John's Health Center, chose to open the gym earlier this year.

Moreover, their own research vouched for the approach. Studies undertaken by David A. Merrill, MD, PhD, director of the Brain Health Center, Sarah C. McEwen, PhD, director of research and





programming, and their colleagues suggest certain forms of exercise may constitute the single most effective way to prevent Alzheimer's as well as cognitive decline from age and many other diseases. Effective treatment starts with some weights, exercise machines, a few props, and some extremely creative and knowledgeable folks wearing sneakers.

"Participating in physical exercise in midlife and on, may reduce risk of cognitive decline later in life by somewhere between 50% to 70%," says Dr. McEwen, a cognitive psychologist. "But in particular, exercise combined with cognitive challenges appears to be the most beneficial for some of these problems."

This type of exercise impacts the brain on multiple fronts. Aerobic exercise increases heart rate, pumps more oxygen to the brain and is associated with more cell growth in the hippocampus—an area of the brain responsible for learning and memory, as well as other compensatory pathways. Exercise also changes brain chemicals to positively impact depression, mood disorders, balance and mobility. In short, says Dr. McEwen, fitness is the closest thing we have to a panacea.

At the Cog Fit gym, certified personal trainer Lesley Bell and brain health coach Ryan Glatt put patients through the paces, either one-on-one or in small groups. To get a feel for what they do, Bell says, try doing an aerobic workout while counting backward by 7s from 83. Or walk and recite the alphabet backward. In the gym, she often uses card and word games combined with prescribed sets of exercises.

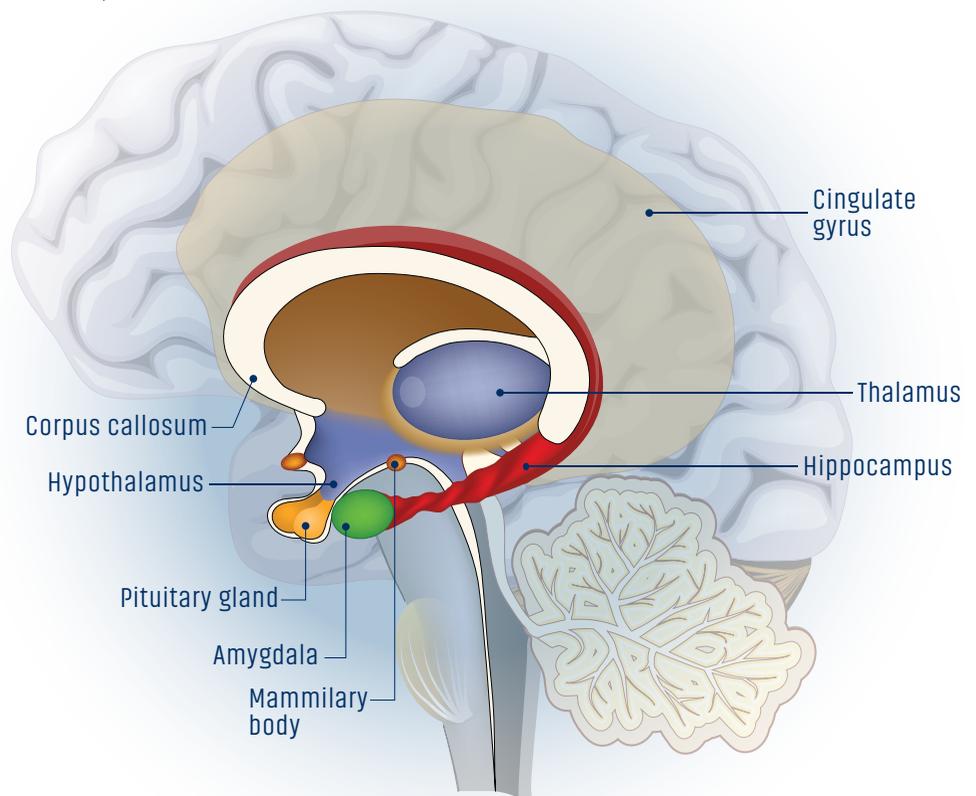
And because novelty is a mandate of the program—in fact, novelty increases the brain's acetylcholine neurotransmitter, which helps with the survival and growth of beneficial new neurons—Cog Fitters do everything from traditional resistance training to Filipino kali martial arts to dance and kundalini yoga's Kirtan Kriya.

At times they also use specialized equipment designed to "gamify" exercise. One of Spector's favorites is a piece of equipment that prompts him to punch at certain intervals and with either the left or right hand. After working with it for several months, he says he's sharper and can already



Joseph Spector is devoted to his Cog Fit workouts.

Certain types of exercises for the brain can strengthen the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for long-term memory.



14

million Americans with Alzheimer's disease projected for 2050

WHAT IS THE PACIFIC BRAIN HEALTH CENTER?

The Pacific Brain Health Center, home to the new Cognitive Fitness Gym, treats the full spectrum of disorders impacting brain health and wellness, including Alzheimer's dementia, mild cognitive decline, depression and anxiety. In collaboration with other PNI specialists, the Brain Health Center's psychiatrists, neurologists and therapists offer diagnostic imaging and treatment options to minimize the impact of other disorders including stroke, brain tumors, traumatic brain injury and Parkinson's disease, as well as treatment-related insults from brain surgery, radiation and chemotherapy.

145%

Increase in deaths due to Alzheimer's disease between 2000 and 2017

notice an improvement in his accuracy and reaction time.

Cog Fitters also receive precision health and lifestyle recommendations designed just for them, but most include dietary counseling based on the Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) diet. Since inflammation has been associated with Alzheimer's, MIND is an anti-inflammation eating plan that emphasizes reducing carbs and processed foods in favor of lean proteins, fruits and vegetables.

Robert Altfest, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, says physical improvements are tough for him to gauge because Parkinson's is relentless, but he's certainly noticed benefits by taking part in the program.

"Every time I leave, I somehow feel better," says Altfest, 75, a retired director of a Fortune 100 company. "Because the gym is integrated with the Brain Health Center medical team, it's somehow heartening to hear all the doctors, the physical therapists, the trainers and coaches saying the same thing about how to improve cognition. There's excellent coordination."

Altfest and his wife, Marjorie, divide time between Los Angeles and New York City. He tries to keep his exercise program alive with home routines provided by the L.A. team, but he says there's nothing like being at Cog Fit. "It's a very encouraging place."

That's exactly the vision PNI leaders

had when launching the Brain Health Center and Cog Fit. "Dementia isn't an unavoidable consequence of aging," says Dr. Merrill. "We want everyone to understand there is something you can do for your cognitive health. We have research that supports doing it. And furthermore, at Cog Fit we do it together."

For many memory care patients outside of Saint John's, specialist visits are infrequent and their doctors may not communicate with each other. More defeating: Far too often "cognitive decline" and "inevitable" make their way into the same sentence. The consequence is that visits to a memory clinic are dreaded. "It shouldn't be this way," says Dr. Merrill, a geriatric psychiatrist.

Phase two of the Cog Fit dream is well on its way with a soon-to-open meditation and brain stimulation studio. "All of this is only coming to existence because of philanthropic support from our generous donors," Dr. Merrill says. How much Cog Fit can do and how many it will serve is yet to be determined, but he says his team is thinking big. Very big.

Coach Glatt sees the program as ideal for everyone. "Many older adults may not have dementia or mild cognitive impairment, but it still behooves them to pursue healthy lifestyle changes and novel interventions in an attempt to curb or ameliorate psychological and cognitive changes."

The entire Brain Health Center team

is extremely hopeful that cognitive workouts are the future gold standard of all fitness pursuits, says personal trainer Bell. "If you're doing brainless work in the gym, it's not doing everything it could do to protect you where it matters most."

The budding program has become so popular we already need a bigger space, Dr. McEwen says. "The growth of our center is still at a point where any support will help accelerate our efforts, especially with underserved populations. Our ultimate aim is for everyone to have access to this," Dr. Merrill says.

Joe Spector will be there. For now, researchers will be collecting thousands of biomarkers from Spector and others as part of a Brain Health Center study that could help improve treatment of cognitive decline and deepen the understanding of cognitive preservation. However, the official life experience coach for the Pacific Palisades High School football team has seen too many benefits to ever give up his standing appointment. "I tell everyone this program is so great,

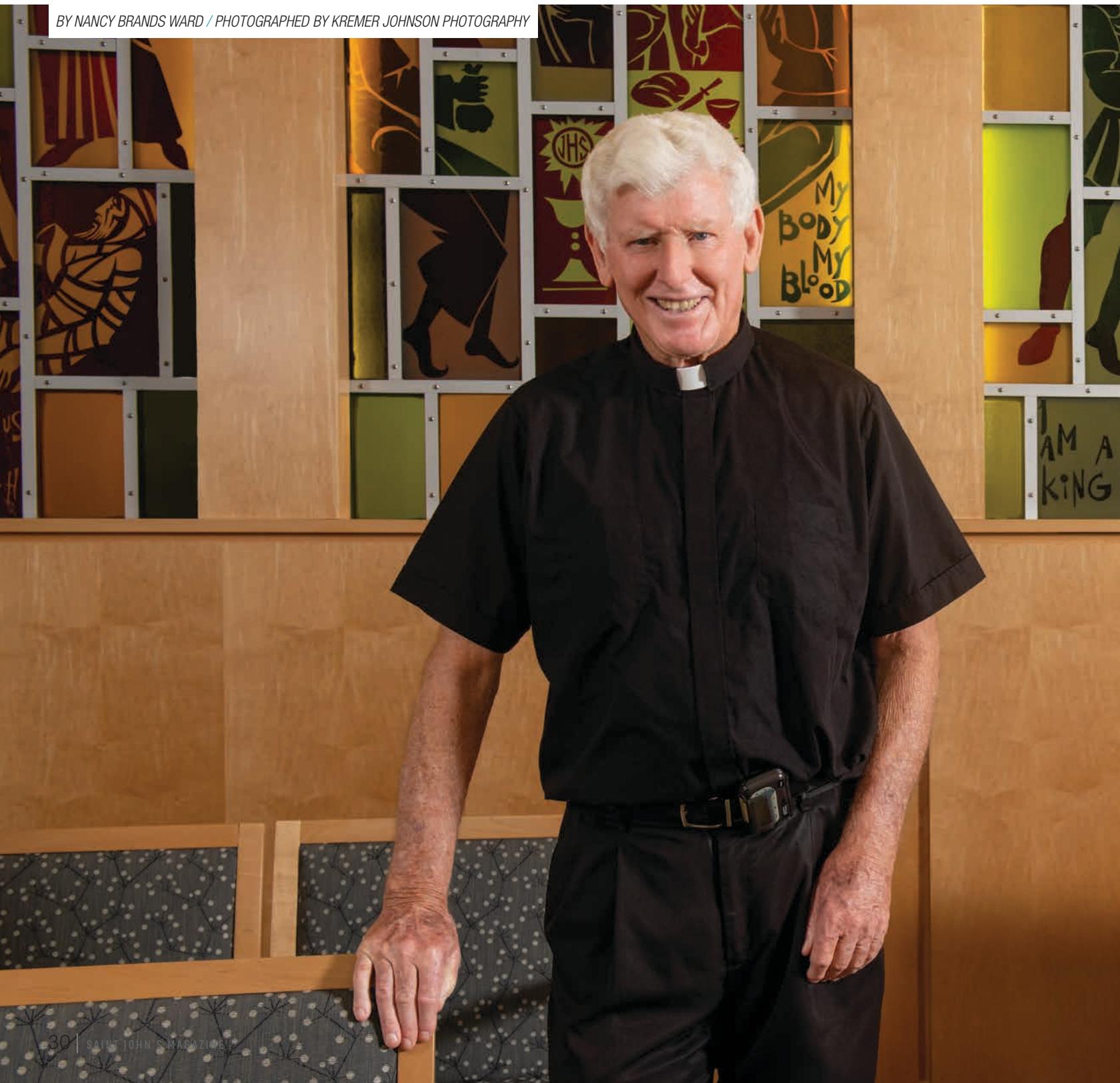
I hope to be coming here for the rest of my life," he says. 🤝

To find out how you can support this growing program, contact Mary Byrnes at 310-582-7102 or Mary.Byrnes@stjohns.org.

From Ireland to LA

Father Pat Comerford celebrates
50 years of the Priesthood.

BY NANCY BRANDS WARD / PHOTOGRAPHED BY KREMER JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY





Whenever Providence Saint John's Health Center opens a new facility or hosts events, Father Patrick Comerford is often called upon to offer a blessing for the new endeavor—showing up in press photos with hospital officials and honored guests. But most of the time he flies below the radar, going quietly about his pastoral ministry of offering sacraments and comfort to all patients, their families and staff at Saint John's five days a week.

Although at 76 Father Comerford claims to be slowing down, you wouldn't know it from his schedule. In his work with the spiritual care department, he sees some 40 to 50 patients a day.

For the past 31 years, Father Comerford has been ministering to patients and staff at Saint John's—a Catholic hospital where about one-third of the patients are Catholic. On June 14 he celebrated the 50th anniversary of when he was ordained as a priest at All Hallows College in Dublin. A month later, he headed to Dublin for a reunion followed by a smaller parish celebration in Kilkenny in southeastern Ireland.

He says his 50th anniversary reminded him of a favorite Bible verse from Hebrews 5:1-4. "No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God, just as Aaron was."

Father Comerford's calling includes days that begin at 6:15 a.m. with visits to patients who want a blessing or prayer before 7 a.m. surgery. He may offer the Sacrament of Holy Communion to one patient, the Sacrament of Confession to another or perform the Sacrament of Anointing the Sick to another patient. He also does a lot of listening and talking with patients about the meaning and mystery of their situations.

Some visits require more time than others, but many are often "cameo appearances" for patients with less pressing needs, he says.

"The most difficult part of the job is working with people with terminal illness," Father Comerford says. "In our Catholic tradition, we handle it through our sacramental system. But we're available to help patients, family and staff of all religions or those with no religion. Helping people in these difficult situations of sickness and end of life—not just the patients but also their families—is what I've enjoyed the most and found the most rewarding."

Father Comerford grew up in Kilkenny in a family of seven brothers and six sisters. Although he hadn't considered the priesthood until his late teens, he began training for the priesthood after being recruited by American

priests who sought to convince Ireland's surplus priests to move to the U.S.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles sponsored his eight-year training in philosophy and his undergraduate degree in science from University College Dublin. He was ordained for the diocese of Los Angeles and received his first posting to a parish church in North Hollywood.

Robert Klein, president and CEO of Saint John's Health Center Foundation, calls Father Comerford's move to the U.S. "Ireland's loss."

"The foundation's trustees and staff have been blessed for the past 30-plus years by enjoying Father Pat's friendship, spiritual guidance and the influence of his uplifting demeanor," Klein says. "His smile, wonderful sense of humor and wit are truly a blessing to all that encounter him."

Over the years he's had various assignments, including one in Northern Spain to study the language and a 17-year post in Los Angeles high schools. He then joined Saint John's, where he shares duties with another priest, ministers of other faiths and four lay employees.

Ordained just after the Second Vatican Council that changed the language of the liturgy from Latin to the vernacular, Father Comerford admits a fondness for Latin. His tastes in literature also tend to be classical. "I'm not much for modernity," he says. "It has to be at least 100 years old to be of any value."

Indeed, he enjoys reading Cardinal John Henry Newman, Samuel Johnson and Hilaire Belloc and has read some 90 novels and plays by P.G. Wodehouse, noting with self-effacing humor and Irish wit that it's not so much evidence of his being an avid reader as the number of things that can fit into the long span of 76 years.

Priests are assigned where there are perceived needs, and Father Comerford has found ministering to people in need at Saint John's over 31 years an immensely satisfying vocation. He says that when he signed on to transfer to Los Angeles, he certainly didn't know what to expect.

"As an 18-year-old, you don't know," he says. "If they had told me Timbuktu, I wouldn't have objected." 🍷



Diana Helena Martin turned to the UCLA/VA Veteran Family Wellness Center, a CIF grantee, for help with post-deployment issues.

ON THE FRONT LINES

**CIF GRANTS SUPPORT LOCAL
PROGRAMS HELPING VETERANS.**

THE GIFT OF HEALTH

The Community Impact Fund (CIF) was established by Saint John's Health Center Foundation to support our local health care partners in improving the health of our community. Each year the CIF committee reviews applications and makes grants to entities, striving to improve the health of local residents. In this issue of Saint John's, we are proud to present the third in a series of stories on recipients of CIF grants. Our story highlights two organizations that help veterans in need.

Growing up in a military family, Diana Helena Martin felt a sense of duty that drove her to join the Navy at 19 years old. She worked on an aviation crash salvage and rescue team while serving aboard the USS Tarawa and the USS Bonhomme Richard. But when she was sexually assaulted in the military, she decided that she needed to find a new path for herself outside the military.

It wasn't until years later, when she was in the midst of a challenging divorce and fighting for custody of her two children, now ages 10 and 7, that Martin recognized the impact that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was having on her life.

"Off and on, I would realize that I needed to confront the PTSD from being assaulted, but I never really got the push I needed," she says. "During the divorce, there was a push from all sides. I needed help for me and for my kids, and that's how I found the Veteran Family Wellness Center."

Among Veterans Administration (VA) services, the UCLA/VA Veteran Family Wellness Center (VFWC) is unique. The program, which is located on the sprawling West L.A. VA campus, provides support for veterans and their families rather than focusing on medical or psychiatric care only for veterans themselves. The VFWC uses a model

called FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress), developed by Harvard University and the Semel Institute of Neuroscience, to build resilience and wellness through counseling, classes and community-focused events.

"When I got there, they really assessed the PTSD aspect of what I was going through and took the time to figure out what would help," Martin says. She and her children participated in therapy sessions and took classes, such as a skills-building class to help strengthen their family unit, communicate better and plan their future as a family.

"It was such a huge transformation for all of us. It was totally what we needed in our lives at that time."

In 2019 Saint John's Health Center Foundation made a commitment to support organizations in the community that work with veterans on issues like PTSD, homelessness, food insecurity and transitioning into civilian life. To fulfill that commitment, the foundation provided grants through its Community Impact Fund (CIF) to both the VFWC and the Westside Food Bank, a Santa Monica-based nonprofit that supplies food assistance to veterans directly and to organizations that offer food assistance to veterans around the community.

BY TRAVIS MARSHALL / PHOTOGRAPHED BY KRISTIN ANDERSON

Support for Vets and Their Families

When the VFWC launched in August 2017, it became the first program of its kind in the nation committed to helping veterans and their families. “This was a departure from the traditional VA system,” says Tess Banko, executive director of the VFWC. “As we approach 19 years of continuous wartime campaigns, the need for attention to the well-being of veterans and their families is growing.”

The VFWC was designed to strengthen veterans and their families as they make stressful transitions, like moving into permanent housing, seeking treatment for PTSD or integrating back into civilian life. “Rather than psychotherapy and medication, the VFWC provides resilience-based wellness training,” Banko says. “The CIF grant has been instrumental in helping us provide innovative tools that meet veterans and families where they are.”

Through the CIF grant, the VFWC has launched a tele-wellness program that allows veterans throughout the city of Los Angeles to access the program’s services over the internet—even if they can’t physically get to the VA campus. “Los Angeles is a geographically challenged area,” Banko says. “Now we can send a link that lets our participants access services wherever they happen to be.”

The funds have also helped the VFWC launch a new transition program that focuses on teaching resilience to veterans as they transition to new chapters of their life. The program teaches cognitive and psychological strategies to get veterans through tough times, such as the period immediately after leaving the military or when they are coping with injury or illness, Banko explains. They begin to form a new picture of the future.

“The VA’s push to incorporate holistic wellness models and move away from medications whenever possible is something that hasn’t been done before.”

As part of the UCLA/VA system, VFWC has a base budget through the UCLA chancellor’s office that covers basic program costs and staffing. “Anything else we need at the center for developing programming or enacting

programs comes through fundraising and grants,” Banko says. “I can’t express how much the support of the Saint John’s Health Center Foundation and the CIF is appreciated because they’re making a direct impact on the lives of veterans and their families.”

Food Fundamentals

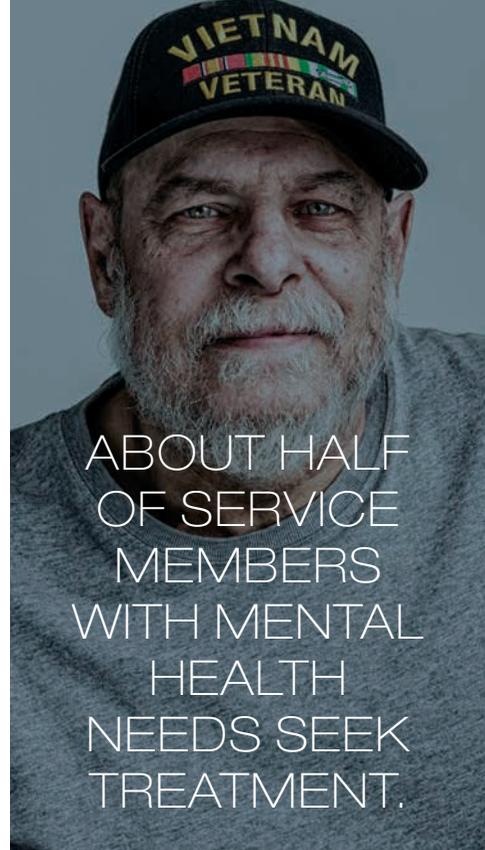
In addition to veterans and their families who struggle with the challenges of finding new direction and community support after their military service is over, there are also a growing number of veterans who lack the most fundamental needs—like food and a safe, affordable place to live. Bruce Rankin, executive director of Westside Food Bank, says there are around 4,000 homeless veterans in Los Angeles and that nearly 10% of the people served by the city’s food pantries are veterans.

The Westside Food Bank, founded in 1981, distributes nearly 4.5 million pounds of food every year throughout its Westside service area. “The objective of any food bank is to use economies of scale to get large amounts of food at better prices so we can distribute to social service agencies and food pantries,” Rankin explains. “We provide food to about 70 different agencies in our service area, including many that work directly with veterans.”

With an annual budget of \$2.2 million, the Westside Food Bank gets most its funding from private organizations like Saint John’s Health Center Foundation, along with individual contributors.

“Those two groups alone make up more than 70% of our funding,” Rankin says. “Given that we spend nearly \$1 million on food each year and a minimum 20% of our service—including produce—goes to vets, the gift from the CIF provides close to half of what we spend on produce for veterans every year.”

Among those that work with the food bank are agencies that help veterans



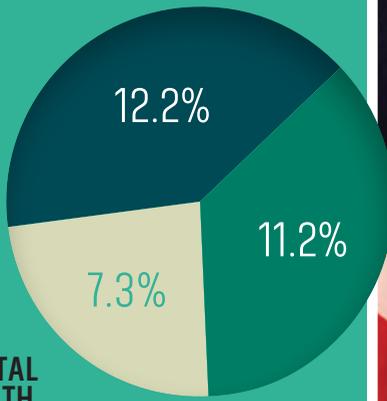
ABOUT HALF
OF SERVICE
MEMBERS
WITH MENTAL
HEALTH
NEEDS SEEK
TREATMENT.

**VETERANS RETURNED
FROM AFGHANISTAN
OR IRAQ:**

Have PTSD or depression
18.5%

Experienced traumatic
brain injury
during deployment
19.5%





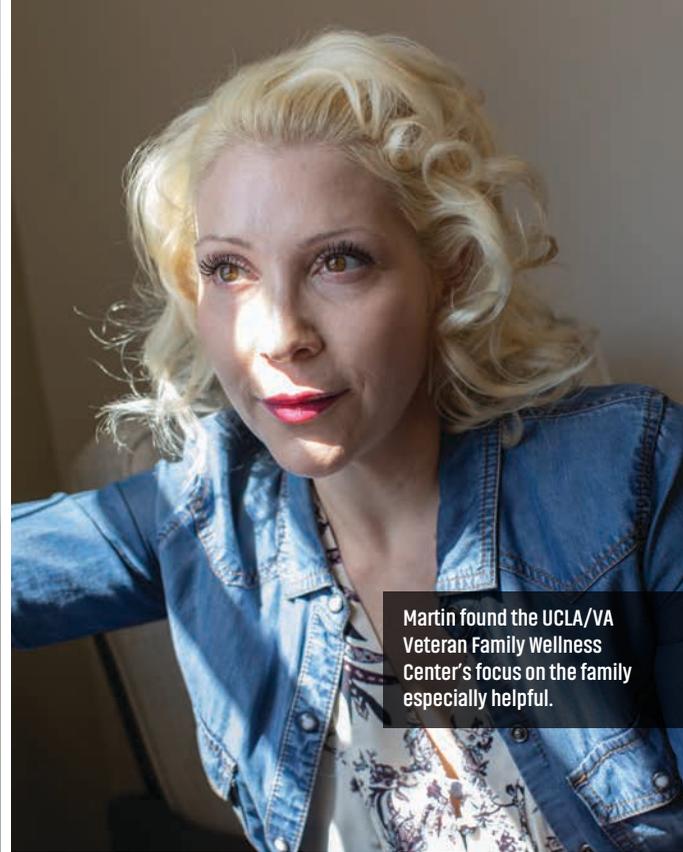
MENTAL HEALTH

31% of veterans report symptoms of a mental health or cognitive condition:

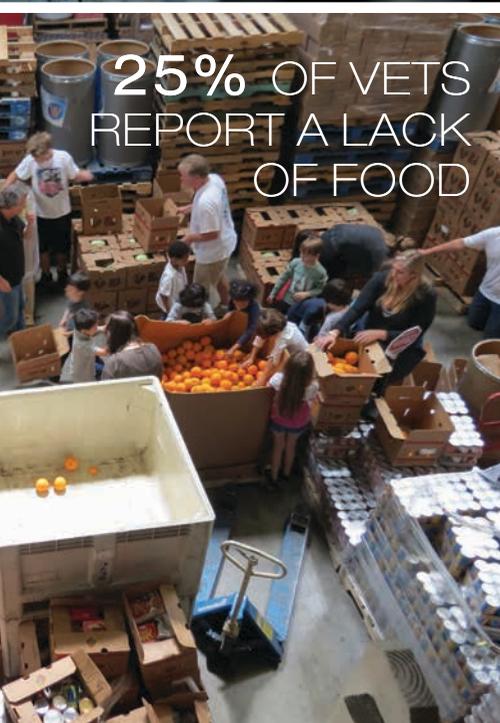
- 11.2% mental health condition
- 7.3% mental health condition and traumatic brain injury
- 12.2% traumatic brain injury



Diana Helena Martin served in the U.S. Navy



Martin found the UCLA/VA Veteran Family Wellness Center's focus on the family especially helpful.



25% OF VETS REPORT A LACK OF FOOD

find transitional housing, including New Directions on the VA campus, the Salvation Army Westwood Transitional Village and People Assisting the Homeless (PATH). The VA is currently working to expand available housing for veterans both on campus and in the community, and the Westside Food Bank recently launched its first direct service effort, providing food to veterans on campus through a pop-up food pantry.

“Every Thursday afternoon we serve up to 150 veterans, and our goal is to provide at least four types of fresh produce every week—usually more in the summer,” Rankin explains. “The program is expanding as we’re beginning discussions with the VA about moving the pop-up pantry to an indoor setting as more veterans can move onto campus.”

The commitment to and focus on

PEOPLE AGES 45 TO 54 WHO REPORT AT LEAST TWO CHRONIC CONDITIONS, SUCH AS DIABETES, HEART DISEASE OR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE:



fresh produce was a key part of the decision to provide the CIF grant to the Westside Food Bank. “At least half of everything we distribute by weight from the food bank is fresh fruits and vegetables,” Rankin says. “The need for food assistance among veterans has increased a great deal in recent years, and the CIF grant was made to support the purchase and acquisition of fresh produce across the board for all of our agencies.”

Serving veterans is special, he says, noting the L.A. veterans’ campus is one of the largest in the country. “The money from Saint John’s Health Center Foundation gets us closer to what we want to do for them.”



4.3 MILLION
out of 18 million vets have a service-connected disability



Two Cherished Gifts: Time And Treasure

BY SHARI ROAN / PHOTOGRAPHED BY JP CORDERO



It's fair to say that Patricia Flaagan is making her postretirement years count. Once the Santa Monica woman retired from her job as a risk manager, she began a quest that, essentially, is making the world a better place—now and for years to come.

That's the result of two choices she made: to perform volunteer work

and to create a legacy gift through estate planning. Providence Saint John's Health Center—and the larger community—is the beneficiary of Flaagan's selflessness.

"I wanted to give to an organization that will really make a difference in a lot of people's lives," says Flaagan, 63. "I figured Saint John's is that place.

It's local, and it felt personal. I felt connected to it as opposed to giving to a national organization where I wouldn't really see what the benefits would be."

Flaagan has seen the good works of the health center since she began volunteering there last year—every Wednesday for a full day. She does office and computer work at the Saint

“In a position where you give back and contribute, you make yourself useful.”



John’s Health Center Foundation, assists in the volunteer office and works several hours in the surgery waiting room. She is comfortable around people and understands family and caregiving. She comes from a big family, with six siblings, and her mother is 94.

“I knew when I retired I would have time, and I wanted to volunteer,” she says. “When I checked into it, the hospital had lots of opportunities. There were so many choices. They weren’t telling me I had to do this or that. They said, it’s up to you.”

Her volunteer duties are fulfilling and inspiring, Flaagan says. “I think it’s a win-win for everybody because the hospital can use the volunteers, and the families of patients benefit from our presence. I think in a position where you give back and contribute, you make yourself useful.”

When she retired, she began indulging in her favorite activities of reading, walking, exercising, traveling and attending the theater. But she also took time to ponder her estate and decided to direct some of her Individual Retirement Accounts to the foundation as a legacy gift. Before making her gift, she did her homework—going on the foundation website to read about the health center and charitable giving. What she learned, and what she saw every Wednesday while volunteering, convinced her that her gift would benefit others—helping them heal and alleviate suffering.

“People may not know the need is there and that it’s easy to leave money to an organization like the Saint John’s Health Center Foundation,” she says.

“We are all touched by Pat’s visionary legacy gift that will ultimately be used to

support the greatest needs of Saint John’s,” says Andy Trilling, foundation vice president of principal and planned gifts. “Pat is an example, like so many of our other supporters who are making wise charitable estate plans during their lifetime that benefit the health center but are also tax-wise for family and friends. She is an inspiration!”

Flaagan says she has benefited from having access to a top-quality community hospital. In 2012 she developed a problem with her vocal cords and underwent a successful vocal cord implant.

“Living in Santa Monica, Saint John’s is first and foremost at the top of my list for hospital care, and almost all my doctors are affiliated with Saint John’s,” she says.

Flaagan says she’s confident her gift will be put to good use. Everyone benefits by having a strong, community hospital, Flaagan says. “People will benefit from the health center’s advances in medicine and ability to keep up with the latest technology.” 

THE GRACE OF LEGACY GIVING

Legacy gifts, such as bequests, are made through charitable estate planning and can have significant tax advantages for you and your heirs. There are many additional reasons to consider a legacy gift:

- Charitable bequests are viewed as one of the most meaningful expressions of gratitude for care received.
- It allows you to leave a legacy in an area that may be close to your heart.
- You may be able to make an impact greater than you thought possible.
- Legacy donors may be eligible for special recognition and amenities.

Our experienced staff can work confidentially with you and your financial advisors to help ensure your charitable wishes are fulfilled. Please contact Andy Trilling, vice president of principal gifts, at 310-449-5246 or Andrew.Trilling@stjohns.org



JWCI FELLOWSHIP GRADUATION

The John Wayne Cancer Institute Fellowship Program commencement ceremony and reception was held June 27 at the home of Ruth Weil. More than 100 guests recognized the conclusion of training for five fellows: Dr. Shaheryar F. Ansari (Neurosurgery Fellow); Dr. Ramkishan Narayanan (Urologic Oncology Fellow); Dr. Trang K. Nguyen (Surgical Oncology Fellow, Ruth and Martin H. Weil Fellow); Dr. Annabelle Teng (Surgical Oncology Fellow, Tarble Foundation Fellow) and Dr. Abhineet Uppal (Surgical Oncology Fellow, The Harold McAlister Charitable Foundation Fellow).

The ceremony highlights included remarks from the graduates as well as from JWCI faculty, including: Dr. Trevan Fischer, Dr. Leland Foshag, Dr. Daniel Kelly and Dr. Timothy Wilson.

Speakers honored and expressed gratitude for JWCI benefactors and donors who support the fellowship programs.



1. Mary Flaherty **2.** (First row) Dr. Abhineet Uppal, Dr. Trang K. Nguyen, Ruth Weil, Dr. Annabelle Teng, Dr. Shaheryar F. Ansari and Dr. Ramkishan Narayanan (Second row) Dr. Anton Bilchik, Dr. Leland J. Foshag, Dr. Melanie Goldfarb, Dr. Adam Khader, Dr. Molly Kledzik, Dr. Timothy G. Wilson and Dr. Santosh Kesari (Third row) Dr. Anthony Scholer, Dr. Juan Santamaria, Dr. Trevan Fischer, Dr. Daniel F. Kelly and Dr. Chester Griffiths **3.** Dr. Trang K. Nguyen and Ruth Weil **4.** Patrick Wayne, Michael Wayne, Bob Klein **5.** Dr. Trevan Fischer **6.** Angelo Fernando, Sharon Weil, Berry Gordy, Ruth Weil and Dr. Ramkishan Narayanan



PALISADES WILL ROGERS RUN

Providence Saint John's Health Center was proud to serve as title sponsor of the 2019 Palisades/Will Rogers 5K and 10K Race, held on July 4. The 42nd annual event, which raises money for local charities, drew many Saint John's Health Center Foundation trustees as well as physicians, donors, patients and their families. Special guests included Janice and Billy Crystal, honorary co-mayors of Pacific Palisades and official race starters; Bill Simon, foundation trustee, race sponsor and official race starter; Jordan Kaplan, foundation trustee and race sponsor; Marcel Loh, chief executive, Providence Saint John's Health Center; Jane Loh, member of the Irene Dunne Guild; and Evelyn Guerboian, president of the Irene Dunne Guild.



1. Runners take to the streets of Pacific Palisades.
2. Jessica Pelikan, Dr. Peter Pelikan
3. Steve Nesbitt, Blake Nesbitt
4. Providence Saint John's Health Center stroke team
5. Young runners celebrate their finish.

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Happy Retirement, Sister Maureen

Providence Saint John's Health Center recently bid farewell to Sister Maureen Craig, SCL, as she retires to the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth motherhouse in Leavenworth, Kansas.

Sister Maureen came to Saint John's in 1987 after 30 years of teaching, when the multiple sclerosis she suffers from made teaching difficult. She has left a deep impression on the lives of patients and the hospital staff. Her poetry, sense of humor and dedication to our mission endures. We thank Sister Maureen and will remember her wisdom, words and poetry.



"In the gift shop of Saint John's there's a small statue of Jesus washing St. Peter's feet. Peter doesn't like it, but Jesus does it anyway. The washing of the feet sums up what we are about at Saint John's. We are called to be Jesus and to wash the feet of those in need and of those in poor health. Many times people don't like to be reminded they're in poor health, or have their feet washed, but Jesus does it with love. And that's what we as caregivers are called to do: to be Jesus washing other people's feet. There are times in our lives when we've done that. But there also comes a time to be Peter—to stop and let others care for us. That's what you've been doing for me for so many years and through so much. It's not easy being Peter because we want to be Jesus. We want to be the people who are doing the running around. But the time comes for all of us when we have to stop and say, yes, please take care of me. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of the love you have given me when I wanted to run around being Jesus but needed to be cared for by all of you. And you know, this really is what health care is all about. It's what we, as a Catholic hospital, are about: caring for one another. We're taking God's role in our hands and saying, 'We're Saint John's, and we're going to love you and care for you.' That's what I wish for all of you today as we say goodbye after our long, long years—that we will remember that we are Jesus and taking on his role, and that sometimes we're going to be Peter and have to sit back. But we know which role we're doing. We're acting out the mission. I thank you."

— SISTER MAUREEN CRAIG, SCL

**"I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash one another's feet. I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you."
— John 13:14-15**

We are Patchwork People

We are a patchwork people
Our histories differ—
As do our views.
But not our values!
No, here our scraps of life unite
Our call to caring
Our passion for excellence,
Our belief in Christ's

Call to healing.
Stitched together
By the golden thread of mission,
Make of us a quilt
Bringing, as patchworks do,
Not just warmth and comfort,
But a beautiful tradition as well.

POEM BY SISTER MAUREEN, 2001

THANK YOU DOMINIC ORNATO

For your generous gift to Saint John's Health Center Foundation in support of Providence Saint John's Health Center, John Wayne Cancer Institute and Pacific Neuroscience Institute.

Dominic's support of \$2.5 million advances health care and alleviates suffering. Like Dominic, when you give a gift to Saint John's Health Center Foundation, you can help fund breakthrough technology and innovative critical care in health areas close to your heart, such as cardiology, cancer, neuroscience, orthopedics, nursing or other areas of care. This essential support enables us to continue to serve you, your family and the local community we all love. You can take pride in helping others heal and return to good health, something we all cherish.



Please give now at [SaintJohnsFoundation.org](https://www.SaintJohnsFoundation.org)
or call 310-829-8424, Monday through Friday,
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- PAGE 30 -

Heaven Sent | Fr. Pat Comerford
provides spiritual guidance



- PAGE 32 -

Serving Our Veterans | Community
resources help veterans at home

“Health care is a very complicated, multifaceted business. I particularly like working in this capacity with Saint John’s because the trustees, employees, physicians and caregivers all really love this hospital.”

— JIM FORDYCE,
Planning the Future at
Saint John’s
- PAGE 10 -

