

A publication of FHN

Volume 15, Issue 1

# Insight

## 'Stent Sisters' Share Cath Lab Experience

5 Generations of  
Caring at FHN

New Tech to Help  
Ease Sinus Issues



*We're here, for you.*

**FHN**



MARK GRIDLEY, PRESIDENT AND CEO

## Serving Our Communities with Heart

Greetings, healthy and happy American Heart Month! Though its roots don't go quite as far back as those of Valentine's Day, Americans have been observing this heart-y

holiday each February for 61 years. It's a wonderful opportunity to remind the people you love how valuable they – and their heart – are to you.

In this Insight, we'll introduce you to two sisters whose hearts were in just the right place – our FHN Judy and Virgil Bocker Cardiovascular Center – when they needed it. We'll look at our state-of-the-art cardiac catheterization lab in the Center and learn about how cardiac rehab helps patients stay healthy after a heart issue.

We also have some very exciting news about a new ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) procedure that may finally bring relief to people dealing with sinus issues. FHN Otolaryngologist Terry Donat, MD, FACS, FICS is the only provider offering this procedure in the area. Another first for your local community healthcare system!

FHN Foundation Director Al Evon has some interesting details to share about the generous individuals and organizations who donate to local healthcare, and we'll look at how our all-local Board of Directors makes choices not just for FHN, but for the health of all those impacted in our communities.

We have a human-interest story about five generations of one family who have worked at FHN, and why they're proud and happy to continue that tradition. And finally, we'll look at how our Patient Family Advisory Council helps us in our continual quest to deliver excellence, every person, every time, and with empathy.

And one final note: I'm a participant in this year's free Get Fit program, and I'm having fun learning new ways to eat healthy and keep moving. It's not too late to join in and work on some healthy habits with a fun group of people!

As always, thank you for the privilege to be your partner in healthcare. We're so proud to be a part of the community caring for friends, family, and our neighbors! ■

FHN is an award-winning regional healthcare system committed to the health and well-being of the people of northwest Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Organized in 1995, non-profit FHN is comprised of FHN Memorial Hospital, the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital, and 15 healthcare centers in 5 counties spanning northwest Illinois offering primary and specialty medical care, hospice, and outpatient mental health services. For more information about us please visit [www.fhn.org](http://www.fhn.org).



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## THANK YOU

TO OUR TEAM OF TALENTED STAFF COMMITTED TO DELIVERING HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY



▲ Toni Bollon and Sherri Daniel pose in the cath lab at the FHN Judy and Virgil Bocker Cardiovascular Center at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport with Interventional Cardiologist Prasad Kilaru, MD, FSCAI, FACC. This is the first time Dr. Kilaru remembers treating siblings in the same week.

## Sisters Get Stents at Cardiac Cath Lab

Sisters Sherri Daniel of Freeport and Toni Bollon of German Valley have been doing things together since childhood – but they never dreamed they would both receive stents in FHN’s state-of-the-art cardiac catheterization (cath) lab within four days of each other!

It all happened in November of 2023. Toni had been having pain in her calf and hip. Walking became difficult, so she called her primary care provider, Jeffrey Schleich, MD, who immediately suspected a vascular blockage that was impeding circulation in her leg. He promptly ordered tests at FHN’s cath lab.

“He knows me,” says Toni, “and we have a strong rapport. Sure enough, an ultrasound indicated a blockage

in my leg, and I was scheduled for an angiogram and stent placement the following week.”

### Sister Two Gets the Procedure First

But before Toni could have her procedure, her sister had an emergency one. “I just felt funny,” explains Sherri. “My hands and face were tingling and I started to feel sick to my stomach. I began violently vomiting. My husband knew something was wrong and called the ambulance. The EMTs got me stabilized, but I decided not to go to the hospital – I truly thought I was fine.”

Unfortunately, that was not the end of it and Sherri’s husband and kids took

her to the FHN emergency room. Says Sherri, “Tests showed I had a heart attack! I was absolutely floored. I am only 60 and in pretty good health. I don’t drink, I am not overweight, and I quit smoking 15 years ago. But I have a family history of heart problems and have dealt with high blood pressure since my 30s, always taking my meds to keep it under control.”

After an angiogram, Sherri was also diagnosed with a blockage and scheduled for a stent the next day.

“I had a heart attack on Monday, the stent on Tuesday, was released on Wednesday, enjoyed Thanksgiving on Thursday, and went back to the ICU on Friday because my blood pressure

— Continued on page 4



◀ Sherri Daniel sets her pace on the treadmill in cardiac rehab, with her sister, Toni, and nurse, Krista Montgomery BSN, RN, providing encouragement. “It is a well-run program,” says Sherri, “and they customize the rehab for my needs.”

Now, Sherri’s primary care provider, Diana McNulty, MD, and interventional cardiologist Prasad Kilaru, MD, FSCAI, FACC, are keeping track of her progress. “Both of them are great assets to FHN,” says Sherri, “and I know they are looking out for me, evaluating my cardiac rehab, and monitoring my needs.”

### **Sister One Happy with Outpatient Procedure**

Toni, meanwhile, had a successful procedure as an outpatient – she went home the same day. “They did a great job letting me know exactly what was happening, and I felt informed up front,” says Toni.



I totally trusted Dr. Kilaru and felt in good hands. He was reassuring and professional, and I have heard so many positive comments about him since this happened. In two to three days, I felt like a new person. It was wonderful! My pain was immediately gone.

was soaring – the same day my little sister Toni was scheduled for her stent. So the nurses were working to regulate my BP while my sister was downstairs getting her procedure. It was crazy and our poor mom was worried sick.”

### **ICU Nurse Makes an Impression**

Happily, the story improves from here. Sherri’s blood pressure stabilized

with the help of Alexi Ostergard, RN, her nurse in FHN’s intensive care unit (ICU).

“She was great,” Sherri emphasizes. “A real pro. Down to earth, attentive, intuitive, capable, and compassionate. She was truly meant to be a nurse! My numbers got under control, I was released on Monday, and I have been feeling back to normal ever since. My entire experience at FHN was truly awesome.”

The sisters proved to be somewhat of a novelty in the hospital. “We did create a bit of a stir,” explains Toni. “We started calling ourselves ‘Stent One’ and ‘Stent Two’ and ‘The Stent Sisters.’ The FHN cath lab team noticed that two patients in the same week had the same tattoo – three hearts for three sisters. (We started teasing our youngest sister, Stacy, that we are in an exclusive club she isn’t invited to join). It was pretty funny.”

## Heart Issues Can Cause Heartache

Sherri and Toni, however, know their heart issues are no laughing matter. Their dad, now gone, struggled with heart problems. Their 79-year old mom – with a four-heart tattoo for herself and her three daughters – is dealing with a heart condition as she ages. And sadly, Toni’s son, Tanner, died of a heart attack three years ago, in March of 2021.

“His fiancée found him on the couch,” explains Toni. “He was just 33. He thought he had heartburn. But he had some numbness too, which prompted him to make an appointment that he never went to. He had been laid off, had no insurance, and worried about the cost.”

Heartbroken from losing Tanner, both sisters stress the importance of getting checked quickly if any symptoms are present. “You just never know,” says Sherri. “Go to the ER. Don’t hesitate. Don’t worry about being embarrassed. And remember, symptoms can be different for women. Get checked!”

## Rehab – the Final Step

Both sisters plan to complete cardiac rehabilitation at FHN, and Sherri has already started. “I am at rehab for an hour and a half three times a week, and it has been great for me,” says Sherri. “I don’t love exercise, but I know I benefit from it and it is making me feel strong. It is a well-run



program and they customize my rehab for my needs.”

She continues, “The team is very knowledgeable and they push you because they want you to be well. I also value the educational component, which includes mental health insights, because it is a bit daunting post-heart attack. That guidance is really helpful.”

Toni plans to start her cardiac rehab regimen following an upcoming cruise, which will include her sister Sherri and Sherri’s husband and children. “I am going to kick back, relax, and celebrate a new year – hopefully a healthy one,” she enthuses. “When I return I will start the program and join my sister on the treadmill!” ■

▲ Sherri (right) shows Toni how to do some of the weight-bearing exercises that await her when she begins cardiac rehab. Both sisters will benefit from the exercise and education that are key to a successful rehab experience.



It is fitting that Sherri and Toni have matching tattoos featuring a heart design.



## THE FHN JUDY & VIRGIL BOCKER CARDIOVASCULAR CENTER: IT'S ALL ABOUT HEARTS

It's fun to give and receive heart-shaped cards or enjoy candy from a heart-shaped box for Valentine's Day, but have you thought about how important your heart really is?

The average human depends on their heart beating about **100,000 times a day**, every day, all of their life. Even the smallest of heart problems can affect a person, causing a range of symptoms from simply tiring out too quickly to needing emergency care.

That's why your heart health is a really big deal – and it's very important to us, too. Every day of the year, FHN's Heart Health team is devoted to keeping your ticker "ticking" and in the best shape possible!

"We completed a major technological upgrade to our cardiac catheterization lab ("cath lab") at the beginning of 2022, and our team has an equal focus on helping people reduce their cardiac risk through cardiac rehabilitation," says FHN Director of Imaging Services

and Cardiac Services Katie Alvarado, MBA, RT(R)(N), CNMT.

### NEW 'EYES'

The recent cath lab upgrade project gave our providers and caring team new, high-definition "eyes" – a fluoroscopy unit that offers very high-quality images at the safest, lowest radiation dose to each patient.

"The updated technology enables us to view real-time images in high definition," says FHN Cardiologist Prasad Kilaru, MD, FSCAI, FACC. "We are also able to manipulate the view and move in different angles, which allows for better visualization of some vessels."

The Volcano intravascular ultrasound imaging system (IVUS) monitors the pressure inside the patient's arteries and enables the provider to see the patient's arteries from "inside out." An added Penumbra tool system uses the power of suction to help the team remove clots.

The FHN cardiac services and cath lab teams are able to perform a wide range of tests to assess the health of a patient's heart and circulatory system, from the standard treadmill stress test and tilt table test to angiograms, echocardiograms, carotid ultrasounds, and vascular studies of the peripheral system.

The upgrade also means that, if our caring team finds an issue during a diagnostic test, FHN's Prasad Kilaru, MD, FSCAI, FACC can place a stent to open up blockages and perform a thrombectomy to remove clots. Our cardiac team also is able to implant permanent pacemakers for heart rhythm problems.

### COMPREHENSIVE CARE, CLOSE TO HOME

While the advanced technology at the Cardiovascular Center can literally be a lifesaver, FHN's cardiac team works to educate patients on the cardiovascular system and teaches



**J. Steve Harweger,**  
AGACNP-BC



**Prasad Kilaru,**  
MD, FSCAI, FACC



**Madhu R. Malladi,**  
MD, FACC, FASE



**Bhadresh A. Patel,**  
MD, FACC, FACP



them how to modify their current lifestyles to reduce the chances of another heart event.

Patients who are experiencing stable angina, peripheral artery disease or congestive heart failure also can benefit from cardiac rehab, which must be prescribed by a physician. Any cardiac patient – regardless of whether they received their treatment at FHN, is welcome – it’s all about getting people the help they need to regain and keep their best health.

“

Our goal is to help patients become healthier and help them get back to their lives and to prevent further heart problems. Recent studies show that patients who attend cardiac rehab have a **42.7 PERCENT DECREASE IN ALL-CAUSE HOSPITAL READMISSION** or mortality, compared to those who do not attend!

– Diane Bardell

”

The Cardiac Rehab team develops an individualized care plan for each patient, usually involving three appointments a week in the rehab gym at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport for up to 12 weeks.

At those appointments, patients work one-on-one with our caring team of RNs and exercise specialists, learning how to manage their condition and prioritize their health.

The Cardiac Rehab team monitors each patient and makes adjustments as needed,” Diane says. “Encouraging patients to live a healthier lifestyle is a huge component of the program.”

“Having heart problems can be so frightening, and we’re here to help people work through those fears and figure out that yes, they can have a good, active, healthy life.” ■

▼ Cardiac Rehab team members (left to right) Krista Montgomery, BSN, RN; Carly Quaco, cardio pulmonary rehab specialist; and Dianne Bardell, Cardiac Services team leader.



## HEART MONTH SPECIALS

\$129 each

Call 815-599-6860 by Thursday, Feb. 29 to schedule at the special price.

Tests must be performed by Friday, May 31, 2024.

## HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR HEART?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. Early diagnosis of heart disease is key, so FHN is offering two different screening tests for American Heart Month. If you have no known coronary artery disease and no prior heart issues, you can take advantage of our Heart Month Specials.

### CALCIUM SCORING CT HEART SCAN

uses 64-slice CT scanner technology to detect calcified plaque in arteries, an indication of potential heart issues. This non-invasive x-ray takes only a few minutes and does not require any physical activity.

**STANDARD TREADMILL STRESS TEST** helps determine heart conditions and may be right for you if you have risk factors for heart disease such as high cholesterol, existing or borderline high blood pressure, a history of smoking, diabetes, or family history of heart disease. You must be able to walk for this test and not have a history of heart problems.



# Breathing Easier

## Dr. Donat Introduces New Tech to Help Ease Sinus Issues

Relief remains wonderful in all its forms ... so FHN Otolaryngologist Terry Donat, MD, FACS, FICS continues to expand the availability of minimally-invasive office procedures for those affected by bothersome nasal and sinus problems which interfere with their enjoyment of life.

If you are still seeking your relief from persistent nasal drainage, persistent real trouble breathing through your nose, or chronic sinusitis, you now have even safer, more effective and long-lasting treatments available to improve the quality of your life. Minimally-invasive procedures for these conditions designed to be performed in the office under local anesthesia are a practice focus for Dr. Donat, a board-certified Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeon, to reach and

help his patients suffering from sinus and nasal problems.

These new procedures also provide patients relief from fears which may prevent them from pursuing sinus and nasal surgery, such as the long-outdated practice of nasal packing for days after surgery. **We haven't routinely used nasal packing for any of the nasal or sinus surgeries discussed below for more than 25 years.**

### Aerin RhinAer Radiofrequency Treatments for Excessive Nasal Drainage

The new set of Aerin procedures for treating nasal congestion, nasal obstruction and excessive nasal drainage are minutes-long FDA-approved surgical procedures designed to bring relief to patients

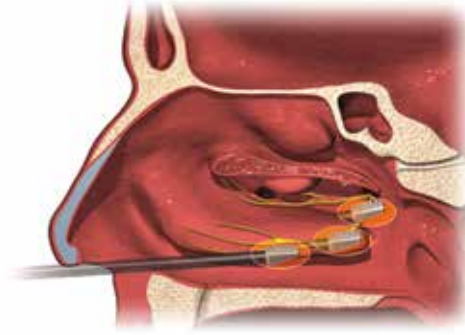
suffering from months or years of troublesome nasal drainage (rhinorrhea) and inferior turbinate congestion, usually from nasal allergies, changes in weather, inhaled irritants, or overactive nasal nerves, all of which can cause chronic nasal inflammation (rhinitis).

Rhinitis symptoms which are usually the most bothersome to candidate patients are a far-too-frequent watery nose, congestion which alternates sides of the nose, congestion in the morning, post-nasal drip, constant clearing of the throat and difficulty sleeping due to a runny nose.

RhinAer is a new focused radiofrequency approach that allows your caring team to get to the root cause of your runny nose, regardless of the cause, in nearly all cases,



**Terry Donat, MD, FACS, FICS**



◀ The treatment tool allows Dr. Donat to use radiofrequency heat to stun and deactivate nerves causing sinus problems.



without significant risks of bleeding, even in people taking blood thinners, and without the side effects of high-dose medications or other more complex treatments.

While seasonal or daily oral medications, like nasal sprays containing antihistamines and steroids, may greatly improve symptoms, it often seems like symptoms still break through or patients understandably grow tired of having to use their medications over such long periods of time.

In fact, some physicians now feel that the extended need for nasal sprays for years on end only rather reveals that we are truly still failing to ease our patients' suffering with prescribed medications; but that those shortfalls can be managed far better using Aerin RhinAer.

For this reason, RhinAer also does not necessarily require an extended period of time to prove medications have failed before considering it to reduce or eliminate your reliance upon medications. Typically, patients who fail drainage-reducing medication or are simply tired of taking everyday nasal medications for years-on-end are good candidates for these treatments.

During the Aerin RhinAer procedure, which takes less than an hour under local anesthesia, our team uses a small wand to stun the specific nerves in the back of the nose with radiofrequency heat energy to relieve congestion and to reduce the amount of excess nasal mucous production, beginning over the next several weeks afterward and lasting at least several years.

After radiofrequency therapy in the office, you may typically return to work on the same or next day. Aerin RhinAer is effective in more than 80 percent of patients with a first application and may be safely and effectively repeated, if needed.

## **Aerin VivAer Radiofrequency Treatments for Remodeling and Strengthening the Nasal Airways**

The spots on the sides of your nose where you pinch your nose or you might, much more dramatically, place a clothespin, to fully block your breathing are called the nasal valve. The nasal valve is the narrowest part of your airway from out in the world to all the way down to the depths of your lungs.

For many people, the nasal valve area seems to be a big factor in moderately to severely blocked or collapsed nasal breathing. Nasal valve collapse and inferior turbinate enlargement also can result in increased snoring, habitual sniffing, the desire to try external nasal strips and mouth breathing which may further affect your quality of life, quality of sleep and even be bothersome to those close to you.

Since the nasal valve and enlarged turbinate produce such nasal narrowing, any alterations in the structure of the nose affecting this area can result in increased resistance or blocked airflow. The most common causes of nasal valve collapse are previous rhinoplasty, nasal trauma and congenital weakness and age-related weakness of the upper and lower nose cartilages. While nasal valve collapse during vigorous physical activity may be normal, its collapse during normal breathing when awake or asleep is certainly not.

Aerin VivAer is an FDA-approved minutes-long focused radiotherapy surgical procedure under local anesthesia that is designed to specifically strengthen the position of the upper and lower nasal cartilages by remodeling the internal tissue strength for the sidewall of your nose above your nostril. Supporting the cartilages serves to reduce nasal valve collapse, nasal airway obstruction and help you breathe better. Studies have shown it to be effective in the vast majority of patients.



### **Meet Rob Fox**

Rob Fox, PA-C is the Physician Assistant working with Dr. Donat in FHN's ENT and Facial Plastic Surgery Department.

Rob brings more than 20 years of experience in caring for patients from a variety of surgical specialties, family medicine and emergency medicine. He earned his PA-C degree and credentials from Wayne State University in Detroit after earning a bachelor's degree in biology from The Citadel in Charleston, SC.

When he cares for patients dealing with persistent nasal disorders potentially amenable to Aerin procedures, Rob takes a careful history of symptoms, reviews past attempted and current treatments, performs a comprehensive examination including office nasal endoscopies, and designs customized medical treatment plans based upon his diagnoses – some of which may eventually include Aerin procedures.

Together with Dr. Donat, Rob's goal is to determine the most beneficial options to bring much-needed relief to you or your loved one.

# LET FHN'S PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS HELP YOU BE HEALTHIER IN 2024

Did you make a resolution to be healthier in 2024? The very best place to start is with your primary healthcare provider!

Your primary care provider can help you – and your family members – achieve and maintain your best health.

If you need a primary healthcare provider, call us at **815-599-7060** Mondays – Thursdays 7 a.m. – 6 p.m. or Fridays 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. We'll make sure you have an appointment before you hang up the phone!

This issue's provider spotlight focuses on a family medicine nurse practitioner who is welcoming new patients at our Burchard Hills facility in Freeport.

## 1. What is the most rewarding part of your job?

I find it rewarding to help others and be a patient advocate. Further, I love having continuity of care and the ability to build a meaningful relationship with my patients and their families. There is nothing better than knowing I am impacting someone in a positive way.

## 2. What would you like new patients to know?

I'm okay admitting I do not know something, and that I need to do research or ask questions to find out the answers. Thankfully, FHN has a great team of providers who are always willing to support and guide me – they are available around the clock to be a resource for me and my patients. That adds up to a lot of expertise in a lot of different areas.

## 3. What is your favorite hobby or skill outside of work?

Take me outside! Some of my favorite outdoor activities include golfing, kayaking, boating on the lake and Mississippi river, or simply just playing outside with my kids and dogs. I also love to travel - one of my favorite trips was when I went to Ireland with my entire family.

## 4. Do you have something of which you are especially proud or a fun fact you can share about yourself?

Yes! I was born in Lakenheath, England. We lived in Europe for the first 11 years of my life, as my dad was active military. Following England, we moved to The Netherlands. Instead of living on the military bases, my parents decided to have us live in the community. Because of this, English is actually the second language I learned to read and write. We went to the Dutch school system, so I learned Dutch first and only spoke English when at home with my parents. We moved back to the U.S. (Elizabeth, IL, where I still live), when I was in 6th grade. I can still speak Dutch if I really concentrate! ■

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◀ Megan loves to travel and especially enjoyed a recent family trip to Ireland. Here, she celebrates the beauty of the Cliffs of Moher.



## FHN PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

### Megan Bauer, DNP, FNP-BC

Family Medicine Nurse Practitioner  
at FHN Family Healthcare Center –  
Burchard Hills in Freeport

Phone: 815-599-7170



# Welcome to FHN!



If you're looking for a new primary care provider, FHN's newest Family Nurse Practitioner **April Jessen, FNP-BC** is welcoming new patients at her practice at FHN Family Healthcare Center – Highland View Drive in Freeport!

April may be a familiar face, as she has cared for patients as a registered nurse at FHN Memorial Hospital as well as Javon-Bea-Mercy Health and the University of Illinois-Chicago in Rockford. She earned her

master's degree and certification as an FNP from Chamberlain University in Addison, Ill.

And yes, April is a home-town girl; she is the daughter of FHN Allergy Specialist Timothy Jessen, MD. If you'd like to make an appointment with her, call her office at 815-235-3165.



We're also proud to welcome Physician Assistant **Emily Valente, PA-S** to our Surgery team!

Emily earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Ind. She has cared for patients of all ages as part of her training, which included time on Family Medicine, Ob/Gyn, Pediatrics, Emergency Medicine and General Surgery teams.

As a PA on our surgical team, she cares for pre- and post-operative surgical patients, and assists in surgical procedures.



We are also excited to welcome **Donna Strauch, AGCNS-BC** to our team of providers caring for patients at area nursing homes.

Donna is a board-certified Adult Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist. She earned her master's degree and certification from Saint Anthony College of Nursing in Rockford and holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from Mercy University in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

She is a familiar face, as well – Donna has cared for patients at FHN in a number of roles, from registered nurse to Ambulatory Care team leader and Surgical Services Operations team leader. ■



## Your healthcare information is just a click away!

**MyFHN** lets you get lab results, diagnostic test results, discharge instructions, check your appointment history, and see upcoming appointments.

With just a few clicks, you can also request or cancel an appointment and send and receive secure messages with your providers.

Enroll online using one of two processes (depending on whether or not you have an email address on file with us and know your medical records number). If you need assistance, please ask the staff, call MyFHN Support at **815-599-6907**, or email **MyFHN@fhn.org**.



# Patient Family Advisory Council (PFAC) Aims for Excellence

## Seven Meetings, 17 Projects ... and Counting!

FHN aspires to make every patient experience truly exceptional, and 10 community members are helping guide that effort.

Along with FHN facilitator and Patient-Focused Consultant Aby Breed and Director of Quality Doreen Timm, MSN, RN, APN/CNS-BC, these diverse community members work with FHN leaders to provide feedback on a broad array of subjects. They focus on how patients understand and navigate healthcare in the modern age, and emphasize the importance of communication in every step of the process. By learning from the patient and/or family perspective, FHN is better able to improve the patient experience, increase safety, and enhance the quality of care throughout the organization.

### PATIENT INPUT A CONSTANT AT FHN

Though some version of this initiative has been around for many years, a renewed emphasis emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Aby.

"We were all reinvigorated and eager to emphasize a solutions-oriented approach. We wanted to make sure the PFAC was representative of our community, that we clearly identified challenges, and that we created a process focused on action and accountability. We have done that, and this particular group of community advisors, who started in June of 2023, has been a catalyst for many beneficial projects already ... 17 of them in just seven monthly meetings!"

PFAC suggestions have impacted patient care or patient interaction in numerous areas, including radiation robe selection in the cancer center; home-based bacteria control for post-surgical patients; and survey clarification and waiting

area updates in the ER, where PFAC members went on a "field trip" of sorts to gain firsthand knowledge.

### A MEMBER'S PERSPECTIVE

"I feel like FHN is on the right track," says Amy, a committee member who took some time to share why she feels good about contributing to the PFAC. "While there have been points of criticism by nearly all members regarding experiences at FHN, those same members have also praised and commended other situations/circumstances. That's what I think makes for an effective member; one who can be open enough to see and acknowledge both the positives and the negatives with the organization and how it's run."

Amy also appreciates strong leadership from Doreen and Aby. "They provide good follow-up at our meetings," she shares. "They always round back to prior topics and update us on how our input was received as well as how valued the PFAC group is throughout the organization. We have seen some of our input become enacted within only a month's time, so rollout of different topics has been fast on FHN's end."

If you're like Amy and feel enthusiastic about supporting and improving care at FHN, you may want to consider joining our next Patient Family Advisory Council! If you would like more information, email [PFAC@fhn.org](mailto:PFAC@fhn.org) and a PFAC representative will contact you. With your help, FHN can improve on our commitment to provide safe, compassionate, and innovative healthcare for everyone in our communities.



### PFAC PARTICULARS

PFAC members must be age 18 or older. Those selected to become PFAC members will be asked to commit to a minimum one-year membership. After completing a mandatory orientation, monthly meetings are held at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport. There is an online attendance option, but two meetings per year must be attended in person.

Confident you want to help? Submit your information at [www.fhn.org/PFAC](http://www.fhn.org/PFAC).

◀ Director of Quality Doreen Timm and Patient-Focused Consultant Aby Breed show patient-care items that have been improved thanks to input from the Patient Family Advisory Council (PFAC). The Council is guided by diverse community members who work with FHN leaders to provide feedback on a broad array of subjects.





# The Details on Giving to FHN Foundation

Al Evon, Foundation Director

The FHN Foundation is always striving to improve. In order to do this, it is important to listen to and learn from those who support us financially. After all, without the generosity of individuals, families, organizations, companies and foundations, the FHN Foundation would not be able to help deliver healthcare excellence for our communities.

In 2023, we reached out to several current and previous donors with a survey asking them for feedback on a variety of topics. Here are some of the highlights:

### Among donors who have given in the past two years:

- 98.06 percent indicated they **feel appreciated** as an FHN donor.
- 90.39 percent rated their **overall experience** with the FHN Foundation **very positively**.

### Some of the reasons these donors gave as to why the community should support FHN included:

- To enhance local access to **high quality care**
- FHN is **valuable** to, and helps, our **community**; it provides an absolutely necessary service
- Had an **excellent experience with care** at FHN

### In order of preference, donors ranked how they would prefer the FHN Foundation use donations:

1. Provide funds for new equipment
2. Provide funds for improvements to patient care and safety

3. Provide scholarships for nursing students and healthcare professionals
4. Provide funds for new facilities or improvements to current facilities
5. Provide funds for ongoing staff training and education
6. Support specific programs or departments (Hospice, Cancer Center, gifts for children)

### New Donors

We also asked for feedback from donors who made their first gift to the FHN Foundation in the past year. A few key points from the new donors included:

### New donors learned about the FHN Foundation from:

- Friends and family
- Insight magazine
- FHN Festival of Trees Gala
- FHN staff members
- The Community Garden
- Mailings
- The Healthy Heart Hustle
- Social Media

**100 percent** of the new donors who responded indicated that they **would donate again!**

### Previous Donors

We also contacted donors who had previously given to the FHN Foundation, but had stopped giving to better understand why they no longer gave to the FHN Foundation. While life circumstances can change, we needed to know if some donors stopped giving because of something the FHN Foundation did or failed to do.

A number of donors who stopped giving indicated that their giving had been in memory or in honor of someone. Therefore, their connection was to the person and not the Foundation. Others noted that they no longer lived in the area, thus they no longer support the FHN Foundation.

I will continue to periodically reach out to donors for feedback so that we can continue to learn and improve.

*Thank you* for making a difference for the people of our region by partnering with the FHN Foundation.



# FIVE GENERATIONS MAKE THEIR MARK AT FHN

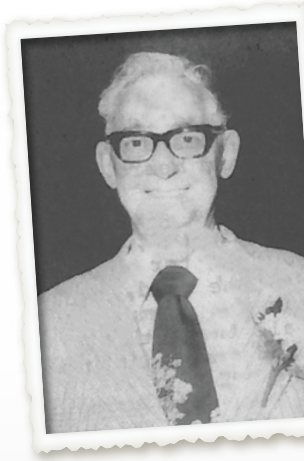


▲ Miranda Wilson and her son Cam are proud to be part of their family's long legacy at FHN.

When Miranda Wilson started her career at FHN, she didn't realize she was extending a family legacy.

It all began in 1946, just after the end of World War II. Her great grandfather, Leo Hayes, took a new job in maintenance at the old Deaconess hospital after working at an ammunitions plant. Now, nearly 80 years and five generations later, another member of their family has joined the ranks at what is now FHN.

The realization came about at a family gathering. Miranda, now an executive assistant, and her son, Cam, were talking about his volunteer work at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport, which includes wheeling patients out after they are released. Family members started to reminisce about their various positions and memories, and her grandmother announced that Cam was indeed the fifth generation to make their mark at FHN.



## EACH PERSON'S ROLE WAS IDENTIFIED AND DISCUSSED

### • 1st Generation:

Great Grandpa Leo Hayes started in maintenance in 1946.

### • 2nd Generation:

His daughter (Miranda's grandmother), Marcia Hayes Zimmerman, delivered trays to patient rooms and helped patients eat, circa 1949. She still remembers particular patients (and applied for the job without telling her parents ... uncommon in those days)!

### • 3rd Generation:

Miranda's mother, Deb Zimmerman, worked in housekeeping starting in 1974, and her aunt, Melissa Zimmerman Dickens, has been a phlebotomist since the 1990s.

### • 4th Generation:

Miranda came back to the area in 2015, and heard good things about FHN's commitment to team members and surrounding communities. She started as a Patient Services Representative (PSR) and transitioned to administrative assistant and compliance roles before becoming an executive assistant.

### • 5th Generation:

Cam started as a volunteer in 2023 at age 14.

Family members agreed that patient interaction was the common denominator to their job satisfaction, and that helping others was a wonderful family tradition. Miranda's grandmother, Marcia, shares, "You don't have to be a doctor or nurse to make a difference. It takes all kinds of skills."

“

**I FEEL LIKE WE HAVE A LEGACY OF SERVICE AT FHN AND I AM PROUD TO BE PART OF IT.**

”



▲ Photos from the family archives show Miranda's mom, Deb Zimmerman (second from left), sporting pigtails and posing for the camera with her co-workers at FHN, circa 1974; and Miranda's great grandfather, Leo Hayes, wearing a big smile at his retirement party in 1977.

Miranda agrees. "One of us has been roaming the halls of FHN for almost 80 years. It is very symbiotic, and it feels good to be a part of the past, as well as a part of the future."

The Hayes, Zimmerman, Dickens, and Wilson families are pleased to be part of the FHN story. If you would like to know more about how you might write your own chapter as a team member or volunteer, go to [fhn.org/careers](http://fhn.org/careers) for information. Opportunities are available in many different disciplines, and training is available for certain roles.



**Melissa Dickens,**  
FHN Lab  
*Miranda's aunt*

# The Power of Local

## Business Standouts Join FHN Board of Directors

FHN is proud to announce some changes on the FHN Board of Directors. Our board, comprised of people who live and work here in northwest Illinois, takes pride in making choices based on what's best not just for FHN but for the communities we serve.

We're pleased to welcome **Kim Beggin** to the board. She is a project manager with The Lucas Group Financial Advisors + CPAs in Freeport, and she also serves on the FHN Foundation Board of Directors.

We are also excited to welcome FHN Nurse Practitioner **J. Steve Harweger** to the board. He cares for patients in Cardiology and is the first NP to serve on the Board of Directors.

**Stephen Kneubuehl** has rejoined the board and will serve as treasurer. He is the retired CEO of Berner Foods in Dakota.

### Our current board members and officers are:

**Mark Gridley**, *FHN President/CEO*

**Heather McPherson**, *Board Chair, McPherson Law Offices*

**Rich Chang**, *Board Vice Chair, Retired Executive*

**Bruce Baldwin**, *Board Secretary, Retired Executive*

**Stephen Kneubuehl**, *Board Treasurer, Retired CEO Berner Foods*

**Neal Richardson**, *Board Past Chair, Retired Executive*

**Amy Baker**, *Citizens State Bank President and CEO*

**Kimberly Beggin**, *Lucas Group*

**J. Steve Harweger**, *AGACNP-BC, FHN Provider*

**Timothy Jessen, MD**, *Chair of Physician Council*

**Beth Kalnins, MD**, *Medical Staff President*

**Glenda Koeller, RN**, *Retired nurse and FHN executive*

**Clarence Parks, MD**, *Chief Medical Officer*

**Gary Quinn**, *Retired Executive*

**Dan Schmitt**, *Retired Freeport Community Foundation Executive*

**Shokry Tawfik, MD**, *Retired FHN Provider*

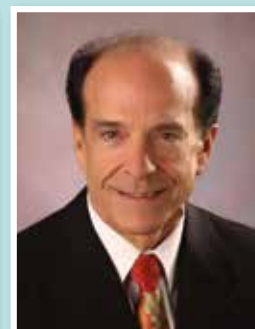
**Mark Wright**, *Retired Executive*



**Kim Beggin**



**J. Steve Harweger**



**Stephen Kneubuehl**

# FHN's Wellness Calendar

We are proud to offer a wide variety of programs, classes, screenings, and support groups for people in our communities. Here is just some of what you will find on the FHN Wellness calendar. Visit [www.fhn.org/calendar](http://www.fhn.org/calendar) to find blood pressure screenings, training events, or first aid classes.

## Support Groups

GROUP	TIME	DATE	DETAILS
<b>Congestive Heart Failure Support Group</b>	1 – 2 p.m.	Feb. 20 • March 19 • April 16	<i>FHN Memorial Hospital lower level Private Dining Room</i> This support group is for anyone in the general public who has CHF. No advance registration is required. Meetings are facilitated by FHN Cardiopulmonary Educators, Carly and Krista. For more information, call 815-599-6388.
<b>The First Steps Grief Support Group</b>	10 – 11:30 a.m.	Feb. 20 • March 19 • April 16	<i>FHN Memorial Hospital cafeteria meeting rooms, lower level</i> Support Group for those with a recent loss. No charge; registration not required. For more information, call FHN Pastoral Care at 815-599-6160.
<b>Caregiver Support Group</b>	2 – 3:30 p.m.	Feb 20 • March 6 • March 20 April 3 • April 10 • April 17 April 24	Free virtual group for those who provide care to a family member, friend, or member of the community. Open-forum discussion and a chance to ask questions and share resources. Contact Sean Huguenin at 815-599-6160 for more information.
<b>Living Through Grief</b>	6 p.m.	Feb. 26 • March 11 March 25 • April 8 • April 22	<i>FHN Memorial Hospital Deaconess Room, 1045 W. Stephenson Street, Freeport</i> This group helps participants learn more about the grief process, share stories of loss, and regain hope for healing. For more information, contact FHN Hospice 815-599-7240.
<b>Adult Diabetes Support Group</b>	5 – 6 p.m.	March 6 • April 3	Participation is free for anyone in the general public who has diabetes, and no referral or registration is required. Meetings are facilitated by FHN Diabetes Educators. For more information, call 815-599-6253.
<b>Breastfeeding Support Group</b>	2 p.m.	Feb. 22 • March 14 March 28 • April 11 • April 25	<i>Freeport Public Library, 100 E. Douglas Street, Freeport</i> Bring your baby and share knowledge, build a support system, and gain up-to-date breastfeeding information. There will be opportunities to speak with area experts about questions you have.

## Community Events

PROGRAM	TIME	DATE	DETAILS
<b>Walk With a Doc</b>	8 a.m.	April 13 • April 27	<i>Krape Park concession stand, 1799 S. Park Boulevard, Freeport</i> Free walk and chat led by FHN providers and health professionals. Meet the group by the concession stand at Krape Park in Freeport. Visit <a href="http://www.fhn.org">www.fhn.org</a> for more information and a schedule.
<b>Striking Success for Children</b>	5 p.m.	April 25	<i>4 Seasons Bowling Center, 1100 W. Galena Avenue, Freeport</i> Teams of 6 bowlers are encouraged to bring out their inner child and dress up for the evening; individuals may raise or donate the \$50 entry fee. Learn more and register at <a href="http://www.fhn.org">www.fhn.org</a> . All proceeds raised will go to updates at FHN Memorial Hospital.
<b>National Prescription Drug Take Back Day</b>	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	April 27	<i>Freeport Police Department, 320 W. Exchange Street, Freeport</i> The FHN Family Counseling Center and Freeport Police Department are working with the State of Illinois and local and national law enforcement to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs.

## Vein Screenings

Vein Screenings are free and by appointment only. Non-cosmetic treatment options are covered by most insurance carriers, including Medicaid. For an appointment, call 815-599-VEIN (8346).

LOCATION	TIME	DATE
<b>FHN Memorial Hospital</b> <i>1045 W. Stephenson Street, Freeport</i>	10 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Feb. 27 • Feb. 29

# Insight



We're here, for you.

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