



SUCCESSFUL BACK SURGERY BRINGS FORMER MASTERS CHAMP OUT OF RETIREMENT AND BACK TO AUGUSTA NATIONAL



“Her approach gave me absolute belief that surgery was an option. After 40 years, I felt comfortable to go ahead with it.”

— Ian Woosnam

Legendary PGA golfer, Ian Woosnam, was serious when he retired twice — once in 2016 and then again, in 2019 — from the game he loves. The chronic back pain he suffered throughout his career had progressed to the point he could no longer swing the club in the manner that carried him to 52 tournament victories worldwide.

However, a recommendation from a friend led him to life-altering back surgery last year performed by Deborah Blades, M.D., at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. Now, Woosnam finds himself pain free and ready to return in April to golf's biggest stage in August, Georgia.

Throughout his storied 40 year career, including his triumph at the 1991 Masters and becoming the first PGA player to earn \$1 million in a single year, Woosnam was plagued by chronic back pain. Ankylosing Spondylitis, a rare form of arthritis that typically affects the spine and large joints of men, was a contributing factor. Over the years, spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the spaces within the spine, created pressure on the nerves which exacerbated his pain.

“I played with back pain throughout my career,” Woosnam said. “Most of the time, I

was able to manage it by staying active, keeping fit and taking anti-inflammatory medications, but by that last tournament in 2019, I was just in too much pain to keep playing.”

Woosnam sought the advice of several doctors, but never felt confident that there was a solution that would enable him to stay in the game. It wasn't until, his friend, Shane Johnson, recommended he see Dr. Blades, a neurosurgeon specializing in conditions of the spine, that Woosnam considered surgery as an option. Shane underwent a successful back surgery at the hands of Dr. Blades three years earlier.

Immediately upon meeting Dr. Blades, Woosnam knew this office visit was different. Upon examination, Dr. Blades could appreciate the pressure on the spine was causing pain simply to stand and Woosnam was beginning to lose strength in his left leg - something none of the previous doctors had mentioned. Dr. Blades recommended spinal decompression surgery to relieve the pressure on Woosnam's lumbar nerves.

“Dr. Blades took so much time and patience to explain my condition and possible treatments in detail. No one had ever really



CHARITY CENTER
of Charity Health System

ST. VINCENT MEDICAL CENTER
A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

The arrival of spring and the celebration of the Lenten season always bring a sense of rejuvenation. This spring, as we distribute COVID-19 vaccinations to the community, the feeling of renewal is especially profound.

The stress, fatigue and fear during the pandemic have been intense for everyone, particularly for our frontline workers. Yet, throughout the hardship, St. Vincent Charity caregivers have stayed true to our mission to act as an extension of the healing ministry of Jesus. Their dedication to our patients and their resilience during the pandemic has led to many "Miracle Moments."

We celebrate Miracle Moments every day in our community COVID-19 vaccine clinic. The clinic has an undeniable atmosphere of joy, relief and excitement that is truly special. Opening our doors to the public has been such a blessing as it's allowed us to welcome many first-time visitors to the hospital.

It's been an unexpected and invaluable opportunity for the warmth and cheerfulness of our caregivers to shine. The outpouring of gratitude and support we have received as a result of vaccine distribution has been both overwhelming and validating.

The spirit of the Sisters of Charity of St Augustine and their continued daily involvement at the hospital create a special environment of caring and compassion. Our caregivers work alongside the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine in living their values every day with every patient. It's been a delight to share this experience with a broader portion of the Northeast Ohio public.

In this issue of St. Vincent Charity Today, you'll read about many more of the Miracle Moments that have been served as beacons of hope and a break in the clouds. These are stories of compassion, encouragement, generosity, faith and most of all – charity (love) for one another.

Wishing you and your loved ones a grace-filled spring.

Many Blessings,

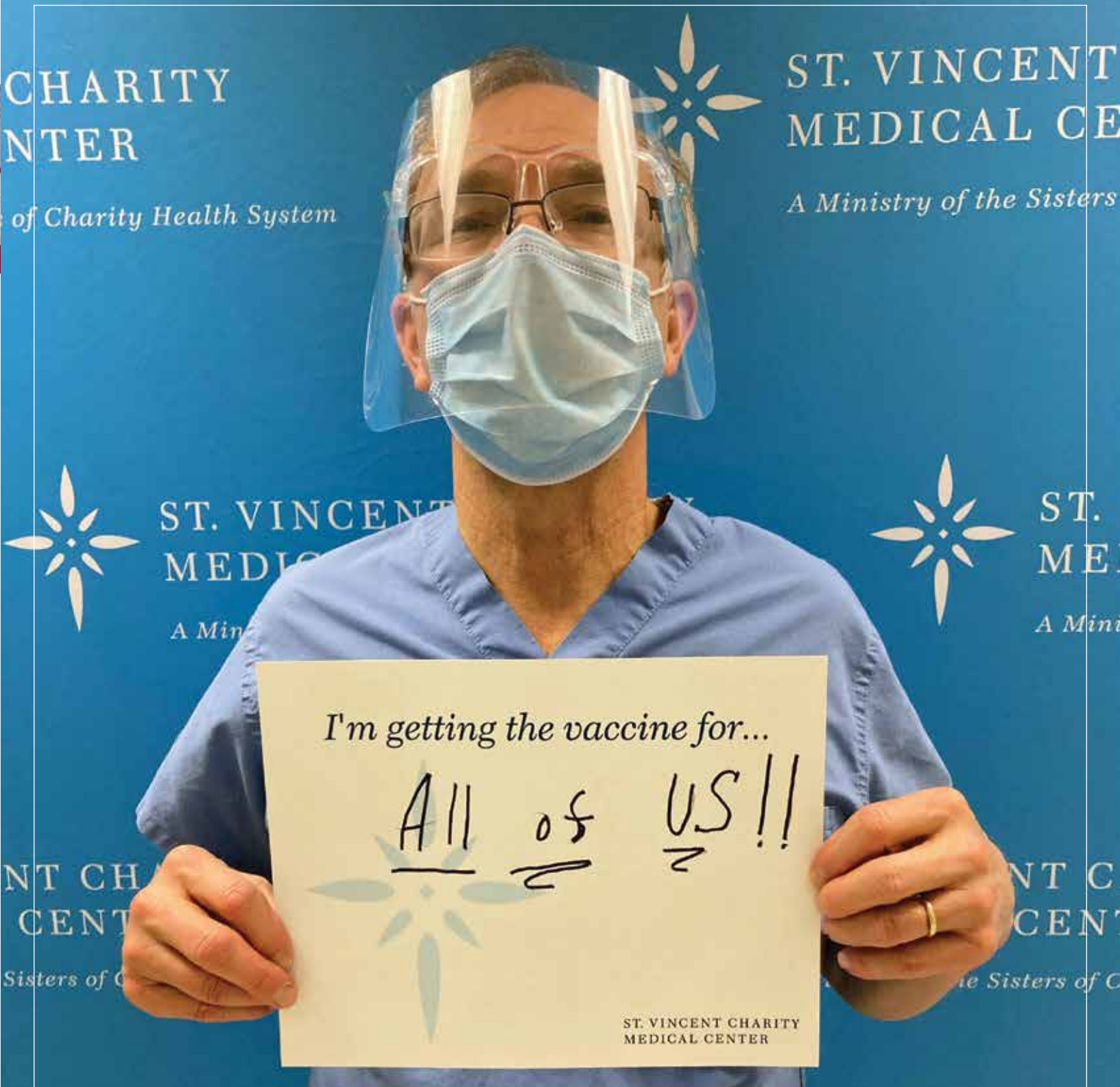
Janice G. Murphy

Janice G. Murphy, MSN, RN, FACHE
President & CEO



March 18, 2021
Ms. Cathy Kopsky
Project Coordinator, Mission Outreach
&
Mr. Ryan Sarovey, RN
EMS/ED Prep Coordinator
St. Vincent Charity Medical Center
2351 East 22nd Street
Cleveland, OH 44115

Dear Cathy & Ryan,
I want to send you a Great Big Thank You and Appreciation for thinking about the staff at William Patrick Day Early Learning Center. The State of Ohio finally recognized Early Childhood Teachers as being essential workers during this pandemic and because of your concern and support approximately 20 of my teachers received their vaccine at your medical center. We are so humbled and grateful for you thinking about us and showing empathy for our staff members who provided



THIS VACCINE BRINGS *confidence.*

Dr. Richard Chmielewski, Division Chief, Infectious Diseases

SUCCESSFUL BACK SURGERY

Continued from front cover

explained it to me like that before. She is almost like your mother because of the care she takes to help you understand," Woosnam said. "Her approach gave me absolute relief that surgery was an option. After 40 years, I felt comfortable to go ahead with it."

Dr. Blades' approach to patient care is motivated by understanding the fears that cause patients experiencing back pain to delay surgical interventions.

"People often wait to have surgery because they are concerned it will interfere with their ability to keep working. In some cases, they may be frightened by stories from family or friends whose surgery did not go as they had hoped," Dr. Blades said. "As a surgeon, it is important to take the time with my patients, so they know I see them as individuals and am fully invested in helping them get back to their daily lives."

Having full confidence in Dr. Blades, Woosnam traveled from Barbados, his home for half the year, to Cleveland for surgery last February. He was surprised upon arriving at St. Vincent Charity to find it was not just Dr. Blades who held a strong commitment to patient-centered care but by everyone he encountered during his stay.

"Everybody, everywhere I went made me feel very welcome and that how I was feeling was their top priority. This kind of care was all so different from what I was used to," Woosnam said.



Shane Johnson, Ian Woosnam and friend.

Just weeks after surgery, Woosnam began to feel freedom of movement that he had not experienced in years. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he underwent physical therapy via Zoom and quickly began swinging a club and hitting golf balls.

"The last few months, I have been feeling really strong again. I guess I should have had this surgery years ago," Woosnam said. "Feeling like I do, I knew when I got the invitation to play in April that retirement would have to, once again, wait. I can't wait to play." ♦

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Deborah Blades, call 216.369.2830



SURGEON BUILDS INTERNATIONAL FOLLOWING

Living in Barbados his entire life, Shane Johnson took advantage of the lush golf courses on the island and became an avid golfer, even playing in competitive, amateur tournaments. As with many players in the sport, Shane began over the years to experience back pain, keeping him off the course for nearly two years.

Golf, as well as other competitive sports, can stress many aspects of the musculoskeletal system, and has a tendency to take its toll on the players' lower backs. The very nature of the rotational force and repetitive motion of the golf swing can place high loads on the lumbar discs placing them at risk for accelerated degeneration.

By early 2014, Shane found himself unable to play golf, struggling even to sleep, walk and stand upright without pain. He began researching treatment options for his condition, seeing a local surgeon in Barbados then seeking consultation with another in Florida. Yet, he still felt apprehensive about surgery given he was only 43 years at the time and had never had surgery in the past.

It wasn't until he received an invitation from a friend and legendary golfer, Ian Woosnam, to serve as his caddie in the 2015 Masters that Shane decided it was time to get serious about finding a solution. Every golfer dreams about walking the fairways and greens of Augusta National during the Masters, but the opportunity to do it carrying the bag of the 1991 Masters champion and one of the game's greatest players made it even sweeter. This honor to walk golf's grandest stage side by side with his friend was too much to give up.

Shane's cousin-in-law Paul Alleyne, who he works with on the island at Alleyne Real Estate, recommended he consult with Deborah Blades, MD, a neurosurgeon at St.

Vincent Charity Medical Center. Dr. Blades has developed a loyal, international following, particularly in Barbados, and has become known for her surgical expertise and personalized approach to patient care.

"Deborah Blades is more than a world class surgeon, she is one of the nicest and most caring people I have ever met. One of a kind!"

— Shane Johnson

Dr. Blades travels to Barbados frequently to visit her extended family; however, over the years, her visits have consistently included consulting with patients seeking help for their spinal conditions. She has earned a reputation for not only her knowledge and expertise but the time she takes listening to her patients and then working in partnership to develop an effective treatment plan. Patients regularly make the nearly 10-hour plane trip to Cleveland for surgery under her expert hand.

It was that strong reputation and the recommendation from his cousin, combined with the desire to return to life without pain and, then, of course, golf that fueled Shane's first call to Dr. Blades to discuss his condition; a call which led to making his final decision.

"Shane and I were on the phone nearly two hours, talking about his condition and answering all of his questions about the proposed surgery and subsequent therapy. He wanted to be as sure as possible that

surgery would allow for the physical demands of caddying and enable him to get back to his daily life," Dr. Blades said. "We spoke several more times by phone."

Just weeks later, Shane flew to Cleveland for surgery, performed by Dr. Blades, to relieve the pressure on a lumbar nerve caused by a herniated disc.

"The long flight to Cleveland made the pain much worse than it had been," Shane said. "When I woke up after surgery, the whole team of caregivers were there. Dr. Blades was the first person I saw. After a while, Dr. Blades asked me to get up and walk with her."

To his amazement, he said he was able to stand completely upright, pain free for the first time in a while. After first thinking it was the result of pain medications, Dr. Blades reassured him that the pain relief and posture was due to the removal of the disc fragment that was compressing the nerve root.

Six months later, Johnson was able to enjoy an amazing week, successfully walking the course of Augusta National for the 2015 Masters Tournament as caddie for his friend, Ian Woosnam (see accompanying story). With his experience, Shane has joined the international group of advocates for Dr. Blades, even last year encouraging Woosnam to seek her expertise for his career-long back and leg pain.

"I would recommend her to my family and closest friends because with Dr. Blades, you know you are getting the best of both worlds — a skilled surgeon and someone who truly care about getting you back to the life you love," Shane said. "Deborah Blades is more than a world class surgeon, she is one of the nicest and most caring people I have ever met. One of a kind!" ♦



HOLY TRINITY CHAPEL: CELEBRATING 90 YEARS AS HOME TO PEACE, COMFORT AND HOPE



St. Vincent Charity Medical Center has undergone an immense amount of structural and organizational change during its 155 year history. Yet,

throughout each period of transformation, Holy Trinity Chapel has remained a sanctuary for caregivers, patients and visitors of St. Vincent Charity. Celebrating the 90th anniversary of its dedication, the chapel continues to support, energize and unite those who walk through its doors.

“Founded on the principles of love of God and love of neighbor, the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine and the hospital, have gone through the years in an unending, unselfish labor of love and self-sacrifice,” said Bishop Joseph Schrembs of the Diocese of

Cleveland during his remarks at the dedication ceremony for Holy Trinity Chapel on March 7, 1931.

Bishop Schrembs described the integral role Holy Trinity Chapel has at St. Vincent Charity:

“In the production of material objects there is a power house, so there also must be a power house in the production of spiritual works. This chapel is the power house for Charity Hospital. Here the sisters and their helpers will come early in the morning to offer their day’s work to God. During the day and until they retire at night, they will come here occasionally to seek the support and the strength that God alone can give.”

The chapel itself was part of the expansion of St. Vincent Charity in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The expansion came about as

part of a massive citywide, nine-day fundraising campaign in the spring of 1926, which raised over \$1.5 million dollars.

“The chapel is the center of the lives of the sisters. It’s where we start and often end our days,” said Sister Miriam Erb, CSA, Vice President of Mission and Ministry at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. “The chapel is open to all people of all faiths and it is beautiful when we can join together in prayer with, and for, each other and for our patients.”

Featuring Spanish design, the chapel originally had three altars and a capacity for 300 worshippers. Over the years, renovations were made to accommodate changes brought about by time and liturgy, however, the spirit and hospitality envisioned by those who made Holy Trinity Chapel a reality is still evident within its walls. The space remains a

welcoming home for those who seek peace, comfort or hope.

“I am often inspired by the beauty, simplicity and peacefulness the chapel provides. However, the chapel is more than just the physical construction of brick, glass, marble and wood. Rather it is the faith, the prayer and one’s relationship with God and His presence among each of us which makes this

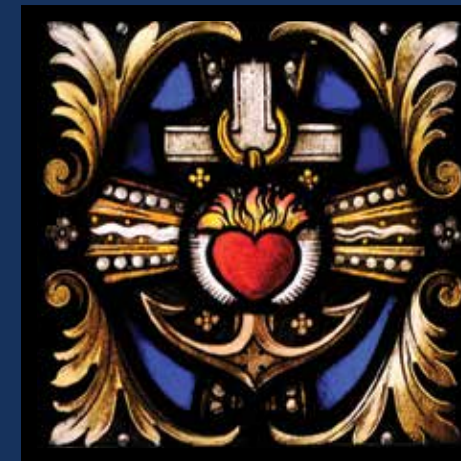
chapel truly unique,” explains Chris Mis, Pastoral Care volunteer.

“It is quite a cause for reflection to think of the tens of thousands of people who came to this chapel over the past 90 years, each with their own special prayers of want, need, praise, consolation, healing or thanksgiving,” Mis said. “Reflecting on the events of the past 90 years, those which affected the world

and the world of each individual, the countless amount of people who offered a prayer in this chapel is overwhelming, known only to God.”

Holy Trinity Chapel is located on the first floor of the West Building at St. Vincent Charity’s downtown hospital. ♦

THE CHAPEL WINDOWS



One of the most striking features of Holy Trinity Chapel are the numerous stained glass windows depicting important events in the lives of Jesus, Mary, St. Joseph and St. Vincent. As with most spaces of worship, windows are a fundamental part of the symbiotic relationship between God and people. Windows catch and radiate the beauty and goodness of God in the hearts and minds of people.

Holy Trinity Chapel is adorned with 26 stained-glass windows made in Germany around the same time as the chapel’s construction. Typical of the Munich style at the time, the windows feature dramatic figures, flowing drapery and highly decorative architectural borders. The glass is heavily painted and there is a masterful use of silver stain, which accounts for the extensive range of yellows, ambers and oranges throughout the windows. Many American churches built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries also featured this style of window.

Over the past 90 years each of these windows in their own way, uniquely inspired and enlightened each visitor who entered the chapel.



Footnote: Special thank you to Chris Mis for contributing the research and content for this article.

PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

Walk a Special Journey



The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, who came to Cleveland from France in 1851 and became the city's first public health nurses, have a deeply seeded commitment to authentic listening, especially with and alongside marginalized and underserved individuals, families and communities. This spirit is carried forward in many ways, including through the St. Vincent Charity Medical Center (SVMC) Certified Peer Support Team created in October 2020.

Peer support specialists are people who have been successful in the recovery process who help others experiencing

similar situations, and have been certified by Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS).

"Peer workers are important members of treatment teams," said Michael J. Biscaro, Psy.D., ABPP (Forensic), SVMC's chief of behavioral health. "Through shared understanding, respect and mutual empowerment, peer support specialists help people become and stay engaged in the recovery process and reduce the likelihood of relapse."

The expansion of peer support throughout the service continuum helps to more

effectively bridge much-needed services and create more seamless transitions in levels of care. SVMC's inpatient and outpatient peer specialists, in partnership with THRIVE (who provide peer recovery services in the emergency departments), engage individuals in a variety of personal outreach approaches and link individuals to care.

"We walk people through the storms in life. We help our clients put their lives back together and reach the other side," said Jerome Reeves, who is a certified peer support specialist for Rosary Hall. "Clients

PEER SUPPORT WORKERS ENGAGE IN A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES.

These include:

- Advocating for people in recovery
- Sharing resources and building skills
- Building community and relationships
- Leading recovery groups
- Mentoring and setting goals

Peer support roles may also extend to the following:

- Providing services and/or training
- Supervising other peer workers
- Developing resources
- Administering programs or agencies
- Educating the public and policymakers

Emerging research shows peer support is effective for supporting recovery from substance use disorders.

Benefits may include:

- Improved relationship with treatment providers
- Increased treatment retention
- Increased satisfaction with the overall treatment experience
- Improved access to social supports
- Greater housing stability
- Decreased criminal justice involvement
- Decreased emergency service utilization
- Reduced relapse rates
- Reduced re-hospitalization rates
- Reduced substance use

open up to us because we are right where they are at. I am in AA, too. Clients are comfortable talking with me anything they are going through."

Peer support services can effectively extend the reach of treatment beyond the clinical setting into the everyday environment of those seeking a successful, sustained recovery process. The role of a peer support specialist complements, but does not duplicate or replace the roles of therapists, case managers and other members of a treatment team.

Continued on page 16

"Peer recovery support provides wraparound services and continuity during the vulnerable, higher risk, post-treatment periods." – Michael J. Biscaro, Psy.D., ABPP (Forensic)

VOLUNTEER'S FAMILY CONTINUES LEGACY OF GIVING

We extend deep thanks to Anne and Bruce Campbell of Sedalia, CO, for their generous gift of \$20,000 to Rosary Hall in memory of Anne's parents, Charles and Mary Kitchen. Charles, who passed away in November at the age of 94, was a highly accomplished attorney and volunteer who shared his recovery journey to support others at Rosary Hall.

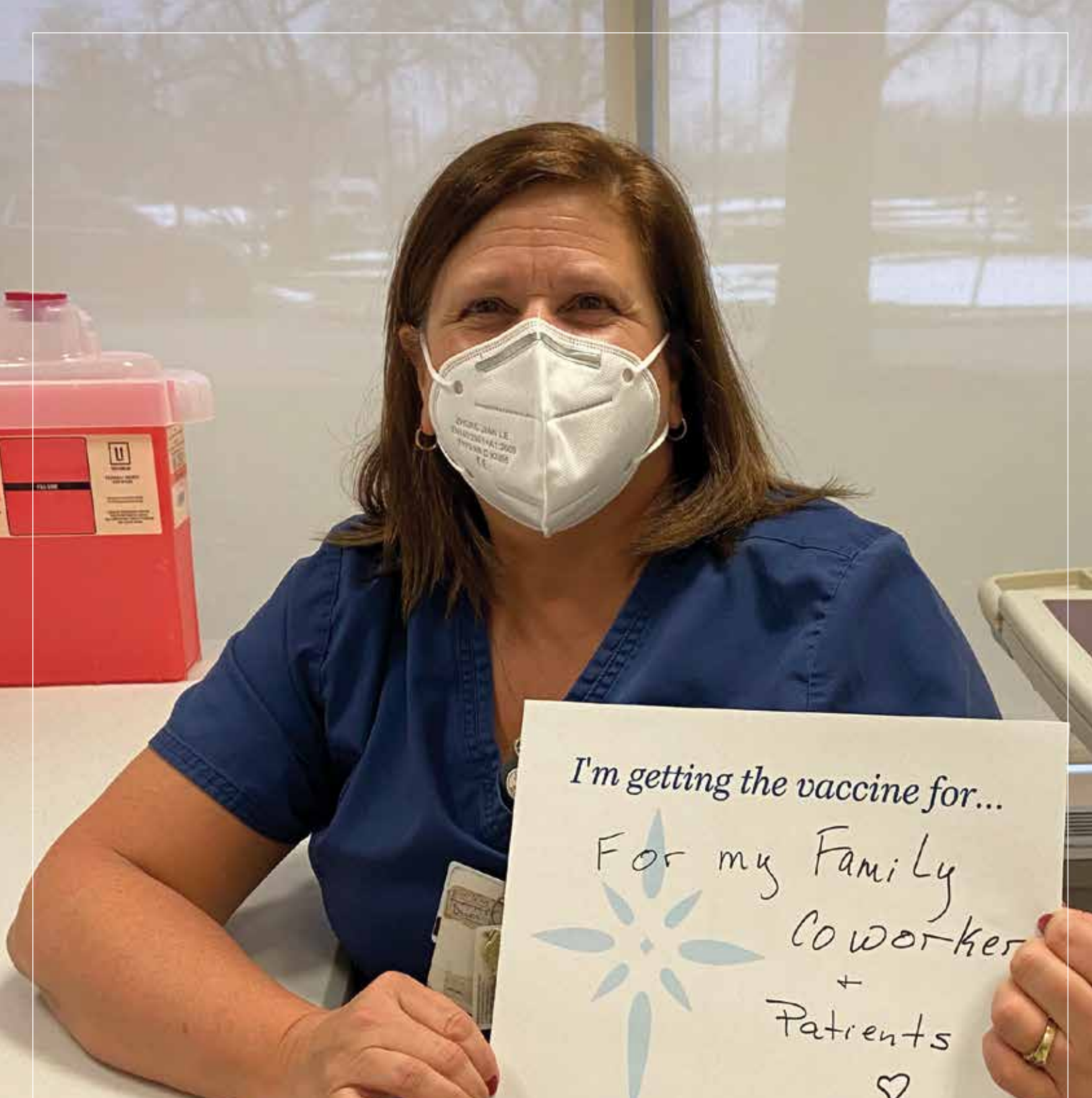
Read about his remarkable life at tinyurl.com/CharlesKitchen.

ABOUT ROSARY HALL

St. Vincent Charity Medical Center's addiction treatment center of excellence, Rosary Hall, has been at the forefront of treating drug dependency for nearly 70 years – treating more than 100,000 individuals with the compassionate care that is the hallmark of the hospital. Rosary Hall was founded in 1952 by Sister Ignatia Gavin, CSA, who worked in collaboration with Dr. Robert Smith after he co-founded Alcoholics Anonymous, the 12-step principles of which still serve as the foundation of care at Rosary Hall. Rosary Hall's innovative efforts continue to be fueled by compassion and decades of proven experience in treating thousands of men and women for substance use disorder.

Treatment options and solutions are individually tailored to support each patient as they work toward a life not defined by substance abuse. Treatments include medical evaluations and ongoing assessments, medical stabilization and acute care detoxification (27-bed inpatient detoxification and assessment unit), outpatient treatment (OP), intensive outpatient program (IOP), partial hospitalization program (PHP), individual counseling, aftercare, medication-assisted treatment (MAT), case-managed transition into community and support networks, family education programs, adjunct therapies, transportation and civil legal assistance.

TO REACH ROSARY HALL, CALL 216.363.2580



THIS VACCINE BRINGS *community.*

Lynn McGoldrick, RN, Emergency Department

NOW OPEN

Rocky River Urgent Care Clinic



In January, St. Vincent Charity opened the doors to a new dual-service clinic in Rocky River. The dual-service clinic is both an urgent care open to the public and an occupational medicine office for St. Vincent Charity's business clientele.

"This is a convenient, off-site location where people don't have to wait for appointments. Our goal is to never have a patient wait for more than an hour," said Ashley Bair, director of occupational medicine at St. Vincent Charity. "Walk in, get treated and get on with your day."

The Urgent Care treats adults and kids age 5 and older.

- Sprains and strains
- Minor cuts
- Simple breaks
- Minor illnesses
- Stomach ache
- Mild asthma attack
- Fevers and colds

Choose in-person or telehealth visits.

The clinic offer telehealth appointments so you can video chat with an Urgent Care specialist right from your home or office. For those that prefer in-person visits, clinic staff see you promptly and get you feeling better fast.

Urgent care backed by a trusted hospital system.

The Rocky River Urgent Care is part of St. Vincent Charity's seamless circle of care, so you know you're being seen by a highly trained team. If your problem turns out to be more serious, you'll have fast, easy access to our downtown medical center.

Get quick, convenient care for minor emergencies, now in Rocky River. Walk-ins welcome.

St. Vincent Charity Medical Center Rocky River Medical Campus

216.937.3910

Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

20220 Center Ridge Road, Suite 120

Rocky River, OH 44116



ST. VINCENT CHARITY
MEDICAL CENTER

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

SURGICAL TEAM USES SKILL, PRAYER AND ENCOURAGEMENT to help patient get back on his feet



When Willoughby resident Michael Hirschberger was found one morning last May on his couch unable to stand and too weak to walk, he knew one thing: he needed to get to St. Vincent Charity neurosurgeon James Anderson, MD, as soon as possible.

Three years prior, Dr. Anderson had treated Michael after failed scoliosis surgery at another hospital. To perform the corrective surgery, Dr. Anderson turned to his colleague, Louis Keppler, MD, who is widely regarded for his surgical expertise in the correction of spinal deformities caused by scoliosis.

“We have a unique environment at St. Vincent Charity because, as surgeons, we work as a team to bring the best experts together to provide our patients the highest quality treatments,” said Dr. Anderson. “Dr. Keppler is considered perhaps THE expert in scoliosis surgery in our region, so bringing him in meant that Michael had the best opportunity for positive outcomes.”

Together, Dr. Anderson and Dr. Keppler successfully relieved Michael of the numbness and pain in his legs, which Michael describes as feeling like “my legs were on fire all the time.” He felt good for about a year and then started to experience proximal junctional kyphosis, a condition that can occur following spinal fusion in which the spine segment directly above or below the fusion degenerates and causes pain and numbness from spinal cord compression.

Michael readily admits he did not follow Dr. Anderson’s strong counsel to be cautious in returning too quickly, if at all, to his normal activities, twisting and bending the way he did before. He felt so good and pain free that he just wanted to get on with his life.

“One of the limitations of spine surgery is that it is a treatment, not a cure,” Dr. Anderson said. “With a fusion, the body is asking the remaining levels of the spine to do more than they are designed to do. If you push it too far, as Michael did, the adjacent discs can wear out.”

Once again, Dr. Anderson’s surgical intervention succeeded in eliminating Michael’s pain. Unfortunately, that is not the end of Michael’s story.

Rehabbing after surgery, Michael’s physical therapist, not affiliated with St. Vincent Charity, pushed exercises too far, disrupting the fusions that had not had adequate time to heal. The next day, Michael’s legs felt weak. After two weeks, his left leg was dragging as he tried to walk. And just a month later, Michael’s girlfriend, Nikki, found him on the couch, after not turning in for bed, unable to walk on his own.

Nikki acted quickly and got Michael to where they both knew he needed to be—St. Vincent Charity—to get help as quickly as possible. Assessing the seriousness of his condition, Dr. Anderson scheduled Michael for surgery the following morning.

The surgery was successful, but because of the seriousness of Michael’s condition and the fact this was his fourth spine surgery, Dr. Anderson strongly recommended Michael go to a rehab facility to regain function once he was released from the hospital.

Michael was terrified. Alone at the hospital due to COVID-19 restrictions, Michael was panicked at the thought of being away from the support of Nikki, her son and his friends. His life experiences, including losing his mother and siblings at an early age and becoming alcohol and drug

dependent in his early teens through his mid-forty’s, made him anxious about being at a facility alone. While he was able to take pain medications after his previous surgeries and successfully stop when appropriate, he feared he might fall back into his addiction without the support of his loved ones.

Seeing his panic, Dr. Anderson made a deal with him. If, after two days at the hospital, Michael was able to walk the length of the hallway, then he would discharge him home.

“At this point, I can’t even move my foot,” Michael said. “I didn’t think there was any way I was going to be able to walk that hallway. Honestly, I was beside myself.”

Then the power of prayer and personal determination stepped in to support him. In his hospital room, nurses sat with him to pray and provided encouragement that he could do this. His Alcoholics Anonymous Facebook prayer chain was over 1,000 strong. “There’s no way I am here right now without prayer,” Michael said.

Things started to improve step by step. First, moving his foot and then his leg. Scooting over to the side of the bed and, eventually, standing. After the two days, Michael, to the amazement of Dr. Anderson, was able to walk that hallway and then leave the hospital to return home.

“Michael is a very determined individual and that determination enabled him to return to



Michael Hirschberger (right) credits Dr. James Anderson (left) and the team at St. Vincent Charity for providing him the surgical treatment, outstanding patient care and emotional and spiritual support that helped him reclaim his life after years of debilitating back pain. Hirschberger recently presented the above t-shirt reading, “I’ve Got Your Back”, to demonstrate his gratitude for Dr. Anderson’s commitment to supporting him on his journey to regain his active, healthy life.

function much faster than normal,” Dr. Anderson said. “By the time he went home, he was better than he was for weeks before surgery.”

Six months after surgery, Michael is walking unassisted, driving and even making trips to the gym to walk on a treadmill. But, this time, he is heeding Dr. Anderson’s call to move cautiously with his activities. ♦

“If it wasn’t for Dr. Anderson and the nurses at St. Vincent, there is no doubt in my mind I would either not be here, or be in a wheelchair. They looked at my whole being—mentally, physically—and gave me the support through prayer and encouragement I need. It took every one of them to make me who I am today.” – Michael Hirschberger

The Spine & Orthopedic Institute at St. Vincent Charity has helped thousands of people renew their lives and move beyond debilitating back, neck and joint conditions. To schedule an appointment with Dr. James Anderson call 216.369.2830.



INTEGRATED CARE CLINIC Provides Outpatient Mental Health, Trauma and Wellness Services in Person-Centered Approach

St. Vincent Charity Medical Center (SVCMC) has launched an Integrated Care Clinic offering individualized treatment for patients seeking behavioral health care, including outpatient mental health, trauma and wellness services. Featured in the February 8th issue of Crain's Cleveland Business, the new clinic opened in December with psychotherapy services and has gradually added more services and staff as volume increases week over week in meeting unmet needs of the community.

Across the United States, nearly 21% of adults experience mental illness. Less than half receive treatment, and mental illness and substance use disorders are involved in 1 out of every 8 adult emergency department visits.

“Typical, traditional care is very problem-focused. Someone shows up with symptoms, providers treat those symptoms and then on they go. At St. Vincent Charity, what we are doing with integrated care is bringing together both the world of medicine and the world of behavioral health — meaning

mental health and addictions. We are making that happen from the front door, all the way into our hospital and then on out into our outpatient clinics,” said Michael J. Biscaro, Psy.D., ABPP (Forensic), SVCMC’s chief of behavioral health.

The outpatient Integrated Care Clinic is emblematic of SVCMC’s deep effort to integrate mental health, substance abuse and wellness services throughout the hospital. Located across from its main campus, the new 6,000-square-foot clinic features a multidisciplinary team of psychologists, social workers, advanced practice nurses, peer support staff and soon psychiatrists to meet individuals’ needs.

For individuals who have complex mental health and/or substance use conditions, recovery and associated challenges go well beyond a brief hospitalization or 4 to 6-week traditional treatment approach.

Depending on the sources reviewed, recidivism rates can increase 15 to 40% within six months of an acute treatment episode for those individuals.

“We provide ongoing outpatient counseling services to help address the clinical needs of the population longitudinally, over time. By addressing individual mental health needs and the high incidence of co-occurring trauma, we have the ability to identify triggers that lead to relapse and recidivism more rapidly and increase the chances of success post-treatment,” said William E. Ajayi, Ph.D., the clinical psychologist who oversees the Integrated Care Clinic.

There, the multidisciplinary team provides mental health diagnostic assessment, individual therapy, group therapy, trauma therapy, wellness, care coordination, medication management and prescription opioid weaning. All services are tailored to meet clients’ individual needs.

Common concerns/diagnoses served include:

- Adult ADHD
- Anxiety Disorders
- Chronic Pain/Illness
- Couples/Marital Issues
- Depression
- Dual Diagnosis/Co-Occurring Disorders
- Grief and Loss
- Medical Conditions
- Mood Disorders
- PTSD and trauma
- Relationship Issues
- Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders
- Sexual Abuse
- Sleep Disorders
- Stress-related Disorders
- Substance Use Disorders

DR. BISCARO EXPLAINS:

“One of the places health care in general loses folks the most is in care transitions. For example, a person with schizophrenia who has been hearing voices is taken to a hospital, where they are given medications and stay for a few days before they are discharged back to the community mental health provider who was taking care of them, if any provider was taking care of them in the first place. We need to do better than that, and ensure there is not a revolving door where someone is hospitalized over and over again. Nobody wants to live like that.”

At St. Vincent Charity, let’s take that same person. They’ve just had a mental health crisis. They come into our Psychiatric Emergency Department, and we can treat them right away. We’re getting them to our inpatient unit and stabilizing them further. It used to end there, but now, we can engage them in outpatient services.

This is historic for us. At our Integrated Care Clinic, this same person can see our providers and make sure they have ongoing medications, individual therapy, case management/care coordination, and groups focused on teaching the skills they need to prevent future relapses. So they can realize those goals and roles they have in life. It’s really about creating an environment where people can stabilize, get well and then move on.”

Recognizing the strong link between mind and body, treatment also focuses on improving general well-being. The goal is to help clients strengthen skills and behaviors in order to optimize health outcomes, improve wellness, cope effectively with stressors and strengthen emotional resilience.

Previously, a patient might have had to visit several offices or entirely different agencies. Navigating this can be challenging for individuals with more serious and persistent mental illness, co-occurring conditions and complex medical issues.

Dr. Biscaro’s hiring in January 2020 was part of an investment in behavioral health leadership, as was the late 2020 additions of both Russell E. Spieth, Ph.D., director of outpatient services at Rosary Hall, and Dr. Ajayi.

Furthermore, SVCMC is expanding and enriching many of the services it is known for, including its Psychiatric Emergency Department and Rosary Hall. Last November, SVCMC centralized access to behavioral health inpatient services to offer better coordination of care. In addition to the lease for the new clinic, the hospital’s investment includes renovating its adult inpatient psychiatric units and space for the new centralized intake. The efforts have also been supported by foundations and funds from Cuyahoga County’s opiate settlement.

“We now have almost anything clients need here — and if we don’t, we have a close partner we work with to get it for them.

Continued on page 16

INTEGRATED CARE CLINIC

Continued from page 15

That's pretty huge," said Dr. Biscaro, who is leading the integration effort.

Over the last year, the needs of a community really revealed themselves, Dr. Ajayi said.

"COVID-19 has reminded us of what fear really looks and feels like, and highlighted structural, regional and political divisions that have existed," said Dr. Ajayi. "I'm grateful for some of it, because it forces us to think differently, but it certainly has revealed a lot of pain and frustration."

Though the integration efforts were in motion before COVID-19, the pandemic reinforced the hospital's deep commitment to behavioral health.

It's really about creating an environment where people can stabilize, get well and then move on.

"A lot of places offer behavioral health care because it's a need and they have to do it," Dr. Biscaro said. "St. Vincent Charity Medical Center offers behavioral health because we believe in it and it is mission critical." ✦

INTEGRATED CARE CLINIC

St. Vincent Medical Office Building

2322 East 22nd St., Suite 200, Cleveland, OH 44115

To make an appointment,
call 216.363.2580, option 2.

Our team includes:



William Ajayi, PhD
Clinical Psychology



Marissa Norden, MSSA, LISW-S
Clinical Social Worker



Ann E. Farris, CNP
Certified Nurse Practitioner

PEER SUPPORT

Continued from page 9

"For example, the emergency room client seen after an overdose will have contact with a peer recovery supporter who can arrange a link to an appropriate level of care, and ensure that discharge plans are followed," said Dr. Biscaro. "Peer recovery support provides wraparound services and continuity during the vulnerable, higher risk, post-treatment periods. In other words, our peer recovery supporters improve longer-term outcomes and save lives."

In Ohio, peer recovery supporters become certified by taking an in-person training or by having three years of work or volunteer experience as a peer navigator, peer specialist, peer supporter or peer recovery coach. Regardless of the pathway to certification, individuals must complete 16 hours of online e-based academy courses, which include topics such as ethics, human trafficking and trauma-informed care; pass the OhioMHAS Peer Recovery Services exam; sign and agree to the code of ethics; and pass a background check.

"We are right there with all of our clients, especially those who have made the decision they want to achieve and maintain sobriety," said Reeves. "Peer support helps people save their lives from addiction and mental health conditions." ✦



CLEVELAND CLERGY ALLIANCE + ST. VINCENT CHARITY TEAM-UP TO VACCINATE SENIORS

Technology, confusing distribution plans and limited supply have made it frustrating and difficult for many seniors to secure a COVID-19 vaccination. Those who are homebound, live alone, lack transportation or reliable social connections are at an even greater risk of not receiving the vaccine.

Understanding these barriers, Cleveland Clergy Alliance and St. Vincent Charity are working together to ensure Cuyahoga County seniors have access and transportation to COVID-19 vaccinations.

Cleveland Clergy Alliance works with more than 50 churches in the Cleveland area to connect with seniors and assist with transportation to doctor's appointments, grocery shopping and more. During their home visits and check-ins, Clergy Alliance community navigators saw a significant interest in the vaccine, but the process of scheduling appointments was overwhelming.

"The partnership with St. Vincent Charity Medical Center is a blessing! This wonderful collaboration of access and transportation has helped overcome vaccination hesitancy for many in the Black and Brown community," said Reverend Lorenzo Norris, Cleveland Clergy Alliance President and CEO.

Since January, Cleveland Clergy Alliance and St. Vincent Charity have coordinated COVID-19 vaccinations for more than 200 senior citizens. Each week, Clergy Alliance community navigators work with parishes to contact individuals eligible for a vaccine and then arrange an appointment time and transportation to and from St. Vincent Charity.

"Organizations like the Cleveland Clergy Alliance have been essential in our effort to get as many people vaccinated as possible and in ensuring community-wide access to this precious

resource," said Janice G. Murphy, MSN, FACHE, President and CEO, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. "In the spirit of our mission, it's essential that we extend access to our neighbors and that means more than just offering appointments. We are so grateful to work with Cleveland Clergy Alliance on eliminating obstacles."

About Cleveland Clergy Alliance

The Cleveland Clergy Alliance in partnership with the Cuyahoga County Division of Senior and Adult Services, works collaboratively to connect seniors to services. Community Navigators assist seniors by removing barriers to services including: medical, insurance, transportation, dental, mental health, financial literacy, housing, technology training, food deprivation, and any unidentified unmet needs.

The Cleveland Clergy Alliance works to increase access to available programs and services; break the cycle of social isolation; and aims to prepare pre-retirees to navigate the systems that will support them in aging safely in their communities with dignity and respect. Navigators also observe each individual for any signs of neglect, self-neglect, or abuse for referral to the Cuyahoga County Division of Senior and Adult Services (DSAS) and Senior Adult Protective Services (APS). Call (216)727-1020 or visit at www.theclevelandclergyalliance.org for details about our services. ✦

For information about COVID-19 vaccination at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, visit www.stvincentcharity.com. St. Vincent Charity follows the COVID-19 vaccination guidelines outlined by the Ohio Department of Health.



THIS VACCINE BRINGS *strength.*



Ted Wnek, RN, Emergency Department



MISSION KITCHEN

Food service department turns COVID-19 restrictions into community outreach opportunity

COVID-19 safety measures at St. Vincent Charity

Medical Center required the cafeteria to limit seating and only allow access to employees. While the safety protocols were necessary, the impact was felt beyond the walls of the medical center.

“Many of our neighbors frequently visit the hospital cafeteria because it’s a convenient, affordable option and one of the few places in the neighborhood that serves freshly cooked, home-style meals,” said Sr. Miriam Erb, CSA, Vice President of Mission and Ministry at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. “Restricting visitors to the hospital meant limiting access to warm meals and that was a very difficult decision to reckon with. It goes against how we see our role in the neighborhood, which is as a welcoming place.”

Recognizing the growing demand among hospital caregivers for online ordering and take-out, the team saw an opportunity to support hospital staff and help those in need in the neighborhood. In February 2021, Mission Kitchen was launched, an online menu for hospital caregivers served as grab-and-go meals. Proceeds from online

orders provide meals for families in the Central Neighborhood. In addition, caregivers can add a \$10 Mission Meal to their order, which feeds a family of four in the community. A purchase of a to-go meal is not required to donate a Mission Meal.

“The response has been bigger than we anticipated. Our initial plan was to provide weekly meals for ten families of four. After three weeks of online orders we realized we could increase the number of families we are serving,” said Andy Cooper, Executive Chef at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center and co-founder of Mission Kitchen. “The generosity of the St. Vincent family continues to blow me away.”

The Mission Kitchen team is partnering with Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, the Friendly Inn and Marion-Sterling Elementary School to distribute Mission Meals on a weekly basis. During the first month, more than 100 family-style meals were delivered throughout the community.

“This program embodies everything we try to achieve as healthcare food service profes-

sionals,” said Jay Williams, Director of Food and Nutrition Services at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. “Food gives caregivers a much-deserved break during their day, it provides patients with strength and healing, and for our neighbors it brings comfort and well-being. We couldn’t take these things away a time when people need them the most.”

HOW TO SUPPORT

Grab-and-go meals are currently only available to caregivers and patients and their designated visitors, but you can still support Mission Kitchen by purchasing a Mission Meal.

1. Visit the website at missionkitchenmenu.com
2. Click on “Donate a meal today”
3. Click the meal option and choose donation amount

THANK YOU



SVC TODAY

St. Vincent Charity Today is produced by the Marketing and Communications Department at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center.

EDITOR

Maureen Nagg
Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications

WRITERS

Terri Jankowski,
Maureen Nagg and
Rebecca Gallant

DESIGN

Diane Roberto

Send your feedback to info@stvincentcharity.com

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

You can receive this newsletter directly to your email inbox. To subscribe to the email publication, visit: stvincentcharity.com/newsroom

WE'RE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK

facebook.com/StVincentCMC

INSTAGRAM

instagram.com/stvincentcharity

TWITTER

twitter.com/StVincentCMC

YOUTUBE

youtube.com/CLEStVincentCharity



WE ARE CLEVELAND'S DOWNTOWN HOSPITAL

Cleveland's first and only downtown hospital, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center is the city's faith-based, high-quality health care provider. Our distinguished doctors and caregivers are devoted to treating every patient with clinical excellence and compassionate care. Home to the renowned Spine and Orthopedic Institute and the Center for Bariatric Surgery, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center has services in cardiovascular, emergency medicine, primary care, occupational health, behavioral health and addiction medicine. Owned by the Sisters of Charity Health System, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center has provided Care Beyond Medicine since 1865.



**ST. VINCENT CHARITY
MEDICAL CENTER**

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

2351 EAST 22ND STREET
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44115

www.stvincentcharity.com

