

Momentum

Fall
2024

A PUBLICATION OF ATRIUM HEALTH FOUNDATION

Atrium Health Levine Children's

JOINS HANDS WITH NINE HOSPITALS TO
TRANSFORM PEDIATRIC CANCER CARE



Atrium Health
Foundation



A Message from our Board Chair:



As we look back at 2024, I marvel at the constant generosity of this community. In the throes of a natural disaster, we came together to ensure that our communities had access to health care and resources to support their well-being. And together, you demonstrated your passion for safeguarding the future of health care in our region through legacy and memorial gifts, as well as corporate, foundation, and family commitments. Together, we also mourned the loss of local leaders who have been instrumental to building world-class care at Atrium Health.

I'm proud to help lead an organization that brings together people from all walks of life to make a positive impact. Hand in hand, and gift by gift, we are leaving the world a better place.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mandy".

Mandy Houser
Board Chair, Atrium Health Foundation

Dear friends,

We are in an era of great transformation — in our country, our community, and at Atrium Health. Health care is changing rapidly, with new innovations in artificial intelligence, discoveries in research, and opportunities for growth and integration. At Atrium Health Foundation, we are keeping up to speed with support from generous donors, who have helped ensure our strongest first three quarters in history!



Because of you, we are ensuring that no matter where you live, you have access to world-class care.

Your gifts of hope are advancing breakthroughs in cancer treatments, providing specialized care for women and children, and ensuring equitable educational opportunities for future health care leaders.

Together, we will continue to lift up our community and inspire others to join us in this important mission.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Armando".

Armando Chardiet
President, Atrium Health Foundation



Momentum

“Momentum is a powerful word, one that signifies the growth and continual progress we strive for within our health system.”

Bringing **HOPE** to Communities In Western North Carolina

The generosity of Atrium Health Foundation's donors is being felt across communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. Several of Atrium Health's mobile units made their way to the front lines, including Atrium Health's Care Everywhere unit (funded by The Tepper Foundation); the Drive to Thrive mobile medicine program (supported by Barbara and Todd Kopczynski, MD); along with Atrium Health's MED-1, MedCenter Air, and the Levine Cancer Institute mobile lung cancer screening unit.



 **Atrium Health
Foundation**

The Levine Children's **Gala**

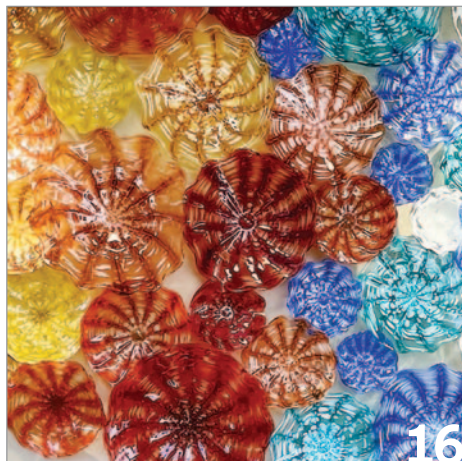
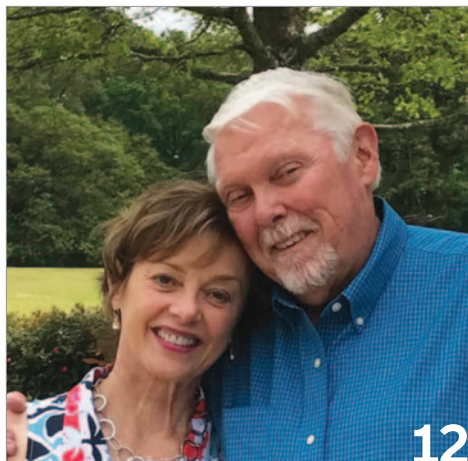
WHERE
HOPE
SHINES.

Saturday, March 29, 2025
Bank of America Stadium

Tickets go on sale early 2025.

C O N T E N T S

FALL 2024



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**Atrium Health Foundation
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ARISE-ing *to the Occasion*

The future is looking brighter for cancer patients in the Carolinas, and Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital is leading the way. The hospital recently launched the Alliance for Research and Innovations in Pediatric Oncology (ARISE) Cancer Consortium™ to expand pediatric cancer research across North and South Carolina. Nine hospitals have joined forces with one shining goal in mind: to better the lives of children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer — now and in the future.



By fostering an environment of innovation and collaboration, the consortium aims to accelerate the discovery of new therapies and improve existing treatments. The alliance gives patients across the Carolinas early access to first-of-their-kind clinical trials, research, and therapies.

“I believe the future of medicine is collaboration,” said Dr. Javier Oesterheld, vice chair for clinical affairs for Atrium Health Levine Children’s in the Greater Charlotte region, and founder of ARISE Cancer Consortium™. “This consortium embodies our commitment to providing the highest standard of care and to driving forward research that will one day lead to a cure.”

Every children’s hospital in North and South Carolina was invited to join ARISE Cancer Consortium™, which is spearheaded by Levine Children’s Hospital. This collaborative approach will enable the consortium to pool resources, knowledge, and expertise, all while giving patients more access to treatments, close to home. “To push the boundaries of pediatric oncology research — to beat pediatric cancer — we have to all be working together,” said Oesterheld.

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- 1. From left: Research technician Kenzie Wells, MS; research scientist Katie Smith, PhD; research technician Poornima Gourabathini, MS; and lab manager Kimberly McKinney, MS
- 2 and 4. Cancer survivor Charlotte McGinness, a patient of Levine Children’s Cancer & Blood Disorders program
- 3. Teammate Kenzie Wells demonstrates Helios™ — state-of-the-art equipment designed to improve cancer detection and treatment.
- 5. United in purpose, the ARISE Cancer Consortium’s inaugural meeting marked a groundbreaking collaboration to advance cancer research and care in the Carolinas.

ARISE-ING

Continued from pg. 3

Atrium Health Levine Cancer, the largest cancer program in the Carolinas, will run all clinical trials opened by ARISE Cancer Consortium. The consortium's first clinical trial will aim to reduce hospital stays for osteosarcoma patients receiving high-dose methotrexate.

In addition to collectively working toward a cure, ARISE Cancer Consortium™ is uniquely dedicated to improving care and quality of life along the way. This includes an emphasis on supportive care, survivorship, and other efforts to improve the patient experience.

Alongside the collaboration of researchers and physicians, philanthropy will be crucial to the growth of ARISE Cancer Consortium™. "Together, and with support from our community, we can bring innovation and hope to pediatric cancer patients in our region like never before," said Dr. Oesterheld.

For more information visit:

AtriumHealthFoundation.org/ARISE.

1. Levine Children's research scientist Katie Smith, PhD, and pediatric hematologist-oncologist Jeffrey Huo, MD, PhD.
2. Miya, a patient of Levine Children's Cancer & Blood Disorders program

2



1



ARISE
CANCER CONSORTIUM

**Participating hospitals will
provide care for 3.8 million
children under age 18**

- 1) Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital
- 2) Duke University
- 3) Eastern Carolina University
- 4) Medical University of South Carolina
- 5) Novant Health Clinical Research
- 6) Prisma Health – Midlands
- 7) Prisma Health – Upstate
- 8) University of North Carolina
- 9) Wake Forest University Health Sciences

**Joining
Forces**

INAUGURAL SPANGLER FAMILY ENDOWED PROFESSOR NAMED

In September, Atrium Health's Dr. Ngina Connors, an esteemed maternal and fetal medicine obstetrician and gynecologist, was named the inaugural recipient of the Spangler Family Endowed Professorship in Obstetrics and Gynecology. The position was made possible through a transformational gift from Anna and Tom Nelson through the C.D. Spangler Foundation. In addition to creating the professorship, the contribution was intended to improve maternal and fetal health and provide a foundation for parents and children for student success.

Dr. Connors was recognized at an investiture in Charlotte, attended by her close family, faculty, and Atrium Health leaders. Dr. Ebony Boulware, dean of Wake Forest University School of Medicine and chief science officer of Advocate Health, and Ken Haynes, president of the Southeast region for Advocate Health, presented the traditional white coat to Dr. Connors.



A medical graduate of University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Connors completed her fellowship in maternal fetal medicine and earned her MBA at Wake Forest University. She currently serves as chair of the Atrium Health Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology.

As endowed professor, Dr. Connors will be actively engaged in educating and mentoring medical students and residents within the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

“Endowed professors are the gold standard of faculty distinction and recognition,” said Ken Haynes, president of the Southeast region for Advocate Health. “It’s an honor to recognize Dr. Connors for her achievements and contributions to women’s care.”

1. Surrounded by benefactors and Atrium Health leaders, Dr. Connors receives her endowed professorship coat.

2. Dr. Connors and her family celebrate her investiture.



Rhett *DEFIES THE ODDS*

WITH BRAVERY AND FAITH

In fall 2021, Rhett Jones — a spirited four-year-old with a love for adventure — fell ill during a family camping trip. When his symptoms persisted, Rhett's parents grew increasingly concerned. Multiple visits to the doctor and urgent care brought alarming news: Rhett's spleen was enlarged, and his bloodwork was abnormal.



Rhett was admitted to Atrium Health Levine Children's Brenner Children's Hospital, where he was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML), a rare and aggressive cancer that affects the bone marrow and blood. The road ahead would be daunting.

Rhett underwent three rounds of chemotherapy before he was transferred to Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital. On his fifth birthday, Rhett was admitted for a bone marrow transplant. Both of his siblings were tested to be bone marrow donors, and his older brother, Lane, was a perfect match. The transplant took place on March 24, 2022.

Unfortunately, Rhett's recovery was filled with complications. He faced a life-threatening pulmonary hemorrhage and spent three challenging weeks on a heart/lung machine. His care team wasn't sure he would survive, but each heartbeat was a testament to his resilience.

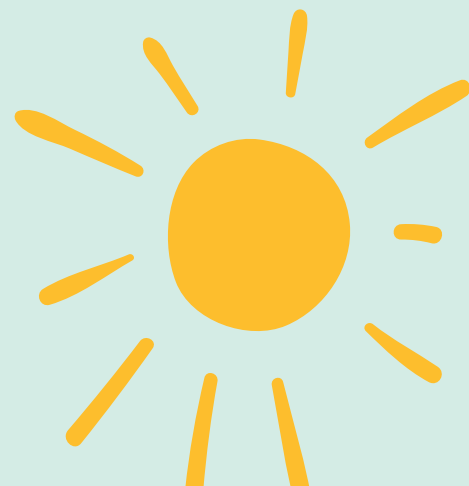
Gradually, Rhett transitioned from intensive care back to a regular hospital room. He returned home later that summer, while continuing treatments for complications related to his transplant.

Nearly two years after his initial diagnosis, Rhett rang the end-of-treatment bell — a day his family and care team will always remember. "To see him ring the bell was just so special and beautiful," said Sammi Starkey, a Child Life specialist at Levine Children's Hospital. "They weren't sure what was going to happen, and now Rhett is here...healthy and thriving!"

Even as Rhett continues to manage post transplant complications, his family rejoices in every milestone. Rhett recently started second grade and enjoys time with his baby nephew, River.

"You never think going through cancer will happen to you or your family," said Rhett's mother, Renae. "It's not easy, but we are so thankful for where we are today and how we've grown as a family."

Throughout his journey, Rhett's bravery has remained steadfast. His story is a testament to the strength he found within himself, the love of his family, the power of faith, and the hope inspired by the expert care at Levine Children's.



2

1. Tommy and Renae Jones with their son, Rhett
2. Three years after his initial cancer diagnosis, Rhett attended the 29th Annual Hopebuilders 5K with his family and hundreds of community supporters.





Jim's life was an anthem to service — to his family, country, and community. He was dedicated to the “for all” part of Atrium Health's mission, and his legacy will continue to inspire us all.

In Memoriam

JAMES E.S. HYNES

July 22, 1940 – October 28, 2024

The Atrium Health family celebrates the life and legacy of James E.S. Hynes — a man who defined the model of character and will be forever interwoven in the fabric of our health system. He will always be remembered as the “historic glue” of board leadership, beloved mentor, and most of all — a dear friend to Atrium Health.

Jim's service to Atrium Health spanned over 50 years, beginning with his initial volunteer work on the original advisory board of (what was then) Charlotte Memorial Hospital. He went on to hold key roles on the Carolinas HealthCare System board, serving as vice chair from 1985 to 1999 and chair from 2000 to 2012. In 2013, he joined the board of Atrium Health Foundation and served until 2020. Until his final days, he served as a founding member of the Advocate Health Board.

Asked why he was not tempted to cultivate other interests during such a long stretch of time, he said it was because the job never got boring. “The organization was forever changing and growing,” he said. “My job was never the same any two years in a row.” Growth and change were always important to Jim, yet he was always the constant for Atrium Health.

Raised in Mecklenburg County, he was always on a mission. As son of a successful farmer and businessman, he aspired to grow by challenging himself. His strong work ethic fueled him to achieve goals that stretched beyond simply doing well. He sought to excel.

Jim graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1962 and went on to attend Naval Officer Candidate School, after which he was assigned to serve on an admiral's personal staff. That position led to extensive travel to exotic locales such as Beirut, Singapore, Bangkok, and Hong Kong, as well as ports in Italy and Japan. Over his lifetime, he visited more than 80 countries. He was truly defined by his early travels and military service.

When he wasn't traveling, Jim lent his leadership talent to serve on many corporate, arts, educational, and philanthropic boards. He led many successful capital campaigns and always gave generously of his own resources.

Perhaps Jim's most impactful gift has been his time, especially at Atrium Health. He had a knack for energizing people with his passion, and his optimism helped him recruit others to change the course of health care in the Carolinas and beyond.

In 2023, Jim and dear friend, Howard C. "Smoky" Bissell, teamed up to transform the trajectory of prostate cancer care at Atrium Health Levine Cancer. Smoky, along with his wife, Margaret, established the Jim Hynes Prostate Cancer Center of Excellence and the Jim Hynes Endowed Chair in Prostate Cancer at Atrium Health Levine Cancer Institute. His legacy will advance access to quality prostate cancer treatment, detection, screenings, and related clinical research at Atrium Health Levine Cancer.

Always thinking of others, in Jim's final days, he teamed up once again with Mr. Bissell to honor their dear friend, Stuart Dickson, by naming the R. Stuart Dickson Skybridge. This gift of friendship will create the gateway to advanced medicine for patients, teammates, and visitors.

Jim's generosity was endless — philanthropically supporting many initiatives within Atrium Health, including Levine Cancer Institute, Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute, and Levine Children's Hospital. He was also a proud member of the Evergreen Society, which recognizes those who have made planned gifts to the health system.

Jim's life was an anthem to service — to his family, country, and community. He was dedicated to the "for all" part of Atrium Health's mission, and his legacy will continue to inspire us all.



1. Jim Hynes (surrounded by Atrium Health leaders) was instrumental in negotiating the merger with Atrium Health Cabarrus. 2. From left: Former Carolinas HealthCare System CEO Michael Tarwater, benefactor Leon Levine, and Jim Hynes

Transformational Gift Honors the Life and Legacy of **R. Stuart Dickson**

CHARLOTTE BUSINESS LEADER AND PHILANTHROPIST

Longtime friends James E.S. “Jim” Hynes and Howard C. “Smoky” Bissell recently made a \$5 million gift to honor the life and career of R. Stuart Dickson, Atrium Health advocate and leader, who passed away in May of this year. The gift was announced before Jim Hynes’ passing in October, acknowledging Dickson’s unwavering leadership, which spanned decades of service and chairmanships on both the Atrium Health Board of Commissioners and Atrium Health Foundation.

It also marks the first transformational gift in support of Atrium Health’s new state-of-the-art, advanced care facility, scheduled to open in 2027. The new facility will address the health care needs of the rapidly growing region, offering unparalleled access to highly specialized care.

In recognition of the gift, the new skybridge at Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center (CMC) will be named in Dickson’s honor.

The two-level R. Stuart Dickson Skybridge will connect the existing Rush S. Dickson Tower at CMC to the new advanced care facility.



R. Stuart Dickson

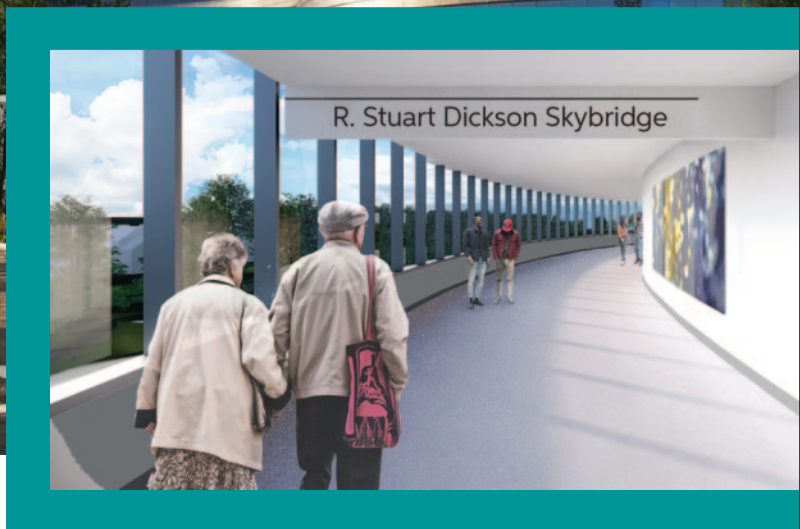


Longtime friends Smoky Bissell and Jim Hynes

“Stuart Dickson’s visionary leadership is woven into the fabric of our health system’s success,” said Gene Woods, CEO of Advocate Health, of which Atrium Health is a part. “Naming this skybridge in his honor is a powerful and fitting tribute to his legacy of ‘connecting’ people and ideas to advance the best health care available within our community.”

Well-known in Charlotte for his success leading Harris Teeter Super Markets, Stuart helped transform the Charlotte economy. He also grew up learning the importance of leadership and philanthropy, demonstrated by his father, Rush, who served on the board of Charlotte Memorial Hospital for 20 years.

“Stuart Dickson gave his time, talent, and treasure to Atrium Health and its predecessor organizations, following in his father’s footsteps and serving as board chair for 23 years,” said Jim Hynes, who succeeded Dickson as chairman of the hospital board.



For decades, Hynes invested in the health system as a major philanthropic supporter, also serving as a founding member of the Advocate Health board and as chair of the Atrium Health Foundation board.

“Stuart was creative, enthusiastic and had an immense network of people who liked and respected him,” Hynes said. “He was a giant in this community and spearheaded efforts to build the foundation of what we now call Atrium Health.”

“Jim and I are pleased to honor Stuart for his visionary leadership, and for seizing opportunity and pioneering change,” said Smoky Bissell, whose family has sparked advancement and excellence in health care across Atrium Health. Bissell was also responsible for leading the campaign to build Atrium Health Levine Children’s Hospital, which opened in 2007.

“Stuart was our mentor and friend, and his footprint is felt throughout our community,” said Bissell.

The R. Stuart Dickson Skybridge will serve as the gateway to advanced medicine, providing safe passage to patients, teammates, and visitors — a gift of friendship, and a gift to the community.



Planting a Legacy

HOPE BLOOMS FOR CANCER PATIENTS IN THE CAROLINAS



When John Killian of Lake Wylie, South Carolina, speaks of his late wife, Barbara, his voice fills with pride. “She was the prettiest girl in the room, but I’d say there are three words that describe Barbara best: honesty, loyalty, and commitment,” shared John. “When Barbara made a commitment, it was going to be fulfilled, and that was the end of it.”

A devoted friend, master gardener and rosarian, and John’s spouse of 43 years, Barbara left an indelible mark on those she touched during her lifetime. Now, her legacy will continue through John’s heartfelt \$2 million gift to establish The Barbara C. Killian Center for Thoracic Oncology and The Barbara C. Killian Thoracic Oncology Fund at Atrium Health Levine Cancer Institute. John has also designated the newly named center in his estate plan to provide Levine Cancer Institute with significant and sustained support for its thoracic cancer program. “It’s a form of healing and comfort to do something that honors her forever,” said John.

Barbara was diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer in 2010. Although she and John had retired to South Carolina, they sought care at MD Anderson in Houston, Texas, where they had spent many years and where Barbara ran a floral business. In the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, travel restrictions impeded access to her care team in Texas.

Fortunately, a Houston-area oncologist and family friend referred Barbara to Dr. Kathryn Mileham, chief of thoracic medical oncology at Levine Cancer Institute. Barbara’s care team was a beacon of hope during an uncertain time in John and Barbara’s lives. “Dr. Mileham was fantastic,” said John. “She and Barbara hit it off. The doctors and nurses were first-class. It was a tremendously supportive environment.”



Thoracic Oncology at Levine Cancer

DIFFERENTIATORS:

- Personalized, comprehensive approach to care
- Advanced diagnostics and therapeutics
- Interventional pulmonary and thoracic surgery techniques
- Collaboration across sub-specialties



For Dr. Mileham, the experience of caring for Barbara — whether in her office, at home, in the garden, or with her cat Olive — also left a lasting impression. “Through this time, we connected on so many aspects of lung cancer care, and really, the beauty of life,” said Dr. Mileham.

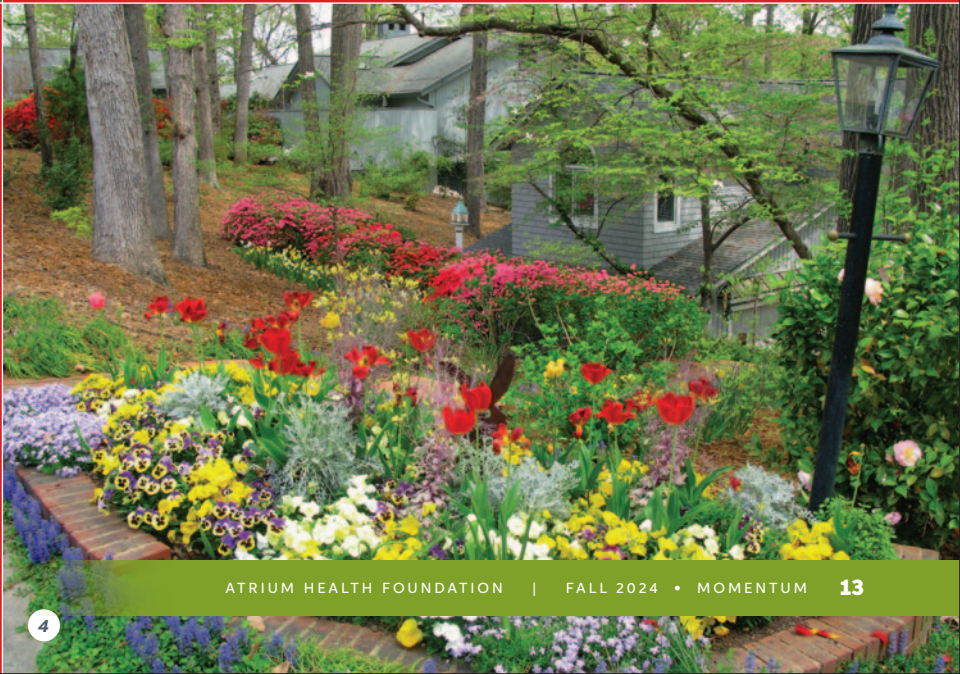
Barbara lost her battle with cancer in November 2020. Compelled by the excellent care she had received, John embraced the opportunity to give back. Consistent with his wishes, The Barbara C. Killian Thoracic Oncology Fund will advance Atrium Health Levine Cancer’s nationally recognized lung cancer research, enhance patient access to clinical trials, ensure quality of patient care, and provide caregiver support. The fund will also support programmatic initiatives, such as lung cancer screening, biomarker testing, patient education, supportive oncology, and end-of-life care.

“The Barbara Killian Thoracic Oncology Fund will facilitate real action, expanding research, improving outcomes and safety, and developing national standards of care,” shared Dr. Mileham. “The center and fund named in honor of Barbara — the master gardener — will continue to grow our lung cancer care within Levine Cancer Institute.”

1. John Killian with Dr. Kathryn Mileham
2. Barbara and her beloved cat, Olive
3. John’s devotion to Barbara was steadfast.
4. A Master Gardener, Barbara created a stunning garden at her home in Lake Wylie, SC.

“THE BARBARA KILLIAN THORACIC ONCOLOGY FUND WILL FACILITATE REAL ACTION, EXPANDING RESEARCH, IMPROVING OUTCOMES AND SAFETY, AND DEVELOPING NATIONAL STANDARDS OF CARE.”

— KATHRYN MILEHAM, MD, FACP, FASCO





Philanthropy Breathes Life

INTO LUNG CANCER RESEARCH

A heartfelt bequest made to Atrium Health Foundation will honor the life and legacy of Carolyn McCall Williams, bringing healing and hope to future patients at Atrium Health Levine Cancer Institute (LCI). Following Carolyn's diagnosis of non-small cell lung cancer in 2021, LCI was named the beneficiary of a \$500,000 gift designated through a trust Carolyn established before her passing in January 2023. Because of her generosity and forethought, the

Carolyn McCall Williams Thoracic Oncology Fund will help advance lung cancer treatment and related clinical research at LCI.

During her own cancer treatment, Carolyn participated in a clinical trial and showed tremendous gratitude for her care team at LCI, including Dr. Kathryn Mileham, chief of thoracic medical oncology. The fund named for Carolyn was established with a goal of curing more people with lung cancer and ensuring that every person with lung cancer has a better quality of life.

BLAZING A TRAIL FOR NOVEL TREATMENTS IN LUNG CANCER

With support from the Carolyn McCall Williams Thoracic Oncology Fund, Dr. Kathryn Mileham and her colleague, Dr. John Heinzerling, a distinguished radiation oncologist at LCI, have embarked upon a new research study: *Genomic profiling for radio-resistance in treatment of unresectable, centrally located, stage I-IIA non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) treated with SBRT*. Still in the early phase of the study, LCI has identified 80 patients — from a database of over 1,000 patients with early-stage non-small cell lung cancer treated with stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT) — to gather clinical information on those who have responded positively to SBRT and those with continued cancer progression.

Once results of the initial study are published next year, clinical trial design for a phase II study will commence with a goal to start enrolling patients in late 2025. The innovative study has already gained the interest of highly respected research institutions and health systems in other parts of the country, reflecting Atrium Health Levine Cancer's continued significance as a thought-leader and destination for exceptional patient care.



Kathryn Mileham, MD



John Heinzerling, MD

The Cannon Foundation Paves the Way

FOR BRIGHT MEDICAL MINDS
THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT

Based in Concord, NC, The Cannon Foundation has committed a transformational gift to name the 6th floor terrace of the Howard R. Levine Center for Education at Wake Forest University School of Medicine – Charlotte. Made in honor of The Cannon Foundation's board president William (Bill) Cannon, Jr., the gift recognizes Bill's longstanding volunteer leadership on both the Atrium Health and Advocate Health Boards and exemplifies the indelible mark the Cannon family has made on Atrium Health and greater Charlotte community for decades.

From William Cannon, Jr. Terrace, students and visitors will have a picturesque view of the Queen City from the site of Charlotte's first four-year medical school, where the next generation of health care leaders and practitioners will shape the future of medical care in our community. Thanks to The Cannon Foundation's commitment, the work of the Wake Forest University School of Medicine – Charlotte will drive excellence and innovation across Atrium Health and the broader Advocate Health enterprise.

"Our founder, Charles A. Cannon, believed life's greatest purpose was to serve others — through health care, higher education, and human services," said Suzanne Philemon, executive director of The Cannon Foundation. "Today, The Cannon Foundation shares in Atrium Health's vision to create the next generation of bright medical minds who will improve the health and livelihood of every person in our community."

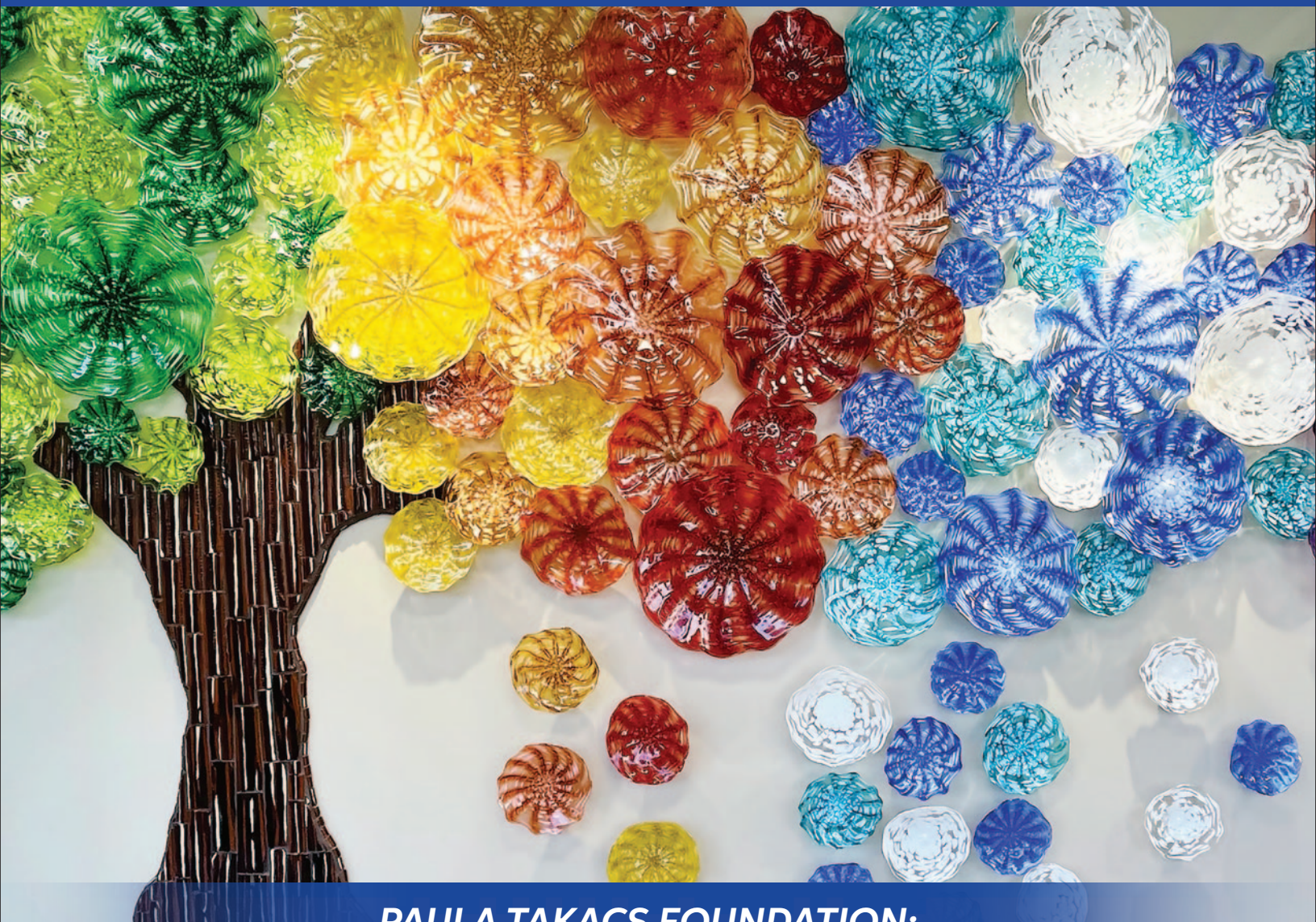
Following this generous contribution, The Cannon Foundation also committed a major gift to revitalize Atrium Health Anson by replacing patient beds throughout the facility. A 15-bed hospital, Atrium Health Anson is the county's destination for primary and specialty care, serving more than 500 patients annually, close to home.



Pictured: Through his volunteer leadership on the boards of Atrium Health and Advocate Health, Bill Cannon and his family's personal contributions benefiting Hospice & Palliative Care of Cabarrus, Bill joins Atrium Health in heartfelt service to our patients in the Greater Charlotte area.



1-2. From the William Cannon Jr. Terrace, students of Wake Forest University School of Medicine-Charlotte will envision a bright future ahead, thanks to support from The Cannon Foundation. 3. Members of The Cannon Foundation board and staff enjoyed a tour of the terrace under construction on the new medical school campus.



PAULA TAKACS FOUNDATION:

GROWING HOPE THROUGH ART

Paula Takacs was a new mom when she was diagnosed with liposarcoma, a malignant soft-tissue cancer. The bliss of caring for her newborn was cut short as she endured extensive surgeries and treatments. During her courageous battle, Paula became determined to create a foundation that would raise funds to advance sarcoma research. Although she lost her cancer battle in 2014, Paula's legacy has lived on — benefiting countless patients and families impacted by sarcoma.

In the last decade, the Paula Takacs Foundation for Sarcoma Research has donated more than \$2 million to Atrium Health Foundation in support of sarcoma research at Atrium Health Levine Cancer and Atrium Health Levine Children's in Charlotte. In addition to funding cancer studies, the organization recently established The Paula Takacs Foundation Endowed Chair of Sarcoma Research. A Levine Cancer Institute faculty member with expertise in sarcoma will receive the prestigious appointment.



Photos courtesy of James Morton and the Paula Takacs Foundation.

The Paula Takacs Foundation recently launched a new fundraising program that uses the power of art to amplify its mission. The program, Growing Hope Through Art, not only attracts additional funding for sarcoma research but also celebrates the powerful stories of all patients and families. The initiative's inaugural art piece is permanently displayed at Atrium Health Levine Cancer Institute in Charlotte. *Seasons of Life*, by Jake Pfeifer of Hot Glass Alley and presented by TowneBank, shines brightly in the corridor connecting LCI buildings I and II on Atrium Health's midtown campus.

Spanning an impressive 18 feet, *Seasons of Life* features a tree crafted from hundreds of exquisite hand-blown and fused glass blossoms and tree bark. This masterpiece pays tribute to patients, families, caregivers, and medical professionals while reflecting Pfeifer's personal journey through diagnosis, treatment, and survival of pediatric rhabdomyosarcoma.

"I believe we have a responsibility to increase awareness of cancer, and specifically sarcoma," shared Pfeifer, who also emphasized the importance of education, prevention, detection, and timely access to health care for evaluation and treatment. "All of this is critical for positive outcomes. I want individuals with cancer to know there is hope."

Jake at work in the hot shop.

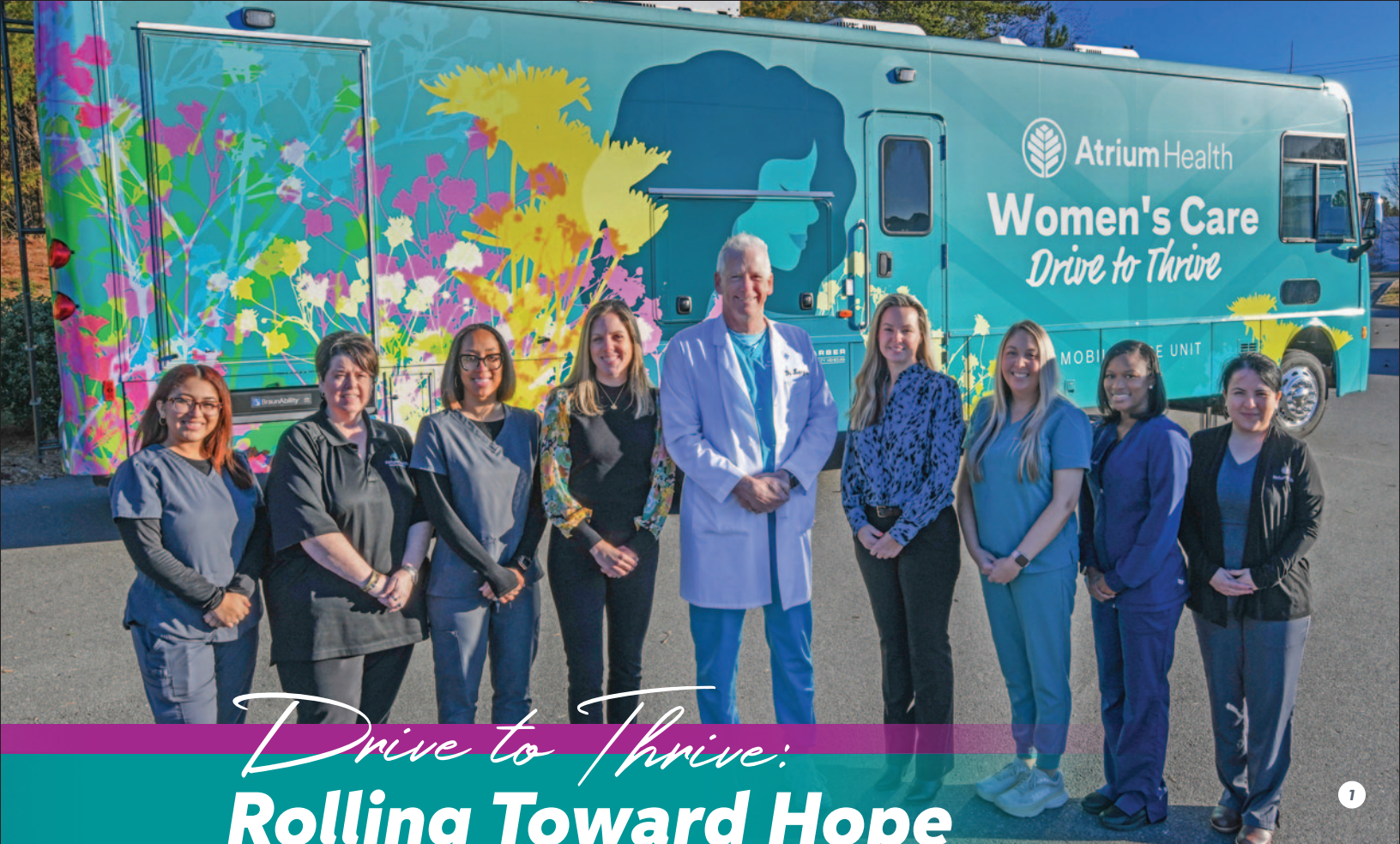
Paula Takacs Foundation board members attended the unveiling, two of whom survived personal battles with sarcoma, including board chair, Doug Sleeper (second from left), and board member Heather Lopane (fifth from right).

Photo courtesy of Hot Glass Alley.



Give the gift of hope:

Sponsor or dedicate a glass tile or flower as a meaningful way to honor loved ones touched by any cancer while contributing to vital sarcoma research. Each piece added to the installation helps grow hope and create lasting impact — one story at a time. [Learn more at GrowingHopeThroughArt.org](https://growinghopethroughart.org).



Drive to Thrive: **Rolling Toward Hope**

In January 2023, Atrium Health launched Drive to Thrive, the first mobile medicine program of its kind in North Carolina and one of the nation's first mobile units dedicated solely to women's health care. The program aims to support women's reproductive, maternal, and prenatal health by bringing state-of-the-art obstetrics and gynecological (OB-GYN) care to the communities that need it most.

Since its launch, Drive to Thrive has provided nearly 1,000 care visits in nine locations throughout the Charlotte area. The program focuses on meeting the needs of underserved patients by bringing care directly into their communities, setting up sites of care outside of grocery stores, churches, and outreach organizations, and partnering with educational institutions, such as Central Piedmont Community College, to ensure care is accessible for all.

Designed first and foremost with patients' comfort in mind, since day one, a key priority for Drive to Thrive has been to offer comprehensive care in a welcoming environment. The clinical team behind the program includes board-certified OB-GYNs, advanced practice providers, and social workers who work together to provide women with a seamless continuum of care, including on-site exams and follow-up appointment scheduling with providers across Atrium Health.

The attention to detail and level of care are praised by the patients Drive to Thrive serves. "The location was very convenient and very close to my home. It is very clean and homey inside. Also, the service is very fast," shared Maria R., a recent patient of Drive to Thrive.

Following in the footsteps of lead benefactors Barbara and Todd Kopczynski, MD, many generous donors continue to advance the Drive to Thrive program through gifts to the Atrium Health Drive to Thrive Mobile Fund, administered by Atrium Health Foundation.

On the road with Ruby: A teammate's Drive to Thrive journey

From the moment Atrium Health teammate Ruby Pittman heard about the opportunity to work as an ambulatory social worker with the Drive to Thrive program, she knew she had the experience to be successful in the role. "I have been with Drive to Thrive since the day the program launched. My background as a social worker in the maternity care unit at Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center helped me prepare for this role. I knew the kind of support the patients we serve were going to need," said Ruby.

The interaction between social workers and patients, Ruby explained, starts with an assessment to determine if patients have adequate access to housing, food, transportation, and mental health services, and provides support to those who need financial assistance. "If a patient is stressed about not having food or a place to live, they will have a hard time focusing on their health. We care about the person as a whole. The social and medical needs are important and connected," said Ruby.

Being onboard the first mobile program of its kind in the state, Ruby is passionate about the purpose Drive to Thrive serves. "This mobile outreach is unique and important because we are able to go into the community and provide a service — meeting patients exactly where they are," she shared. Ruby and her colleagues go above and beyond to ensure the patients receive support for all of their needs — whether they are seeking prenatal care, parenting resources, or mental health support.

"Patients are always appreciative of how we care for them," said Ruby. "What keeps me going is the smile on patients' faces and knowing that I am fulfilling a need. I just love that we are making a difference in our community and offering services that no other mobile unit offers. Everyone should have access to high quality health care. We are easing patients' minds and changing the way they think about health care."

1. Benefactor and volunteer physician Dr. Todd Kopczynski (center), and a dedicated team of specialists from Atrium Health Women's Care, serve high-need communities across the Charlotte area through this first-of-its-kind mobile women's care program. 2. Ambulatory social worker Ruby Pittman is part of an outstanding team of OB/GYN physicians and social workers powering the Drive to Thrive program.



DONORS HELP USHER IN A New Era of Cancer Care

October 14, 2024, was a landmark day in the Carolinas as Atrium Health treated its first two patients using a revolutionary radiation treatment known as proton beam therapy. This milestone marked the completion of the Atrium Health Levine Cancer Proton & Advanced Radiation Center, which broke ground in 2022 and opened its doors to patients earlier this year.

The realization of the state-of-the-art facility was made possible thanks to a transformational gift from Sandra and Leon Levine, through The Leon Levine Foundation, in 2023. Offering the most comprehensive radiation

therapy services in the region, the Center represents a significant leap forward in precision medicine for the Charlotte area.

On September 12, donors who have played a crucial role in supporting Levine Cancer attended a private event to celebrate the launch of proton beam therapy. Attendees heard from health system leaders and grateful patients about the profound impact of this new treatment.

“Many of our donors have helped lead us to where we are today, and it goes without saying that the late Leon Levine has left



1. Event attendees heard from Irene Wong and her 14-year-old son, Oliver Sacks, about the significance of having proton beam therapy close to home for Charlotte-area residents.

2. Atrium Health Levine Cancer president Ruben Mesa, MD, FACP, acknowledged the contributions of our donors, teammates, and physicians, who stand united against cancer.

A closer look:

**ATRIUM HEALTH LEVINE CANCER
PROTON & ADVANCED RADIATION CENTER**

34

STAFF DEDICATED TO
RADIATION THERAPIES

1 of 45

SITES IN THE COUNTRY TO OFFER
PROTON BEAM THERAPY,
AND THE ONLY SITE BETWEEN
WASHINGTON DC AND ATLANTA

850

PATIENTS PROJECTED
TO BE SERVED IN 2024

a legacy here,” remarked Ken Haynes, president of the Southeast Region of Advocate Health. “This is an exciting and monumental day for our cancer service line, and we are extremely grateful for our world-class clinical staff and generous community supporters who made today possible.”

Proton beam therapy targets radiation precisely to a tumor, leaving the areas around it unharmed. It has been used clinically for more than 60 years and has been proven to be safe, effective, and to improve the quality of life for patients.

Atrium Health is the only location offering proton therapy treatments between Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, and one of less than 50 sites in the country to offer this treatment — ensuring individuals and families can receive this advanced therapy close to home.



Stuart Burri, MD, chairman of Radiation Oncology at Atrium Health Levine Cancer, took attendees on a tour of the 110-ton proton accelerator unit, called the cyclotron, which powers proton beam therapy.

FIREFIGHTER AND 6-YEAR-OLD AMONG FIRST TO RECEIVE PROTON BEAM THERAPY IN CHARLOTTE



Dakota Shuford

This October, following the historic launch of proton beam therapy in the Carolinas, Atrium Health Levine Cancer Proton & Advanced Radiation Center announced its first patients to receive proton therapy: 6-year-old Dakota Shuford and 26-year-old Hunter Pearson.

In 2021, Dakota was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare form of cancer that forms in soft tissue. Tumors on his spine caused him to lose the ability to walk. Despite these challenges, Dakota and his family continue to find joy in each day.

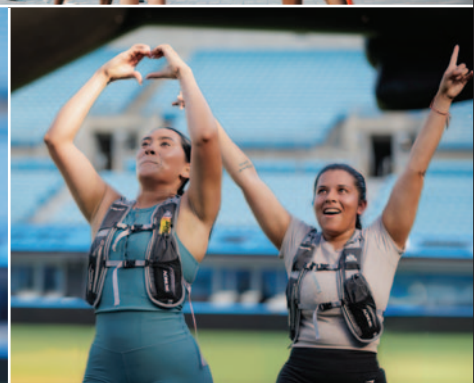
Last year, Hunter Pearson started having pain in his right leg. Months later, doctors diagnosed the Kings Mountain firefighter with Ewing sarcoma. Hunter remains hopeful because of the support of his fellow firefighters, loved ones, and care team.



Hunter Pearson



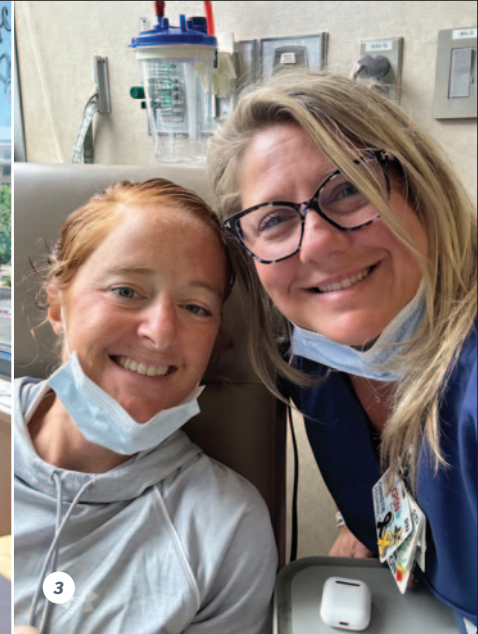
KEEP POUNDING • KEEP POUNDING • KEEP POUNDING • KEEP POUNDING • KEEP POUNDING • KEEP POUNDING



Pounding the Pavement

IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

On June 22, Atrium Health Foundation and the Carolina Panthers hosted the 14th Annual Keep Pounding 5K benefiting cancer research and care programs at Atrium Health. Presented by Rodgers Builders, Inc., the event shattered attendance records, with nearly 1,800 people coming together to pound out cancer, raising over \$126,000 for the cause.



UNDING • KEEP POUNDING • KEEP POUNDING • KEEP POUNDING • KEEP POUNDING • KEEP POUNDING

TERI'S JOURNEY

AT ATRIUM HEALTH COMES FULL CIRCLE

Dr. Ruben Mesa, president of Atrium Health Levine Cancer, rallied participants at the kickoff. **"We are making great strides against cancer, and [our donors] are all a critical part of that,"** he said.

"Defeating cancer is a team sport, and everyone out here who is running and raising money, along with those at home who contribute to advance our mission against cancer. Together, I know we can defeat cancer."

Leading the charge in the fight against cancer was Rodgers Builders, which has been a proud partner of the event since its inception and a steadfast supporter of care initiatives at Atrium Health for nearly 40 years. Rodgers Builders was joined by corporate sponsors APM Terminals, JELD-WEN,

Continued on pg. 20

For nearly 17 years, Teri Mehall, a pediatric oncology nurse at Atrium Health Levine Children's, has supported countless families through their cancer journeys. Every spring, she laces up her running shoes to participate in the Keep Pounding 5K in honor of her patients. In recent years, the event has taken on an even deeper meaning after Teri was diagnosed with stage 3a melanoma, transitioning her role from nurse to patient.

"I've felt supported from day one, from my surgeon to my oncologist to all the nurses and hospital personnel — they all played an important role in my healing," said Teri, who now lives with the disease after discontinuing treatment due to significant side effects. "My journey was not easy and has forever changed who I am. I know it has made me a stronger wife, mother, friend, and colleague. I can only hope my patients and their families feel this has made me a stronger nurse navigator as I continue to walk with them throughout their journeys, knowing I genuinely understand what they are going through."

1. Dr. Ruben Mesa speaks to participants before the start of the race. 2&3. Teri is a beacon of hope and resilience to her teammates and patients, including 12-year-old Lauren Felzer, who will finish treatment at Levine Children's in the fall. 4. Keeping with tradition, Teri, her family, and over 40 members of Team Mehall vs. Melanoma participated in this year's Keep Pounding 5K.



KEEP POUNDING 5K

Continued from pg. 19

DeMayo Law Offices, Pfizer, Office Environments, Mimik Tattoo, and Perspire Sauna Studio, as well as dozens of other department-led, patient, and corporate teams. Team Buffalo was recognized as the top community fundraising team, raising over \$3,500. Their team captain, Ashley Lozito, secured the top individual fundraiser award for her generous efforts.

Since the Keep Pounding initiative began in 2004 to honor the late Carolina Panthers linebacker and coach Sam Mills, the community has raised over \$4.6 million to advance cancer care at Atrium Health Levine Cancer and Atrium Health Levine Children's.



With special thanks to our
SPONSORS:

RODGERS BUILDERS, INC.

APM TERMINALS JELD-WEN DEMAYO LAW OFFICES, LLP

PFIZER OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS MIMIK TATTOO PERSPIRE SAUNA STUDIO

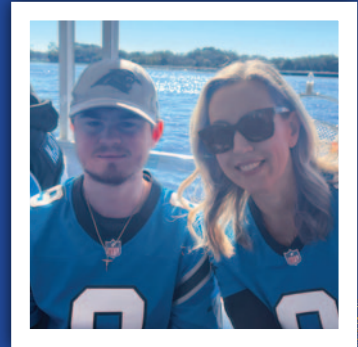
MEDIA SPONSORS:

QUEEN CITY NEWS HITS 96.1 FM



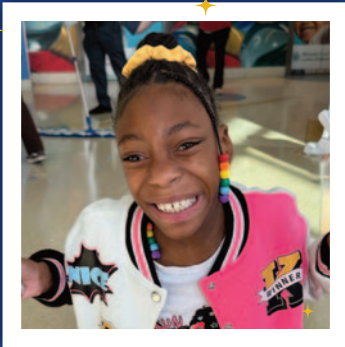
Two special guests helped kick off the race. Longtime Atrium Health teammate Travis Kerns (right) is a liver transplant recipient and patient of Levine Cancer Institute. He was joined by 10-year-old Cameron Stroud (left), a leukemia patient at Levine Children's, who is now in remission. Both have experienced the impact of the Keep Pounding 5K, firsthand, through patient programming at Atrium Health.

GIVE the gift of HOPE



Mikey
KIDNEY DISEASE SURVIVOR

Jennifer
BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR



E'layah
NEONATAL INTENSIVE
CARE GRADUATE



Steve
CARDIAC REHAB GRADUATE

The gift of health is one we all cherish.

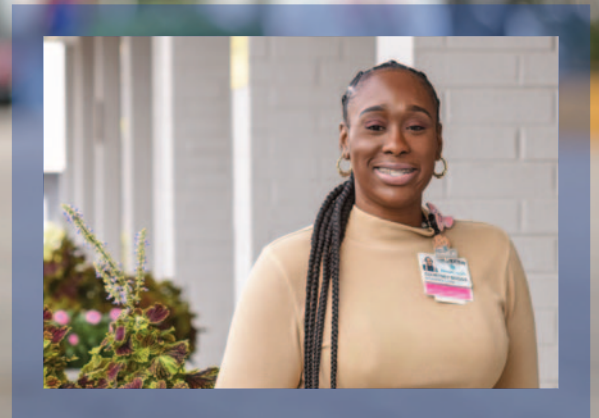
Because of your gifts, Atrium Health uplifts our community
through world-class care, clinical research, and outreach to the underserved.

To make a gift today, scan the QR code or visit AtriumHealthFoundation.org/DreamBig.





Philanthropy Fuels Hope for New Moms



Courtney Buggs joined Atrium Health in 2018 as a clinical case manager at Atrium Health Levine Children's and Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center.

Guided by a passion for connecting new mothers to essential care and parenting resources, Atrium Health teammate Courtney Buggs is making strides to impact the lives of vulnerable women in the greater Charlotte area. Based at Atrium Health Myers Park OB/GYN and Atrium Health NorthPark OB/GYN, Courtney has made it her mission to meet the prenatal and perinatal needs of young mothers and underserved Hispanic women.

During the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Courtney identified a growing need among new mothers within her patient population. Basic provisions, such as diapers and car seats, were out of reach for some patients, many of whom were uninsured or faced financial or cultural barriers to parenting resources. The opportunity to support her patients' special needs as they embarked upon motherhood filled Courtney with purpose.

Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Ann P. Miller Trust, and guided by Courtney's leadership, the two Charlotte-based OB/GYN practices continue to operate jointly as a community resource "hub" that provides vital access to perinatal and prenatal care — and a variety of parenting resources — for new and expectant mothers.

"I love what I do," said Courtney. "It brightens my day and is incredibly rewarding. The fact that generous community donors are supporting this program touches my heart and inspires me to work hard to improve our patients' lives, every day."

“ I love what I do. I wake up every morning ready to work, grateful to have donors to see my vision and help me serve my patients — many of whom are shocked to learn that they can receive this level of support through our clinics. It is such a rewarding position to be in. ”

— COURTNEY BUGGS

An important feature of the patient support program is a series of workshops, hosted in partnership with Smart Start and Mecklenburg County, that educates up to 10 new mothers each month about a variety of safety-related parenting topics and developmental milestones for infants.

“Many child-safety concepts are new to these moms because they come from varying backgrounds with different cultural influences and caretaking styles,” said Courtney.

The program also connects new mothers to food banks, HIV resources, transportation support, and diapers, strollers, and more. With future support from philanthropy, Courtney hopes the program will become a safety net for more young mothers.

Ann P. Miller Leaves a Legacy



Ann Miller, circa 1940



Since 2016, gifts from the Estate of Ann P. Miller have benefited Atrium Health patient programs and service lines, including Women's Care, adult and pediatric cardiology, pediatric kidney disease research, and more. A registered nurse who worked at Charlotte Memorial Hospital and Carolinas Medical Center, Ann left a legacy to her former patients through her generous estate gifts.

To leave a legacy at Atrium Health Foundation and support patients through a planned gift, contact:

Beth Braxton,
Director of Development:
Elizabeth.Braxton@atriumhealth.org
(704) 355-4049

Impact AT A GLANCE:

Last year, Atrium Health NorthPark OB/GYN and Atrium Health Myers Park OB/GYN:

Collectively served
70,000 patients

Provided **10 educational workshops** free of charge, to approximately 100 patients*

Donated **300+ car seats** to new mothers*

More than **50% of patients** treated at the clinics were **uninsured***

63% of patients were **Spanish speaking** (non-native English)*

*Figures represent combined average of data from both clinic locations over the past 12 months.



COMMUNITY SPIRIT SHINES AT THE **HOPEbuilders 5K**

On November 2, Atrium Health Foundation hosted the 29th Annual Hopebuilders 5K, presented by Morris-Jenkins. The event drew over 750 participants, uniting corporate sponsors, competitive runners, families, and care teams in a shared mission to honor the special children in their lives. Together, the dedicated community raised over \$135,000 for Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital, showcasing their deep commitment to the health and well-being of local kids.

Addressing participants at the starting line, Callie Dobbins, senior vice president of Levine Children's, said, "For over 15 years, we've been recognized as a top children's hospital by U.S. News & World Report. But it's not just about our status — it's about the patients we treat, our dedicated and compassionate team, and the generous donors who support us. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you and a special shoutout to two of Hopebuilders' founding partners, Gigi and William Harris. Thank you for your generous support and for trusting us with this event that holds such meaning for both your family and ours."

The success of this year's event was bolstered by the generous contributions of sponsors: Morris-Jenkins, Barings, Samet Corporation, Metrolina Greenhouses, WCNC Charlotte, HITS 96.1, Green Brothers Juice & Smoothie Co., and Summit Coffee Eastover. Presenting sponsor Morris-Jenkins also emerged as the top corporate fundraising team, demonstrating their ongoing commitment to Levine Children's.

Continued on pg. 30



Photo credit: Aquello Studios

Event founders Gigi and William Harris joined 750+ people in building hope for families at Levine Children's.

Care for Rare raised over \$23,000 for the Ward Winslett Center for Complex and Rare Diseases at Levine Children's — a remarkable achievement for their inaugural year. Their efforts inspired WARD'S Foundation to provide a \$20,000 matching gift, further amplifying the impact of their fundraising efforts.



Care for Rare (left) and Morris-Jenkins (right) were honored as the top community and corporate fundraising teams at the event.

HOPEBUILDERS 5K

Continued from pg. 29

Patient families and teams from departments throughout Levine Children's also set the bar high with their strong turnout and contagious energy. Standout teams included Care for Rare, SC Care Team, Rheumatology Rockstars, Team Family Futures, Pulmonary Superheroes, Cuties Not Cooties, Transplant Troopers, Kidney Crusaders, and more. Almost 30 years since its inception, the Hopebuilders 5K continues to inspire tremendous generosity from the Charlotte community and beyond.



The CIVILS Family Finds HOPE Close to Home

This past summer, two-year-old Katie Civils was hospitalized due to a stomach bug that left her non-responsive and with critically low blood sugar. After extensive testing, she was diagnosed with LCHAD deficiency, a rare genetic disorder that prevents her body from converting certain fats into energy.

Katie is among a few thousand people in the country with LCHAD and the only patient identified at Atrium Health in Charlotte. While she will need to follow a strict low-fat diet to avoid serious complications, Katie's family is fortunate to have a dedicated care team at Atrium Health Levine Children's Ward Winslett Center for Complex and Rare Diseases, led by Dr. Clay Ferren.



Grateful for the care they have received, the Civils family participated in the Hopebuilders 5K alongside the "Care for Rare" team. With a surprise \$20,000 matching gift from WARD's Foundation, the team raised over \$40,000 to support rare disease care at Levine Children's, helping to build hope for patients like Katie

◀ *The Civils family holds immense gratitude for the care Katie has received at the Ward Winslett Center for Complex and Rare Diseases. Pictured (from left): Dr. Clay Ferren, medical and biochemical geneticist; Elizabeth and Katie Civils; Kayleigh Bright, registered nurse; and Mackenzie Lane, senior metabolic dietitian.*

Q & A with

Patricia Mook



“ Being able to recognize our nurses for the work that they’ve done inspires them to do more, to give more, and to be even more compassionate for the next patient that comes through the doors. ”

THE ADVOCATE HEALTH ENTERPRISE SVP OF NURSING OPERATIONS, EDUCATION, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHARED HER GREATEST HOPES FOR THE FUTURE OF NURSING AT ATRIUM HEALTH.

AHF: What is your hope and vision for how philanthropy will continue to shape the face of nursing at Atrium Health in the year ahead?

Patricia: There are so many opportunities for us to enhance the work that’s being done in the Greater Charlotte area, including research to validate and extend the most successful care models across the enterprise. I see our donors supporting the innovation of nursing care on a much larger scale.

AHF: How is Atrium Health innovating within the nursing profession?

Patricia: The technologies used in virtual acute care, such as in med-surge areas where we have high demand for nursing resources, present opportunities for innovation. This allows us to attract and retain talented nurses.

AHF: How can philanthropy impact innovation within nursing?

Patricia: Philanthropic support allows us to have Virtual Nurse Observation (VNO) cameras at the bedside, which improves performance by helping our nurses anticipate care needs through machine learning and AI-assisted technology. This also helps us address nursing shortages in rural areas.

AHF: How is the Atrium Health Nursing Stars program making a difference?

Patricia: The Nursing Stars program is incredible. Being able to recognize our nurses for the work that they’ve done inspires them to do more, to give more, and to be even more compassionate for the next patient that comes through the doors.

Pictured: (center) Janice Walker, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, Southeast Region of Advocate Health, pictured with fellow nursing leaders (front row from left) Ronella Eaddy, Marietta Abernathy, Patricia Mook, and Brenda Crump; (middle row) Missy Baker and Stephanie McDonald; (back row from left) Denise White, Cathy Moore, and Robert Rose.





UPWARD

“ACE is the place” for giving hope

ACE Hardware kicked off corporate fundraising for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals with great success in 2024, raising over \$16,000 in their Round-Up campaign at store registers across the region. Driving ACE to a successful finish in first-quarter fundraising, former NASCAR driver and Fox Sports racing analyst Michael Waltrip won funds from the annual ACE Shootout celebrity golf skills competition this January, raising \$14,500 to benefit Atrium Health Levine Children’s Hospital. The summer closed with ACE Hardware’s popular “ACE Bucket Days” campaign, allowing customers to enjoy 20% savings on all they could fit into a 5-gallon bucket in exchange for a \$5 donation to CMN. Levine Children’s teammates also joined the campaign with an ACE Bucket Days decoration contest fundraiser held inside the hospital. Thanks to the generosity of ACE Hardware and CMN donors, miracles are in the making at Levine Children’s Hospital.

Costco champions children's health

Costco continues to shine a spotlight on children's health as a dedicated partner of Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. Nearly four decades into the wholesaler's national partnership with CMN Hospitals, Charlotte-area Costco locations have raised over \$1 million to benefit Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital. In 2023, Costco associates in Charlotte, Mooresville, and Matthews achieved record fundraising totals through their point-of-sale campaign, exceeding \$171,000. Combined with the retailer's corporate matching gifts program, Costco stores have given generously in 2024, raising over \$138,000 to bring health, hope, and healing to Levine Children's patients.

Publix changes future of kids' health

Demonstrating the company's belief in the Children's Miracle Network slogan *Change Kids' Health, Change the Future*, Publix continues its significant support for Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital. In 2023, store associates and customers raised more than \$80,000, followed by a 10-day coupon-based campaign this summer that raised over \$87,000.

Upcoming Partner Campaigns

THROUGH DECEMBER:

ACE Round-Up Holiday Campaign
Gingerbread Lane (Through December 28)
7-Eleven Register Campaign
(Ending January 7)

WINTER/SPRING 2025:

Dairy Queen Dip It For Kids (March 20)
ACE Round-Up Campaign (April)
Whistle Express Car Wash (March)
Ride of a Life Time (April)

YEAR-ROUND CAMPAIGNS:

Club Car Wash	Log-A-Load For Kids
Flow Control Group	Marriott
GameStop	McLane Company, Inc.
JOANN	Panda Express
Kiwanis Clubs	RE/MAX
Love's Travel Stops	Speedway



HYUNDAI LENDS A HELPING HAND TO PEDIATRIC CANCER RESEARCH

On the heels of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, Hyundai Hope On Wheels® gave a \$100,000 Impact Grant to Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital. The grant will support leading cancer research at Levine Children's, which has once again earned national recognition from U.S. News & World Report for its outstanding cancer program.

Driving this promising research is Dr. Jeffrey Huo, who will serve as the principal investigator examining aggressive sarcomas. Together, he and his team will activate a biobank for pediatric tumors within the Pediatric Oncology Research Laboratory to study the unique genetic and molecular characteristics of tumor samples. Through advanced technology in the lab, researchers can assess how different cell types within the tumors respond to treatment.

"By integrating these advanced techniques, we aim to significantly improve the testing of new drug strategies, ultimately leading to better treatment options for children facing such aggressive cancers," said Dr. Huo. "We are hopeful that our efforts will pave the way for breakthroughs in pediatric oncology, providing renewed hope for young patients and their families."

A special ceremony was held at Levine Children's Hospital, where Dr. Huo was joined by patients, who each left a handprint on the Hyundai Hope on Wheels vehicle. Their handprints will now travel across the country, bringing hope to other pediatric patients.

Hyundai Hope On Wheels is a shining example of community leadership in the fight against pediatric cancer. This year alone, they will award \$26 million in grants nationwide, reaching an incredible milestone of \$250 million in lifetime giving.



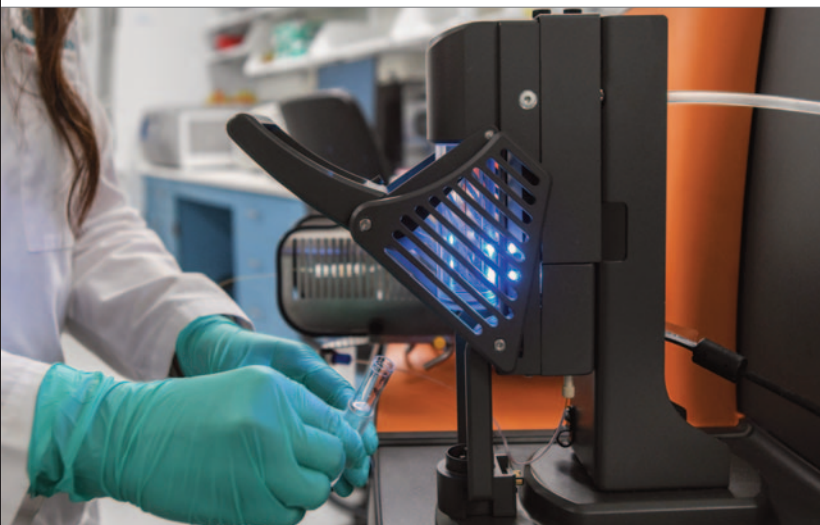
"To be that comfortable to walk around those floors and for that to be your second family... you can't ask for more when you're going through an invasive treatment."

— Ashley Gardner

Mother of Levi, who is being treated for Wilms' tumor at Levine Children's

Young cancer patient, Levi, with his mom, Ashley.





Hyundai dealers, cancer patients and their families, and care teams gathered for the Handprints of Hope Ceremony, followed by a tour of the pediatric cancer research lab.



Give Hope for the Holidays

DECEMBER 15-28

Gingerbread Lane

TheBallantyneHotel.com

From December 15-28, visit The Ballantyne™ to vote for your favorite enchanting gingerbread creations. Open daily from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. (closed Christmas Day), Gingerbread Lane exclusively benefits Atrium Health Levine Children's. Remember to vote generously as each vote — starting at \$1 — counts as a charitable contribution.



Swim Across America Achieves \$1 Million Milestone

On October 6, Swim Across America – Charlotte hosted its eighth annual charity swim at Camp Thunderbird, uniting swimmers of all ages to make waves to fight cancer. This year, the event raised \$270,000 to exclusively benefit leukemia research and related initiatives at Atrium Health Levine Cancer Institute (LCI) and pediatric cancer research at Atrium Health Levine Children's. This year marks a milestone achievement for the organization, having surpassed \$1 million raised in lifetime support for Atrium Health.



Serving as team captains for Team Levine Cancer Institute were Dr. Michael Grunwald and Dr. Lawrence Druhan. They were joined by seven-year-old Margaret Anne, a two-time cancer survivor, who swam to honor those impacted by cancer.

Due to Hurricane Helene, the event — normally held along the shores of Lake Wylie — was transitioned to Camp Thunderbird's outdoor pool. In a heartwarming display of community spirit, participants and volunteers donated supplies to impacted patients at Levine Cancer Institute in Rutherford County, NC.

WHY SHANNON MAKES WAVES

At 37, Shannon Carney received the life-changing news that she had breast cancer. For over two decades, this diagnosis has profoundly shaped her journey.

“It changes a person to their core,” Shannon reflects, considering the battles she has faced alongside her loved ones. “Cancer has taken so much from me, including my mother to pancreatic cancer and my father to prostate cancer.”

Today, Shannon celebrates 21 years of being cancer-free and her second year supporting Swim Across America – Charlotte. She joined her good friend and event director, Patty Waldron, participating with “MSA Team Out of My Box.”

This year, Shannon’s participation carried extra significance. She swam in memory of her dear friend, Rob DiFrank, who passed away last year. Shannon’s commitment to raising awareness and funds for cancer research exemplifies the spirit of resilience and community that defines Swim Across America.

With the support of Shannon, Team LCI, and many dedicated swimmers, this year’s event broke fundraising records and will impact programs that are saving lives, every day.



1. Shannon Carney (center), a breast cancer survivor, has participated in SAA – Charlotte’s swim event for the past two years.
2. Far left: Kris Mesa and husband Dr. Ruben Mesa, president of Atrium Health Levine Cancer; Shannon Carney; and Levine Cancer Institute’s Drs. Lawrence Druhan, Michael Grunwald, and Brittany Ragon.





THE WALMART DIFFERENCE



36 years of “Sparkling Good”



for local patients and families



Every year, Walmart and Sam’s Club associates join forces to support 170 Children’s Miracle Network (CMN) Hospitals through the “Spark Good” campaign. This year, 74 Charlotte-area locations participated in the campaign for Atrium Health Levine Children’s Hospital, a member of CMN Hospitals since 1988. Thanks to contributions from store associates, customers, and members, local Walmart and Sam’s Club locations have achieved a lifetime giving total of over \$15 million to enhance patient care at Levine Children’s. Since 1987, the global retailer has raised more than \$1 billion to benefit CMN member hospitals across North America. Following the company’s three decades of supporting Levine Children’s Hospital, Walmart & Sam’s Club ranks as Atrium Health Foundation’s fifth largest donor of all time.

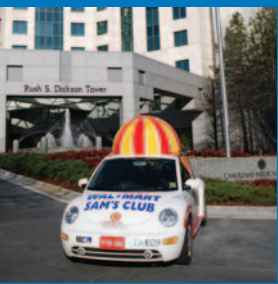
Ranked earlier this year as the “#1 Children’s Hospital” in North Carolina by U.S. News & World Report, Levine Children’s Hospital continues to build its national reputation for providing an unmatched level of care in more than 30 areas of pediatric medicine. Thanks to generous support from community partners like Walmart and Sam’s Club, Levine Children’s continues to grow, care, and innovate. Funds raised through the retailer’s annual “Spark Good” campaign provide direct support for state-of-the-art medical resources, including specialized neonatal intensive care and progressive care equipment, and comprehensive patient programs that improve the lives of thousands of kids each year.

“We’re honored to be celebrating our 36-year partnership with Levine Children’s Hospital — representing an incredible milestone for Walmart and Sam’s Club. Year after year, our employees have boldly shared Atrium Health’s vision to transform children’s health care and ensure a healthy tomorrow — for all patients and families in our region,” said Jason Leisenring, Regional Vice President, East BU Region 4, Walmart Stores Inc.



**Walmart #5747 Front End Coach
Amanda Vigh of Stanfield, NC, (pictured)
credits her son Roman’s health to his
amazing care team at Levine Children’s
Hospital, where he underwent surgery
at seven months old.**





1987

Walmart & Sam's Club (Walmart Foundation) join Children's Miracle Network Hospitals as a national corporate partner.

1988

Walmart & Sam's Club make the company's first corporate gift to Charlotte Memorial Hospital, donating \$47,000 to advance pediatric care.

1990's

Charlotte-area Walmart and Sam's Club store locations lead annual fundraising for Children's Miracle Network, raising more than \$2.7 million and helping to shape the future Levine Children's Hospital.

2004

Walmart & Sam's Club commits \$2.5 million to develop the neonatal intensive care nursery as part of Carolinas HealthCare Foundation's "Dare to Dream" campaign to build a new children's hospital.



2006-2010

Support from Walmart & Sam's Club helps Carolinas HealthCare System's MedCenter Air program reach new heights, funding in-flight medical equipment and a neonatal pediatric ground ambulance.



2019

With funding from Walmart & Sam's Club, Levine Children's Hospital purchases 4 EEG machines, which measure electrical activity in the brain; 6 respiratory ventilators; and 2 ECHMO (heart-lung) monitors.



2024

Locally, Walmart & Sam's Club raised \$565,000 (and counting) through a summer point-of-sale campaign, volunteer program, community grants, and associate giving, helping establish Atrium Health Levine Children's as the "#1 children's hospital"* in NC.

2020

Walmart & Sam's Club provide leading support for the hospital's pediatric cancer program to acquire Helios™ — a state-of-the-art mass cytometry device designed to improve cancer detection and treatment.



* Ranked by U.S. News & World Report in 2024.

On the SCENE

Supporters of the Adaptive Sports & Adventures Program complete ride-of-a-lifetime

1. This October, more than 20 able-bodied and adaptive athletes embarked upon a 180-mile cycling journey from Monroe, NC, to North Myrtle Beach, SC, raising over \$53,000 to benefit Carolinas Rehabilitation's Adaptive Sports & Adventures Program (ASAP). 2. Led by longtime ASAP participant and advocate Brian Muscarella (pictured front, center), this year's Top Fundraising team, Team Freak, raised more than \$39,000 with the support of fellow teammates (left to right) Dean Otto, Laura Sawyer, Daniel Sawyer, Dell Dembosky, Tom Baskind, and Kevin Scanlon.



24 Hours to change the course of cancer

For more than two decades, Charlotte-based 24 Foundation has pedaled and powered its way to raising an incredible \$27 million. Their efforts fuel cancer survivorship and wellness programs throughout the Carolinas, notably backing initiatives at Atrium Health Levine Cancer Institute and Atrium Health Levine Children's. Cyclists and spectators immersed themselves in a whirlwind 24-hour cycletron, setting personal mileage records and enjoying breaks between laps with catered meals, snacks, and beverages. Atrium Health attended in full force, with teammates representing both pediatric and adult cancer services.



Celebration of Hope recognizes top supporters of comprehensive campaign

Generous Atrium Health Foundation donors gathered at Quail Hollow Club to celebrate the success of the Giving Hope campaign, which launched in 2021 and has raised more than \$323 million to date. Advocate Health CEO Gene Woods welcomed guests through a video, emphasizing his gratitude for the community's shared commitment to the campaign's \$500 million goal. Guests also heard from Atrium Health Foundation President Armando Chardiet and campaign co-chairs, Pat Rodgers and Tom Finke, who underscored the campaign's tremendous progress.



Pink Pint Night Supports Breast Cancer Programs

Charlotte Radiology and NoDa Brewing joined forces for the annual Pink Pint Night fundraiser benefiting Atrium Health Levine Cancer: Project PINK, a mobile breast cancer screening initiative serving residents of Charlotte and surrounding communities. The evening featured live music, an online auction, food trucks, and the iconic "pink" brew.

Pictured from left: Charlotte Radiology's Dr. Amy Sobel, Joshua Edwards, and Dr. Shannon Hill, and Levine Cancer Institute's Dr. Arielle Heeke joined breast health advocates and survivors at Pink Pint Night.

On the SCENE

Spinal cord injury advocates and survivors roll together for a cause

The five-year celebration of This is How We Roll, organized by Atrium Health Carolinas Rehabilitation's Spinal Cord Injury team, raised over \$13,000 to support the Spinal Cord Injury Fund. Supporters and attendees of the 1-mile walk-and-roll event enjoyed educational demonstrations and fellowship with survivors and teammates dedicated to spinal cord injury prevention and recovery. Proceeds from the event support adaptive equipment and assistive technology; patient scholarships; spinal cord injury awareness and education; and community-building for individuals living with disabilities.



Union County area residents "Tickled Pink" to support breast health

Tickled Pink, one of Union County's premier fundraisers, raised over \$90,000 to support local breast health initiatives. The event featured a runway show, modeled by breast cancer advocates. Proceeds will support breast cancer screenings and diagnostic services for residents of Union County served by Levine Cancer Institute's Project Pink.



Chick-fil-A of Charlotte hosts Chicken for a Cure

On June 10, Charlotte area Chick-fil-A restaurants donated all proceeds from 49 location's mobile orders, raising \$100,000 to support Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital.

TOP HONORS FOR ATRIUM HEALTH LEVINE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

For the 17th consecutive year, Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital has been recognized as one of U.S. News & World Report's Best Children's Hospitals. In addition to ranking among the Top 50 in the country across 10 pediatric specialties — the most in the hospital's history — Levine Children's Hospital earned the prestigious ranking of the No.1 children's hospital in North Carolina and tied for the No.1 children's hospital in the entire southeastern United States.



This outstanding accomplishment underscores the hospital's comprehensive and specialized care, including being home to the region's most advanced pediatric cardiac program, helping cardiology and heart surgery rank as the No. 7 program in the nation, the hospital's second consecutive year achieving a Top 10 national ranking. These rankings mark the first year that behavioral health has been a recognized specialty by U.S. News & World Report and Levine Children's Hospital is proud to be among the inaugural hospitals ranked in this specialty.

Leaders who spoke at the event recognized teammates for their expertise, compassion, and commitment to ensuring the healthy future of our children and their families. In addition to the tireless commitments of our world-class care teams, the support of many generous donors to Atrium Health Foundation ensures that Levine Children's Hospital consistently ranks among the best in the nation.

Top 10 Pediatric Specialties:

- Behavioral Health
- Cancer
- Cardiology & Heart Surgery
- Gastroenterology & GI Surgery
- Neonatology
- Nephrology
- Neurology & Neurosurgery
- Orthopedics
- Pulmonology
- Urology

#1 *Children's*
HOSPITAL
IN NORTH CAROLINA



Atrium Health
Levine Children's

RANKED IN



SPECIALTIES

AND NORTH CAROLINA'S #1 CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Golfing FOR GOOD

ED STUBBS MEMORIAL GOLF INVITATIONAL

This September, supporters of Atrium Health University gathered at Northstone Country Club for the 31st Annual Dr. Ed Stubbs Memorial Golf Invitational. The event helps Atrium Health University City fulfill its mission of delivering advanced, personalized care to our region.



First place winners: Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute's Bart Reeves, Felipe Navarro, MD, Kevin Bent, and Kevin Hixon

patients over the last 25 years, providing primary and gynecologic care, laboratory services, physical therapy, and dental care.

“Atrium Health University City teammates look forward to this event each year. We work hard, 24/7, so it is special to see community support and to carry on Ed Stubb’s legacy of care and compassion.”

— BILL LEONARD

Honoring the memory of Dr. George “Ed” Stubbs, III, an accomplished OB/GYN physician beloved by his patients and community, the annual event supports Atrium Health University City’s Community Outreach program, in partnership with Cook Community Clinic.

This year, the charity golf event raised over \$65,000 to help ensure that medically fragile patients have access to affordable and comprehensive medical care, including women’s health services — a vision shared by Atrium Health and the late Dr. Stubbs.

“Dr. Ed Stubbs was deeply involved in caring for the underserved in our community,” said Bill Leonard, vice president and facility executive of Atrium Health University City. “Golfers return year after year to support this worthy cause.”

Philanthropy in Action

Thanks to generous philanthropic support, Atrium Health University City — in partnership with Cook Community Clinic in Huntersville — has

cared for over 10,000



From left: Teammates Tim Hall, MD, and Ben Morel, MD, joined VP and facility executive Bill Leonard (front) on the putting green.

PINEVILLE GOLF INVITATIONAL: BEYOND THE GAME

On September 9, golfers hit the greens at Carolina Lakes Golf Club, raising over \$92,000 to benefit Atrium Health Pineville. Presented by Rodgers Builders, the annual Atrium Health Pineville Golf Invitational raises funds to enhance comprehensive care, patient resources, and education.

Alicia Campbell, facility executive and vice president of the Pineville-based hospital, helped organize the event and shared gratitude for the community's support of Atrium Health Pineville. "This tournament has impacted our patients and visitors, as well as the safety and well-being of our teammates and medical staff," said Campbell. "When I work in the hospital every day, I am so grateful to witness how our teammates, patients, and families benefit directly from advancements made through philanthropy."



Atrium Health Pineville teammates and facility leaders hit the green this September, showing their dedication to their patients.

PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION:



Expanding mental health resources and evaluation tools for diverse patient populations.



Upgrading facilities to enhance patient and family services, as well as equipment needs.



Providing operational support to enhance teammate and volunteer experience.



Improving wayfinding throughout the campus for patients' and visitors' benefit.



Recognizing top-performing teammates for their commitment to outstanding patient care.

Meet Ginger

With nearly 20 years of philanthropic experience, Ginger joined Atrium Health Foundation this spring as Director of Development. In her role, Ginger supports fundraising for nursing, surgical programs, emergency medicine, and Atrium Health Carolinas Rehabilitation.



Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, Ginger relocated to Charlotte after spending 14 years on Hilton Head Island, where she served as the Director of Development at Volunteers in Medicine Clinic, the largest free and charitable clinic in South Carolina. Married to Steve, they have a blended family of seven young adults, including two sets of identical twins. Five of their children live and work in Charlotte. A graduate of Wake Forest University, Ginger pursued graduate studies at Georgia State University, and earned her CFRE designation through Boston University's School of Professional Studies.

Outside of work, Ginger enjoys bootcamp workouts, reading, traveling, and time with family and friends. She is excited to meet new people and reconnect with old friends in North Carolina.

“I’ve always been passionate about the power of philanthropy and the profound value of community involvement. I believe deeply in the necessity of health equity and love connecting people with philanthropic causes that resonate with their hearts. It is such a privilege to see people experience the fulfillment and joy that come from giving to create a brighter future and make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.”

Meet Sarah

Sarah Bailey joined Atrium Health Foundation’s Grants & Foundation Relations team this April, bringing with her more than 13 years of leadership experience in public health, grantmaking, health equity, community impact, and nonprofit management. Much of Sarah’s career was spent in the greater Charlotte region, and although her family has since moved to a small town outside the area, she has deep ties to the Queen City.

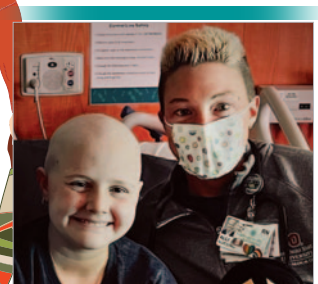
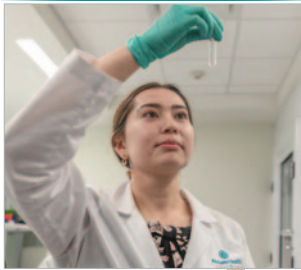
Sarah has a passion for advocating for mental health, especially among children and adolescents. She has served on the board of directors for her local elementary school parent teacher association for several years. She also owns a small business operating inside the Design Market of the Pines, and enjoys spending time with her family, running, baking, and reading books with her kids.



“I’m an eternal optimist who values kindness, integrity, and respect,” shares Sarah. “I have a love for inspirational quotes and a core belief in being and raising good humans. I joined Atrium Health Foundation because of the tremendous support, breadth, and depth of initiatives, and creating positive impact across our communities. It’s an honor to be a part of this team!”

gives

– FROM THE HEART.



Every fall, Advocate Health teammates join in a long-standing tradition of giving to organizations and programs that impact their communities. **In 2024, teammates gave generously, pledging over \$900,000 to support Atrium Health Foundation.** Their gifts will help Atrium Health expand access to care, address social disparities, enhance the patient experience, foster innovation, provide learning opportunities for health care providers, and so much more.

Thank you, Teammates!

A RECIPE FOR HEALTH: **Belk Family Community Kitchen**

When Tim and Sarah Belk made their \$500,000 gift to Atrium Health Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute (SHVI) in 2021, they helped ensure patients had access to a “whole-health” approach to heart care through a state-of-the-art demonstration kitchen. A key component to SHVI’s holistic approach to healing and wellness, the **Belk Family Community Kitchen** provides hands-on nutrition and healthy cooking instruction to patients enrolled in Cardiac Rehabilitation. In addition, the Belk Family Community Kitchen extends its services to families and community partners through seminars and cooking classes. The kitchen also packages healthy meals and distributes them to the community — an approach most important to the Belk family.

Sarah and her husband, Tim, the retired chairman and CEO of Belk, Inc., are the founders of **Wild Hope Farm** — a family business that serves as a resource for educating a new generation of organic farmers. Their farm not only brings high-quality, organic food into local communities through sustainable farming — it is also a gathering place, much like the kitchen named in their honor. A former member of the Atrium Health Board of Commissioners, Tim is a proponent of educating heart patients and families about health and wellness.

Thanks to the Belk family’s support, the Belk Family Community Kitchen provides a bounty of education and healthy meals for our community.

Enjoy this heart-healthy seasonal recipe, inspired by Wild Hope Farm and created by dietitian and chef, Elaine Jones.



From left: Geoffrey Rose, MD, President, Atrium Health Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute; Elaine Jones, Senior Dietitian, Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute.

Cranberry-Almond Chicken Salad

Yield: Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2/3 cup of slivered almonds
- 3 cups chopped cooked chicken
- 3/4 cup sweetened dried cranberries
- 2 celery ribs, diced
- 1/2 small sweet onion, diced
- 3/4 cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon Greek seasoning
- 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Bake almonds in a single layer in a shallow pan 5 to 7 minutes or until lightly toasted and fragrant. Cool completely in pan on a wire rack (about 15 minutes). Stir together almonds, chicken, dried cranberries, and remaining ingredients; serve immediately, or cover and chill up to 24 hours.