

Gift of Health

Our Philanthropy Magazine



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for donors of
Saint Mary's Foundation

WINTER 2020

BeRemarkable.



**Karen Custer shares her
personal journey with
Parkinson's disease**

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We are pleased to introduce a new look and name for our newsletter designed for our family of supporters. Gift of Health has officially replaced Pinnacle... and we hope you enjoy seeing how your gifts make a difference!

On October 28, in front of an audience of nearly 200 at a Vine & Vinyl event, Karen Custer shared her personal journey with Parkinson's disease. The story you are about to read is an excerpt from that evening as well as an additional story telling time with Michelle Rabideau, president of Saint Mary's Foundation.

October 28, 2019:

MR: Tell us about your story.

KC: My story is that my mom had Parkinson's disease, so I was very familiar with the symptoms. She was diagnosed in her 70s. So, I was aware of what I might be facing in my early 60s. When it all started to happen, I didn't want to go there thinking anything was wrong with me. It felt like I had severe arthritis and everything was changing rapidly. I couldn't do the things that I was used to doing well like any sports-related activities. I couldn't hit a golf shot... every golf shot went 60 yards.

MR: Is that not good?

KC: (Laughs) No, that's not good! I was feeling like my functionality was just losing me. My ability to do dance...my feet felt cemented to the floor. I was stiff. My handwriting was small. My family noticed I was moving slowly and very stiffly. I couldn't fold laundry. I couldn't clap continuously. I couldn't take shampoo in my one hand and finish the motion of shampooing my hair...it would stop. I just wasn't functioning like I did normally.

So, my family said I needed some help. We went to Dr. Leslie Neuman at Mercy Health Hauenstein Neurosciences, and he diagnosed me with Parkinson's. I didn't quite believe him at that point. We went to Mayo Clinic for a complete health work-up and they concurred with Dr. Neuman's diagnosis that I, indeed, had Parkinson's.

But, you have to take the medicine a certain amount of time to really prove you have the disease...to see if the medicine restores some functionality. Within just six weeks of taking the medication, I felt like a completely new person.

I recall this one day at home. I love to dance. I was listening to *The Today Show* in my kitchen and at that point in time my feet had felt like there were cemented to the floor. I had no rhythm. Nothing was happening and Jimmy Buffet came on playing "Margaritaville." And I just started dancing all over the kitchen. Dave (husband) was in his home office and I said "Dave, I can dance!" And we both started to cry.

So, it was just a fun, fun thing to go through that I got my life back...I got my rhythm back through the medication.

MR: That is so awesome. And now?

KC: I take good care of myself. I exercise every day. I walk every day and have for about 15 years...2-3 miles every day. I take a nap. I feel lazy taking a nap, but my doctor (Jessica Hedeman, MD) told me I should.

MR: Can I get my doctor to tell me to take a nap?



David and Karen Custer

KC: You should. I feel awesome after taking a nap...like an Energizer bunny. I feel good. I feel great about the future, too. I have a real positive attitude. I feel like my Parkinson's was a gift from God...it's just Parkinson's... I can do this. It's a life-changer. God gave me strength to get through this.

December 16, 2019

MR: Is there anything that you wished you would have shared that you didn't share already about your story?

KC: I wish I would have shared how important my husband Dave was and is to me during this journey. I didn't want to face it. He was the one who insisted I take care of myself and look into what was happening. I didn't give him enough credit for supporting me.

MR: What is most important to you right now?

KC: My faith...my daily walk...my family/friends and my grandkids.

MR: What would you like people to know that no one has ever asked you?

KC: I'm a tomboy. I love guns...I'm big into skeet shooting and grew up hunting, fishing and being outdoors with my dad.

MR: What are you most proud of personally?

KC: Oh, lots of stuff. I'm proud of the love I share with my family. I'm proud of being a good mother, wife, friend...all that!

Continued on page 15...



Custer Grandchildren

Remarkable Community.



Byrne Electric chose to support the Mercy Health Saint Mary's Reach Out and Read™ program in partnership with *The Elf on the Shelf*, for their 2019 Christmas Philanthropy Project. The Byrne team raised enough funds to purchase over 215 *Elf on the Shelf* books that were donated to five of our Reach Out and Reach™ Program locations. We are grateful for their support and for helping us share the magic of Christmas with our patients and families!

BeRemarkable.



Help the community today and plan your third party event by contacting Angela Paasche at 616-685-1426 or angela.paasche@mercyhealth.com for more information.

GRAND GROUPS

GRAND GIRLFRIENDS™ • GRAND GUYS™

Grand Girlfriends™ and Grand Guys™ were created to bring women and men together to support programs and services that improve the health and enhance the lives of patients served by Mercy Health Saint Mary's. Since the inception of both, a grand total of \$154,186 has been awarded back to the organization.

The 2019 Grand Girlfriends™ and Grand Guys™ grants that were awarded, totaling over \$25,000:

- Adult Acute Care Unit was awarded \$8,500 to purchase a vein ultrasound probe to start IVs for hospitalized elderly patients. Adding the vein probe to the already existing bladder scanner machine will allow for more accurate blood draws and IV starts while also reducing time spent, patient pain, and the time for which decisions and/or treatment can begin. It is estimated that each year about 1,500 patients will benefit from use of the proposed equipment.
- McAuley Program was awarded \$1,500 to provide HIV/AIDS infected refugee women living in poverty with a basket of items upon the birth of an infant. Baskets include items such as diapers, wipes, bottles, pacifiers, feminine hygiene products, creams and lotions.
- Wege Institute for Mind, Body, Spirit was awarded \$9,950 to cover the cost of acupuncture for women with breast cancer who develop joint pain when treated with aromatase inhibitor medication. The goal is to provide 10 breast cancer patients a full 6 week course of this transformative therapy.
- Radiology Department was awarded \$5,341 to purchase a stretcher with additional support for women who come for ultrasound studies that require their hips to be elevated. A new stretcher with built-in support will allow for additional patient comfort, ensure safety, provide support for the women's legs and prevent injury to the sonographer by providing an ergonomic work setting.

Contact Alica Woodrick at Alica.Arnold001@mercyhealth.com to find out how you can become a member of Grand Groups.



Touched by a Saint Mary's "Angel Nurse"

"I think we have been touched by a Saint Mary's Angel Nurse...actually three Angel Nurses in the week I've been here," said patient Stephen Dontje.

On Wednesday, December 4, 2019, Stephen underwent lung cancer surgery performed at Mercy Health Saint Mary's.

A patient from the Cadillac area, several years ago, Stephen's Primary Care Physician (PCP) had ordered a low-dose CT lung cancer screening due to Stephen's years of smoking. The screening detected a very small nodule in the upper lobe of his left lung. Stephen's PCP monitored it until it became larger and showed significant changes.

In August 2019, the scans indicated it was time to remove the nodule. Stephen's physician referred him to Bruce Shabahang, MD, at Mercy Health Saint Mary's in Grand Rapids.

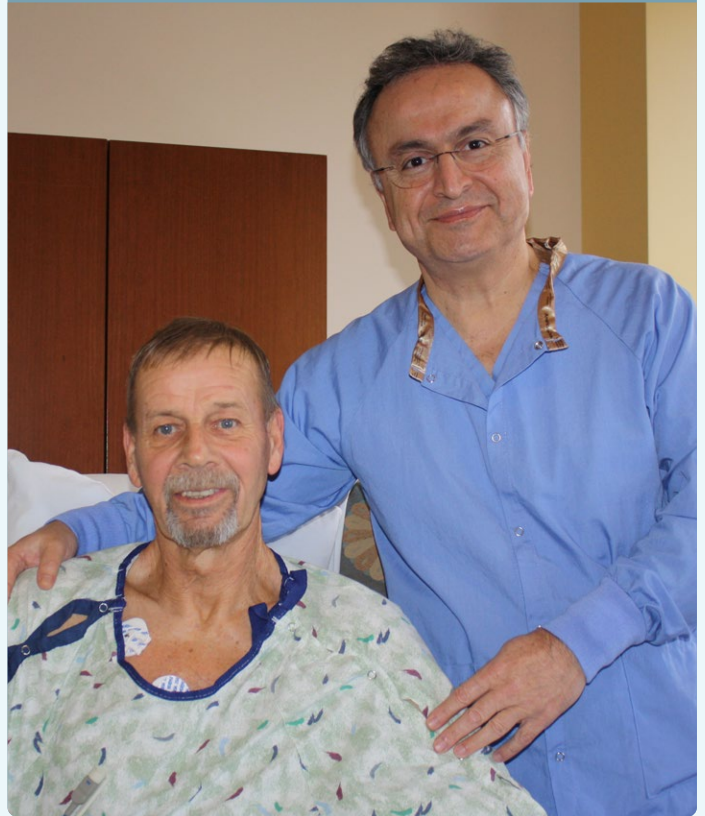
"I was a little bit apprehensive. Through our discussion, he gave me the realization of what the surgery was. He explained that it was removal of the entire lobe — major surgery," said Stephen.

Kathy, Stephen's wife, attended her husband's medical appointments. "Dr. Shabahang puts you at ease when he talks to you. I was concerned about this [diagnosis and surgery] but I knew Steve was in good hands."

"After our first visit, I told Kathy that Dr. Shabahang is a marvelous person. It's the way he relates to the patient. He is straightforward because he wants survival," added Stephen.

The day before his surgery, a preregistration nurse from Mercy Health Saint Mary's called Stephen. Her name was Virginia.

"I think I've been touched by a Saint Mary's nursing angel."



Stephen Dontje with Dr. Shabahang

*"It's all those nurse angels. I was cared for excellently...
the meals, the care, the people.*

*I would rate my care a 12 out of 10!
I was being embraced by angels."*

"I answered a couple of questions, and that was it," Stephen recalled. "I mentioned to my wife Kathy that the nurse's name was coincidental. In 1942, my mother began training as an RN at Saint Mary's, and her name was also Virginia. My mother then moved to Cadillac, where she worked during her career, met my father and started a family. I grew up with a Mercy nurse mom."

When he arrived for registration on the day of the surgery, Stephen told the registrar the story about his mother (now deceased) and the phone call the day before from Virginia.

"The lady at registration said that it was funny, because Virginia had trained at Mercy in Cadillac (now called Munson Healthcare Cadillac) and moved to Grand Rapids for her career," Stephen said. Another coincidence!

During his stay, Stephen shared this "coincidence" with numerous people he encountered. One evening when he was in the Intensive Care Unit following surgery, he thought that his experiences at Saint Mary's and these coincidences might make a nice article to put in a newsletter, if there was one for nurses.

"The head nurse on duty was Lucas, and I don't know why, but I had this feeling that he could help. I asked him if, first, could he arrange for me to meet the Virginia, who had called me the day before surgery? Second, could he find out how I could share my story? He said he would take care of my requests," said Stephen.

Stephen did meet Virginia, who shared that she had trained for nursing in Cadillac from 1964-1966. As he recalled, Stephen thinks his mom was working at Mercy in Cadillac at that time. "They might even have crossed paths," he added. Another coincidence...

Later that night, Stephen did something he never does. "I picked up my phone to find out the biblical meaning of the name Lucas. I had a premonition that it meant something that fits into the 'coincidences' happening with my case. I found out it means 'bringer of light, giver of light'.

"You need to know that I am not the kind of person who reaches out to touch other people," said Stephen. "But later I grabbed Lucas' hand [in gratitude] and said, 'I think I've been touched by a Saint Mary's nursing angel! Throughout my stay, I have physically touched and said that to three of the medical staff.'"

With the cancer removed and the pathology report indicating that the nearby lymph nodes were clear, Stephen's prognosis is excellent. He does not require chemotherapy or radiation treatment. The Dontjes headed back to Cadillac in time for Christmas, which they planned to spend with their daughter and granddaughter. "You know, I think my mother was here with me," said Stephen with a smile.

Thankful for the early detection of his cancer and for the remarkable care he received, Stephen described his week at Mercy Health Saint Mary's as an "uplifting experience...kind of spiritual."

"It's all those nurse angels. I was cared for excellently...the meals, the care, the people. I would rate my care a 12 out of 10! I was being embraced by angels."



Virginia, mother of Stephen Dontje



Tell us a little about yourself:

As an undergraduate, I attended Georgetown University. That is where I became familiar with the Jesuit priests. I was so impressed with the university, that I set a goal to also attend medical school there. In my third year as an undergraduate, I applied to Georgetown University School of Medicine for early decision and was accepted. The Jesuits had an opportunity to mold my mind for about eight years, which inspired me to a life of service.

After graduating from medical school, I completed a general surgery residency at the University of California San Diego, followed by a cardiothoracic fellowship at Tulane in New Orleans. Inspired by the selfless example of the Jesuits, I chose to specialize in cardiothoracic surgery because it requires unwavering dedication, a lot of time, and is probably one of the most demanding fields in medicine. Then an opportunity came up at St. Vincent Medical Center in Los Angeles, CA, where I could work as a cardiothoracic surgeon and serve the economically deprived community.

When I moved to Grand Rapids, MI, I worked for another local health care system for 10 years. I joined the Mercy Health Saint Mary's in 2006 when I was invited to spearhead their thoracic oncology program at the Lacks Cancer Center.

I've dedicated my life to practicing at Mercy Health Saint Mary's and am blessed with strong family support. I have a lovely wife of 29 years, Huda, and two children who understand my life's mission and have supported me in pursuing it.

Bruce Shabahang, MD, FACS

Cardiothoracic Surgeon

Philosophy of Care:

When I was 18 years old and entered Georgetown University, I didn't know what I wanted from life. But my Jesuit mentors helped to shape my thinking and set an example of a life of dedication, giving and focusing your time and intellect for the good of humanity.

Why do you care for your patients the way that you do? What motivates you?

My faith in God motivates me to do the best that I can do in this short life that we have here on earth.

What keeps you here at MHSM?

What keeps me at Mercy Health Saint Mary's is the organization's mission and the appreciation I receive from my patients and the administration. I work 24/7, making rounds each day. This schedule does not tire me out because I am energized by appreciation — from the administration and my patients and their families.

Hobbies & Interests:

My wife and I are amateur movie critics, and that is my main hobby. My wife researches and selects the movie we watch, we read about the movie, and then we watch it together. Then we sit and chat about the movie. We don't limit ourselves to movies made in Hollywood. We



Dr. Shabahang with sister Julianna, and parents Reza and Azar



Dr. Shabahang with wife Huda

see movies made in Japan, China, Bollywood and Europe. I think that's what brings us close together.

Before our two children were born, I used to fly single engine planes. That interest arose from the fact that my dad is a retired Air Force general, and he wanted me to learn how to fly.

Why do you think philanthropy is important to the care that you give your patients?

Philanthropy is an exponential multiplier for what we do. As an individual, I can work 24/7, but I can only do so much as one person. However, if we can encourage philanthropy to complete larger projects, we exponentially multiply our benefit to society. Through philanthropy, we don't touch just one life, we touch thousands of lives. We do not discriminate based on wealth or social class. All patients can benefit.

Edward Prein Memorial Endowment Fund for Music Therapy



Edward Prein

Prein&Newhof made a memorial gift in honor of co-founder Edward Prein, who passed away last year. To honor Ed, Prein& Newhof created and endowed the “Edward Prein Memorial Endowment Fund for Music Therapy” at Mercy Health Saint Mary’s. This program provides the curative effects of music therapy for the physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and social needs of patients in their hospital rooms. Music therapy is designed to promote wellness and address stress and pain management, and to aid in physical rehabilitation.

To support the Edward Prein Memorial Endowment Fund for Music Therapy, [visit our website](#). If you are interested in creating your own legacy at Mercy Health Saint Mary's, we can help you explore ways to make a difference in the lives of patients and support our programs.

To learn more, please call or email Kelli Smith, Director of Philanthropy, at (616) 685-1484 or smikella@mercyhealth.com with any questions about gift options and creating a legacy at Mercy Health Saint Mary's.

Endowment Funds Established to Honor Legacies

Three endowment funds were recently established to honor the retirement of two long-time colleagues, David Baumgartner, MD, and Liz Murphy, RN, and the passing of former Mercy Health Saint Mary's President, Phil McCorkle.

David D. Baumgartner, MD, Endowment Fund for Mission Services will provide funding to advance our mission and core values as we support the diverse needs of those we serve.

Philip H. McCorkle, Jr. Fund for Clinical Excellence will provide funding to advance clinical excellence at the discretion of the Mercy Health Saint Mary's President.

Elizabeth Murphy, RN Endowment Fund for Nursing Education will provide funding to support general nursing education.

With a minimum of \$25,000, a named endowment fund can be established to support a particular area from which an annual percentage of the fund benefits.

If you are interested in learning more about how to establish a named endowment fund, please contact Kelli Smith, Director of Philanthropy, at 616-685-1484 or smikella@mercyhealth.com.

The Gift That Keeps on Giving

2019 year-end giving supported the Mercy Health Kidney Transplant Center, raising over \$48,425.00. Our Kidney Transplant Center is the only one of its kind in the region. The team's award-winning care saves lives through successful transplants — in addition to providing the advanced follow-up care that helped bring baby Michael Frias into the world.



Thank you for joining our Gratitude Movement

Giving Tuesday

Your generosity on #GivingTuesday helped us raise **\$36,450!**

A special thanks to Lake Michigan Credit Union for their generous match for #GivingTuesday.



UP ON THE ROOF



Our signature event, Up on the Roof, had a record-breaking year raising over \$100,374! Over the last 14 years, Up on the Roof has generated more than 1 million dollars — supporting the holistic healing programs at Mercy Health Saint Mary's.

Up on the Roof financially supports our progressive complementary therapies, that, when combined with traditional medicine, provide a more holistic approach to health care. We are grateful for the support and generosity of our sponsors, host committee members, volunteers, guests and the community.

Complementary Therapies at Work in 2019:

- 1,294 patients received facials, pedicures and hair/wig styling that helped reclaim confidence in their outward appearance
- 885 patients received holistic healing through acupuncture and massage
- 685 patients received comforting sounds through music therapy

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Volunteer Spotlight: Liz Murphy

Liz Murphy served Saint Mary's for 17 years and continues to serve after retirement.

Why did you decide to volunteer at Mercy Health Saint Mary's?

When I look back over my 17 years at Saint Mary's, it became family. I love the organization, I love the culture and the people who work there. We do great things and provide services for our patients and our colleagues that are top-notch. While there is always opportunity for improvement, we have accomplished great things. I look forward to continuing to support Saint Mary's, and making it better and better. I enjoy serving our community, and I can't think of any place better than Saint Mary's.

What is your favorite aspect of volunteering?

Well, I would have to say it's the people. Every day I've volunteered, not a half hour goes by that I don't see somebody that I've known and worked with for many years. Giving hugs and getting hugs, catching up with what's going on and hearing about continuing the great work, fills my heart with pride.

Why would you recommend volunteering?

I think it's a great way to give back. For me, it was a lot to go from feeling as if I was on call 24/7, and being devoted to the organization, to then retiring, and not having the same connection, just didn't seem right. I had to find a middle ground, and volunteering, while continuing to serve, allows me that opportunity. I think it's a great experience for anybody that cares about Saint Mary's. It allows me to give back to the organization that supported me, and share with patients the mission, vision and values that we hold upright.

Additional thoughts?

I would recommend everybody who retires think about giving back with your time. Whether it's on a weekly basis, special projects or other unique ways to give. Additionally, I'm grateful for the support of Saint Mary's foundation. I've personally given for many years and they continue to provide great resources for our patients and colleagues, and I think we owe it to them to continue that work.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, contact Rachel Jonaitis at 616-685-1898 or rachel.jonaitis@mercyhealth.com.



Karen Smith, Liz Murphy and Paul Frank

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July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

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In Memoriam

On January 23, 2020, Curtis D. Edholm, MD, Honorary Trustee of Saint Mary's Foundation passed away at the age of 91. During his 25 years at Saint Mary's, Dr. Edholm served in a variety of medical leadership roles, including Chief of Medical Staff and Chairman of the Orthopaedic Surgery Department. In 1984, Dr. Edholm began serving as a Trustee for the Dr. Frank Doran Foundation for Medical Education and continued to be recognized as an Honorary Trustee until his passing.

Continued from page 3...

MR: What gives you the greatest joy?

KC: Helping others and sharing all my blessings. I love seeing how appreciative people are for the support.

MR: Let's talk a bit about your involvement with Mercy Health Saint Mary's. What inspired you to get involved?

KC: Did you know that it was Phil McCorkle (former president and CEO of Mercy Health Saint Mary's) who inspired me to get involved with Saint Mary's...it was under his leadership when I wanted to serve on the Saint Mary's Foundation. He was one of the most caring, loving, gentle souls on this earth.

MR: Amen to that. What makes you most proud to be involved with our organization?

KC: Saint Mary's always stays true to their mission.

MR: What makes Mercy Health Saint Mary's special to you?

KC: The caring soul of the organization for ALL people.

MR: What do you want your personal and/or family legacy to be?

KC: I want my legacy to be one where my faith is

shared with others...that others look back at my life and see and feel my positivity in everything I did. I just want to be happy and bring joy to others.

MR: Final question: Is there anything else that you want people to know about you?

KC: I have a special connection with my dog, Denver. He has been by my side for nine years. He shares his unconditional love with me and follows me everywhere. I just love him...but not above my grandkids!

Favorite color? Pink

Favorite food? Raspberries

All-time favorite movie? *Sound of Music*

Must read book? "Where the Crawdads Sing"

Hobbies? Walking, golfing, fishing, playing with grandkids...anything sports-related!

Fave get-away place? Our cottage

Super power wish? That everyone would know/believe in Jesus and have him as a friend

Quote? "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

Vine & Vinyl



SAVE THE DATES

Monday, March 16

Monday, June 15

Monday, September 14

Saint Mary's Foundation is dedicated to building relationships that inspire financial support from the community to advance the mission of Mercy Health Saint Mary's.

Interested in becoming a volunteer?
Contact Rachel Jonaitis at 616-685-1898 or
rachel.jonaitis@mercyhealth.com

Interested in planned gift opportunities?
Contact Kelli Smith at 616-685-1484 or
smikella@mercyhealth.com

Interested in becoming a member of our
Grand Groups or *up next* programs?
Contact Alica Woodrick at 616-685-1427 or
alica.arnold001@mercyhealth.com

Interested in your company becoming
more involved?
Contact Angela Paasche at 616-685-1426 or
angela.paasche@mercyhealth.com

If you do not wish to receive information from
Saint Mary's Foundation in the future,
please call 616-685-1892.

For more information please contact us:

Saint Mary's Foundation
200 Jefferson Avenue SE
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Phone: 616-685-1892

SaintMarysFoundationGR.com

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Fast Facts

- Mercy Health Saint Mary's received an 'A' grade in the fall report card from Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades. Leapfrog rates hospitals on their ability to keep patients safe and meet the highest safety standards.
- Mercy Health, Metro Health – University of Michigan Health, Michigan Medicine announced the formation of the Cancer Network of West Michigan. This initiative will integrate cancer care services in West Michigan and give patients broader access to advanced, state-of-the-art, comprehensive diagnosis, treatment and support across leading health care institutions. The Cancer Network of West Michigan, a joint venture between Mercy Health and Metro Health – University of Michigan Health, leverages the combined resources and capabilities of the two West Michigan health systems and Michigan Medicine, the academic medical center of the University of Michigan.
- All of the Michigan ministries of Trinity Health including Mercy Health Saint Mary's have been named to the *Detroit Free Press*' list of Top Workplaces, a designation earned by the vote of our own colleagues.
- Leadership updates at Mercy Health Saint Mary's: Michelle Peña, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, has been named Chief Nursing Officer and Kurt MacDonald, MBA, has been named the new senior vice president of operations.

Correction from last publication of *Pinnacle*: On page 4 under the article "Remarkable Legacy," Phil McCorkle's years as president and CEO of Mercy Health Saint Mary's should have been from "2000 to 2013." We apologize for the incorrect year published.