The Healing Power of Giving
Saint Agnes Foundation partners with physicians to help unlock the power of gratitude to help their patients heal.

Saint Agnes is fortunate to have an outstanding group of physician partners who support our philanthropic efforts by providing valuable insight and guidance. This group of dedicated clinicians serve on our Physician Advisory Council, and are ambassadors and champions for our work.

This year, the Physician Advisory Council is focused on creating a “culture of gratitude” by helping to educate other clinicians about how philanthropy has a unique ability to unlock the power of gratitude to help patients heal. Various research studies suggest that patients and families who are given the opportunity to support the institution from which they received care experience an increased ability to cope with stress, a stronger immune function, quicker recovery from illness, lower blood pressure and increased feelings of connectedness. All of these improve relationships and wellbeing which can lead to greater joy, optimism, generosity and compassion. When patients are happier, they can make decisions that will help them lead healthier lives.

Grateful patient philanthropy programs are a way for patients to express their gratitude through philanthropy to their physicians, nurses and other caregivers. Everyone whose work touches the patient has the potential to create gratitude, and this gratitude may find expression in a philanthropic gift.

We wish to recognize and thank our Physician Advisory Council members: Dr. Nancy Hammond (Chair), Dr. Shad Barakat, Dr. Tessa Behrens, Dr. Tom Grace, Dr. Marian Lamonte, Dr. Carole Miller, Dr. Richard Pomerenz, Dr. Juan Sanchez, Dr. John Singer, Dr. Sam Sydney and Dr. Kenneth Williams.

Brian Donchez, grateful patient and cancer survivor

Brian said “the professionals of the Cancer Institute are truly the people of Saint Agnes who epitomize the mission statement to its fullest. Patients are definitely their passion, the physicians and associates are the pride of the Institute, and healing and seeing one survive cancer is their ultimate joy.” It is these professionals and the personalized care provided by Saint Agnes that made Brian want to give back to the hospital that saved him.

Thanks to generous donations from the community, Saint Agnes is able to hire additional staff nurses and support staff to provide our patients with the best care possible, make needed equipment purchases and improve patient care environments. We have more than 800 physicians on staff and we are fortunate that many of them have established their own charitable foundations.

Please join Brian on National Doctors’ Day, March 30th, as he pays tribute to the physicians and caregivers who made a tremendous impact on his life and continue to provide outstanding service to all of their patients. The sentiment of every gift, large or small, is invaluable. Visit give.stagnes.org and fill in the tribute information to make a gift in support of your doctor today!
Designation # 25520

On Friday, April 21 2017, the Saint Agnes Foundation will once again host Baltimore’s most exciting cooking competition, The Supper, an evening of saintly dishes and sinful delights, presented by The Law Offices of Peter Angelos, PC. The live action competition pits chef against chef in the ultimate showdown while raising necessary funds for Saint Agnes Healthcare.

“Top Chef” and restaurateur Bryan Voltaggio and fellow James Beard Award nominee and food writer Julia Bairnbridge return as event emcees. Chef Zack Mills of Wit & Wisdom will also return to the stage as he defends his title after winning last year's inaugural competition.

Held at LoyolaBlakefield, this year's event will feature Chef Chris Becker of The Bagby Group battling against Chef Mark Levy of Magdalena. The winner of this first round will compete against Chef Mills. Attendees will get the opportunity to vote for the crowd favorite while enjoying recipes from each chef prepared by one of Baltimore's top caterers, Linwoods.

Eight lucky attendees will get the chance to serve as judges during the competition! This exclusive experience includes a seat on stage just feet away from the chefs, tastings of delish dishes prepared by the chefs themselves and the opportunity to provide commentary and critique to the emcees.

Tickets to The Supper are currently on sale, but expected to sell out fast! Tickets are $100 for general admission, $150 for the VIP experience and there are just a few spots left to be one of the eight judges. All tickets and sponsorships can be purchased online at thesupper.org.

All proceeds from The Supper will go towards supporting Saint Agnes’ most vulnerable patients and where needs are greatest.

Unable to attend, but still want to join the fun? Purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win a unique dining experience: Dinner for 4 with Wine Pairing at Wit & Wisdom, generously donated by the Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore, are available for $50 at thesupper.org. The winner of the raffle prize will be announced at the event on April 21st but you need not be present to win.

Mark Butles, Chairman of Board of Directors, Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation; Cal Ripken Jr., Baseball Hall of Famer and Ripken Foundation vice-chairman; Keith Vander Kolk, President & CEO of Saint Agnes Healthcare and the Huxtable Family help cut the ribbon of Babe Ruth Field at Gibbons Commons on November 17, 2016.

Many factors contribute to the health of individuals and communities. Our health is determined by our circumstances and environment. Components that have considerable impact on our health include where we live, our income and our education. These determinants can directly affect our individual and community health.

The Saint Agnes Foundation understands that in order to address health disparities we need to consider the assortment of factors that occur outside of our hospital walls. We are fortunate to have community partners to improve health equity through a community-centered approach. By supporting community partnerships that address upstream factors of health, we are able to leverage resources, increase access and improve outcomes related to employment and education. Research data has shown that individuals with less than a high school education have much higher rates of disease and mortality. The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation partnered with Saint Agnes to pay homage to Baseball Legend Babe Ruth with the development of Babe Ruth Field at Gibbons Commons. This multipurpose youth development space that was opened in November will provide Baltimore youth with a clean, safe place to learn, play and grow. We hope that repurposing this property breathes new life into the local community. “At Saint Agnes, our work is centered around providing health and healing to our community — and that includes our youth. The preservation and enhancement of this historic field, is an investment in the health, wellness and future of our youth and we are honored to partner with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation on this project,” said Keith Vander Kolk, President & CEO of Saint Agnes Healthcare. “As we look to the future of Gibbons Commons, we will continue to work with our partners to find new and valuable ways to better the community. Gibbons Commons continues to come together, growing in scope and potential to make a powerful impact here in Baltimore.”

Also present at the ribbon-cutting were Jonathan and Christine Huxtable, who lost their son, Benjamin, to a tragic baseball accident in Lutherville in 2005. We are grateful to the Huxtable family for significant philanthropic support to the Babe Ruth Field as a memorial to Benjamin who loved baseball.

Another partnership is My Brother’s Keeper, which provides meals, workforce development, youth programming and health screening services to create patient-centered healthy neighborhoods. My Brother’s Keeper and the Baltimore Mayor’s Office of Employment operates Community Job Hubs for Southwest Baltimore residents. Together the programs provide direct access to tools and resources needed to pursue employment. They have provided over 20,000 lunches to families and seniors in the Irvington Community. My Brother’s Keeper also provides a health and mobile clinic to residents of Irvington and surrounding communities, inclusive of the Saint Agnes community.

With the Foundation’s support, these community partners are addressing upstream determinants of public health. We continue to stand by our mission that Saint Agnes Healthcare is dedicated to the art of healing to sustain and improve the lives of the individuals and communities we serve.
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Chef Bryan Voltaggio presenting the chef award to Chef Zack Mills in 2016.

Chef Chris Becker of The Bagby Group

Chef Zack Mills of Wit & Wisdom

Chef Mark Levy of Magdalena

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Brian’s father was in the military and stationed all over the world. Brian followed in his father’s footsteps and for 20 years he served his country by joining the U.S. Air Force and was stationed in Fort Meade, Korea, Hawaii, and Colorado. The military enabled Brian to learn about himself and the importance of developing both professionally and personally.

During his time in the Air Force, he met and married his wife, Cathy. They share similar interests such as fine wines and genealogy. After his military career, Brian and Cathy moved to Catonsville, and then to Ellicott City.

In May of 2002, Brian had a routine colonoscopy and after the procedure the doctor suggested he meet with an oncologist at the Saint Agnes Cancer Institute. He was diagnosed with colon/rectal cancer. While it’s never easy to hear the words “you have cancer” Brian felt like he was fortunate to get such terrible news around nurses and doctors who instantly made him feel like family.

Immediately after being diagnosed, Brian was assisted in the process of setting up medical appointments which included chemotherapy and radiation. He was provided a chemo pump which distributed chemotherapy medication to him 24 hours a day so he could continue working. By his side, through the entire process, was Cathy. While the doctor’s treated him they always made sure Cathy was involved and understood the treatment plan. Brian said “as I look back on it now, the process was just what the doctors, nurses, and the entire staff at Saint Agnes was trained for and it was amazing to see the coordination, dedication, professionalism, and attention to every detail with which they handled my personal situation.”

In September of 2002, Brian had surgery to remove his tumor and has been cancer free since.

It is because of the entire Saint Agnes Cancer team that Brian and Cathy will be able to celebrate their 27th wedding anniversary in May and look forward to retiring in the near future. They plan to travel and search out their ancestors.