…By Providing Nursing Supplies to Future Nurses

(Left) St. Francis provided 110 bags filled with nursing supplies to Columbus State University first-year nursing students to use in their lab. The students who received them in August were most appreciative! St. Francis also donated 90 bags to first-year nursing students at Columbus Technical College.

…By Walking for a Cause

St. Francis associates helped raise funds for the local chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association by walking in the group’s walk on October 22 at Brookstone School. (Left) Team members wear event t-shirts handpainted by clients of the Oasis adult respite program at The Bradley Center.

…By Helping High School Students Explore Health Care Careers

High school students explore health care careers at St. Francis Hospital one evening a month through the Medical Explorers program of the Boy Scouts of America-Chattahoochee Valley chapter. (Left) Kevin Ellis, RN, describes careers in surgery to a group in October.

Vision Becomes Reality: Elena Díaz-Verson Amos Center for Breast Health
**Holiday Gifts That Give Back**

The holiday season is approaching, and what better gift to give your friends, family and customers than honoring them through your support of the patients at St. Francis Hospital.

Instead of shopping for gifts and mailing cards, many of our friends and supporters sponsor a poinsettia in honor of their family or associates. The Foundation sends a personal card to the person you designate and, just before Christmas, your poinsettia is delivered to a patient at St. Francis.

For more information about dedicating a poinsettia or making a holiday gift tribute, visit www.wecareforlife.com or call the St. Francis Foundation at 706-653-9375.

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**Spirit of St. Francis**

**VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2**

Spirit of St. Francis is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of St. Francis Hospital, Inc., and the St. Francis Foundation.

St. Francis Hospital Foundation, Inc.
2300 Manchester Expressway, Suite F3
Columbus, Georgia 31904
(706) 653-9375
www.wecareforlife.com

Robert P. Granger
President and
Chief Executive Officer
St. Francis Hospital, Inc.

McDonald Plummer Jr.
Vice President
St. Francis Foundation

Amy G. Adams
Director of Communications

Karen L. Johnson
Editor

Sara R. Hutchinson
Writer

Image by Design
Graphic Design

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The Center for Breast Health, formerly The Women’s Center of St. Francis, announced its vision to the community with a dedication ceremony on October 1. The Center was renamed in memory of Elena Diaz-Verson Amos to honor the Amos family’s generosity. The estate of John and Elena Amos pledged $1 million to St. Francis to ensure that our community will benefit from world class breast health services and the latest technology in future years all under one roof at the center.

“We waited to make this announcement so we could determine our future plans for the facility,” explained Robert Granger, president and CEO of St. Francis. “When St. Francis formed a partnership with Columbus Surgical Associates to become the St. Francis Center for Surgical Care, we were fortunate to gain the expertise of breast surgeon Dr. Charles Scarborough, Dr. Wade Wallace, the director of Radiology, are natives of Columbus, and our community is fortunate to have two local experts serving in their hometown. Dr. Scarborough, a breast specialist and board-certified general surgeon specializing in breast care, and Dr. Wallace, a board-certified radiologist, have dedicated their careers to breast health and mammography services to benefit all the women in our community.

“The Elena Diaz-Verson Amos Center for Breast Health will provide education, diagnostic services and results to referring physicians expeditiously for their review and recommendations to their patients,” says Dr. Scarborough.

“…”This will be accomplished in an environment that is comfortable, convenient and, best of all, using the latest technology available.”

The Center for Breast Health is enhanced by having community support. Two digital mammography units have been donated, one by the St. Francis Auxiliary and the second by a generous local family.

“Our services are available, and we encourage women to get their regular screening mammogram,” says Lynn Thompson, administrative director of the center. “Women are actually their own best breast experts. When a woman checks her breast at the same time each month, she is the first to know when a change has occurred, and she should immediately contact her physician for an examination.”

When a woman gets her screening exam at the Center for Breast Health and an irregularity is detected by the center’s onsite radiologist, she can have confidence that a diagnostic mammogram will be performed quickly, on the same day, if possible, or certainly by the next day.

“Having a dedicated radiologist on site to read, advise and consult if requested by the referring physician can eliminate the fear of the unknown and cut the waiting time to 24 hours.

In 2008, MRI of the breast will also be available. Breast MRI, an exciting and evolving technology, should not, however, replace the standard screening and diagnostic tools used first. The American Cancer Society recommends that a woman with an unusually high risk of developing breast cancer get an annual MRI as well as a mammogram. Specific criteria must be met in order to do so.

The Elena Diaz-Verson Amos Center for Breast Health is dedicated to providing world class breast care to the women of this community.

– Amy Adams

**Services at the Elena Diaz-Verson Center for Breast Health:**

- Two full-field digital mammography units, one of which is designed to take images of full-figured women
- Diagnostic breast ultrasound
- Minimally invasive breast biopsy
- DEXA scan for diagnosing osteoporosis
- PET scans
- MRI
- All other physician-requested ultrasound procedures

Nationally, fewer and fewer women are getting mammograms. This may be the result of a six percent drop in the number of mammography centers in the United States between 2001 and 2004, according to the National Cancer Institute. A government report shows that 1,000 of the nation’s facilities have shut down because of rising overhead costs and a decline in the number of doctors willing to read mammograms. The women of Columbus and surrounding areas are fortunate to have a world class facility like the Center for Breast Health and its dedicated staff of physicians and personnel who share the same goals and vision.
It’s What’s On The Inside That Counts

Announcing the St. Francis Center for Digestive Disorders

Heartburn, indigestion and even nausea can sometimes send you to the pharmacy for quick relief. Complaints related to the digestive tract are some of the most common reasons many people take over-the-counter medications. But a quick fix doesn’t always work and might not be the best solution to what ails you.

Gastroenterologists, or “GIs,” are medical specialists with extensive training in diseases of the digestive tract.

“Buying over-the-counter items like Pepcid and Prilosec are okay for temporary relief, but I see patients that go to health food stores and buy all kinds of medication. Some of these drugs have no scientific basis and can actually be harmful to your body,” explains gastroenterologist Dr. Benjamin Pike.

Dr. Pike, who will retire later this year, is one of the four gastroenterologists who make up the newly announced St. Francis Center for Digestive Disorders. The center combines the experience of Dr. Mark Fortson, Dr. Richard Robbins and Dr. Chad Sisk. Dr. Robbins has been practicing in Columbus for nearly 30 years, and Dr. Fortson has been in practice since 1994. Dr. Sisk comes to St. Francis Hospital from Martin Army Hospital, where he was the chief of Gastroenterology.

“I think it is a great advantage anytime you can combine resources and make access to medical care easier for patients and family members. Combining several gastroenterologists with differing experience levels gives both patients and referring physicians an added option when contemplating gastroenterology consultation,” Dr. Sisk says.

“This group venture will allow us, as physicians, to concentrate on what we do best and that is take care of patients,” explains Dr. Robbins.

Gastroenterologists perform colonoscopies to screen for, and hopefully prevent, the development of colon cancer by removing pre-malignant polyps. The physicians at the St. Francis Center for Digestive Disorders treat many other conditions, too, such as diverticulosis, esophageal reflux, inflammatory bowel disease, irritable bowel syndrome and ulcers.

Gastroenterologists also treat and manage patients with abdominal pain, liver disease, rectal bleeding, diarrhea and gallstones.

The new St. Francis Center for Digestive Disorders will offer a new, state-of-the-art Endoscopy Unit. The new unit will improve patient flow by adding 10 new pre- and post-op areas, for a total of 17, and an additional procedure room. One form of new technology being added is streaming video. This will allow the patient to remain in the Endoscopy Unit instead of being transported to the Radiology department for the procedure. By using video, the radiologist will collaborate with the physician over the phone instead of having to be in the actual procedure room.

Opening the new center will expand technology and services at St. Francis. Recently, St. Francis employed two nurse anesthetists to provide propofol anesthesia during endoscopy. Propofol provides loss of awareness for short diagnostic tests and a surgical procedure. The term “endoscopy” refers to a special technique for looking inside a part of the body. This method of sedation offers completely pain-free endoscopy with rapid recovery and almost no post-anesthesia side effects.

“We also plan to add video capsule endoscopy, This is a small pill camera that is swallowed and allows us to look at video images of the small bowel,” Dr. Fortson says.

“Gastroenterology, like many other fields of medicine, is rapidly changing, and new technologies are always being developed. Hopefully, by joining forces it will also make it easier to continue to bring new technologies to Columbus,” Dr. Sisk explains.

Dr. Sisk hopes that as the center is utilized and expanded, consideration will be given to adding specialized clinics, such as hepatology, nutrition or more advanced gastrointestinal procedures, such as endoscopic ultrasound, that are sometimes only available in a university setting or teaching center. He explains that these types of services keep patients from having to go out of town.

“I appreciate St. Francis giving us the opportunity to expand and combine our gastroenterology services. This center will seek to establish St. Francis as not only the local choice for gastroenterology consultation, but also the referral center for the region,” Dr. Sisk concludes.

— Amy Adams

For more information, call 706-320-2766.

Steps to Good Intestinal Health

• Eat a balanced and varied diet that contains fruits and vegetables, bran and other whole grain breads and cereals, beans, dried plums and nuts.

• Limit fats and avoid concentrated sweets, emphasizing complex carbohydrates.

• Get enough fluids via beverages or foods. Include a beverage with every meal or snack. Low-calorie or non-caffeinated selections could include water and herbal teas and fruit juices, such as prune juice.

• How you eat is just as important as what you eat. Eat slowly, stop eating when you feel full, and don’t eat just before bedtime. Make time for proper nutrition.

• Exercise. Try aerobic or strength-building activities. Or try stretching exercises like yoga or pilates.

• Manage your stress. Relaxing should be a part of your daily to-do list, just the same as work, social and family obligations.
Mark Fortson, MD
Dr. Mark Fortson graduated magna cum laude from the University of Georgia, where he did his undergraduate work. He graduated cum laude from Emory University School of Medicine in 1980. Dr. Fortson did his residency in internal medicine at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City, Iowa, and his fellowship in gastroenterology at The Medical College of Georgia in Augusta. He is board-certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Alpha Omega Alpha. Dr. Fortson is nationally published and belongs to a number of professional organizations, including the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, American College of Gastroenterology and the Medical Association of Georgia.

Richard Robbins, MD
Dr. Richard Robbins is a Columbus native. He did his undergraduate work at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Dr. Robbins went on to Yale Medical School in New Haven, Conn., where he earned his medical degree and graduated cum laude in 1972. He did his residency at Yale-New Haven Hospital and a gastroenterology fellowship at the University of California in San Francisco. Dr. Robbins is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Alpha Omega Alpha. He is also a member of several professional societies, including the Georgia Gastroenterologic Society, Georgia Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy and the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy.

Chad Sisk, DO, FACG
Dr. Chad Sisk comes to the St. Francis Center for Digestive Disorders from Martin Army Community Hospital at Ft. Benning, Ga. Dr. Sisk graduated from North Georgia College in Dahlonega and went on to earn his degree at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. He did his internship and residency at William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas. Dr. Sisk did his fellowship in gastroenterology at Brooks Army Medical Center at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. He is board-certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology. Dr. Sisk has been published regionally and nationally in several medical journals. He is a diplomate for the American Board of Internal Medicine, a fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology, a member of the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopists and the national osteopathic fraternity, Sigma Sigma.

Benjamin Pike, MD, FACP
Dr. Benjamin Pike graduated from the University of Georgia and went on to earn his medical degree at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. Dr. Pike did his internship and gastroenterology fellowship in San Antonio, Texas, at Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center and his residency at USAF Medical Center Kessler in Mississippi. He has been in private practice in Columbus since 1976. He is board-certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology. Dr. Pike is past president of the Georgia Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, a member of the American Gastroenterological Association and the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy and a fellow of the American College of Physicians and American College of Gastroenterology.

Bonnie Franco, RN
Dr. Leland McCluskey
Winning the Georgia Hospital Association’s (GHA) Lifetime Achievement Award came as a surprise to Bonnie Franco. It did not, however, surprise Debbie Saylor, RN, MSN, senior vice president of Patient Services.

“Bonnie is a legacy leader for nursing,” says Saylor. “She is a role model and mentor for nurses throughout St. Francis. She has been here at St. Francis for almost 31 years when the average tenure of a nurse is less than five years. While her tenure alone is significant, her accomplishments and contributions are most worthy of recognition.”

Franco, who first began working as a unit secretary at St. Francis while in high school, became a registered nurse in 1977. She then worked as a staff nurse in St. Francis’ Medical-Surgical unit until 1984. Within a year, she was promoted to charge nurse. Since then, she has held several positions in nursing leadership in almost every department at St. Francis Hospital, including Outpatient Services, Endoscopy, Emergency Services and in Medical-Surgical units. During those years, she completed Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team leader training and served as team leader for St. Francis’ first CQI team. She was involved in planning the hospital’s new Emergency Department, and also led the team that designed the Rosemont Health Center.

In 2003, Bonnie became the administrative director of nursing at St. Francis. As a member of the Continuous Survey Readiness Team, she helped lead the hospital through four successful Joint Commission surveys with a score of 93 or better.

Since becoming The Bradley Center’s administrative director in 2005, she has led the facility to high levels of quality and customer satisfaction while also helping orchestrate a partnership with Columbus Regional Healthcare System. Last year, she helped open a new military unit and a child and adolescent unit, too.

“Bonnie deserves this award for her impact on both St. Francis and the community. This community is better off for the service she has provided,” says Robert Granger, president and CEO of St. Francis.

Dr. Leland McCluskey has made a habit of volunteering his services both locally and abroad.

“Very few people know how much time he gives to public service,” says Robert Granger, president and CEO of St. Francis, “It’s a very selfless thing to do. He’s a tremendous example to all of us and truly a hospital hero.”

During the past four years, Dr. McCluskey has served as a medical missionary for month-long stints in Kenya, working three of four summers at the Kijabe Hospital in Kijabe, Kenya. Last July, he performed 52 surgeries and helped train local surgeons in orthopaedic techniques. His goal and that of fellow medical missionaries at the Kijabe Hospital, is to establish an orthopaedic teaching program, which would become the nation’s first.

Back in Columbus, Dr. McCluskey volunteers to treat poor, handicapped and abused youth from southeastern Nigeria through Voice of the Children Ministries. Sister Patrici Oghonna, who works with the ministry, admires Dr. McCluskey for his compassion and bedside manner.

“He doesn’t see his work as a job but as a way to reach out to people,” she explains. “He is a professional and most of all very compassionate. When you see him smile, you are comfortable... he makes you laugh. He not only takes care of the children medically, he invites us for dinner with his family and makes those kids feel at home. Dr. McCluskey does his job with dedication... and deserves the award because of his compassion toward his patients.”

—Karen Johnson
Read more about Dr. McCluskey’s volunteer service on pages 8-9.
Thirty-five million people live in Kenya. Yet, the country has only 17 orthopaedic surgeons—fewer than Columbus, Ga. Dr. Leland McCluskey of the St. Francis Orthopaedic Institute and fellow volunteer orthopaedists are trying to change that fact.

Dr. McCluskey has worked in one of two Kenyan hospitals for the past four summers. This past July, he served for a month at the 200-bed Kijabe Hospital in Kijabe, Kenya, where he also worked in 2004 and 2005. He performed 52 surgeries while there and spent time teaching Kenyan physicians interested in orthopaedics. His goal, and that of fellow volunteers, is to establish an orthopaedic teaching program, which would become Kenya’s first.

“Lots of general surgeons do orthopaedic work in Kenya,” says Dr. McCluskey. “It’s not the same level of care as here for sure.”

Many of the procedures Dr. McCluskey performs are corrective, where the bone has healed crooked or not at all. He sees patients with untreated fractures, too.

“People come in with injuries that would be easy to treat acutely, but because they were left untreated, they’re more difficult to fix,” Dr. McCluskey explains.

He also treats infections resulting from poor nutrition, which involves removing dead bone and prescribing antibiotics. In one case, an infection in a woman’s femur had stopped bone growth. Dr. McCluskey had to break the bone, reset it and lengthen the leg, using a plate. The procedure will enable the woman to walk again.

In addition to injuries resulting from trauma, Dr. McCluskey treats cases involving tuberculosis (TB) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). TB can destroy the bone around a person’s spine. Dr. McCluskey must drain the area and fuse the back. In 10-15 percent of the cases he performs, the patient is HIV positive.

Dr. McCluskey has found his work in Kenya meaningful on many levels.

“You get a lot out of it,” he says. “You get really close to people in a short time…not all the superficial conversation you have in other places. I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

The Kijabe Hospital provides affordable care for people outside larger cities. Nairobi, an hour and a half from Kijabe, has two very expensive private hospitals. Most physicians at the Kijabe Hospital, which is run by the African Inland Church, are volunteers. A hospital stay runs around $10 per day.

“My hat goes off to the long-term people there,” says Dr. McCluskey. “They are real examples of servanthood.”

This year’s trip was particularly special for Dr. McCluskey. His wife, Suzanne, and four sons accompanied him. The family lived for a month in a cement block house. All six got involved in the community. Suzanne and youngest son Miles read daily with children at a local primary school where older sons Leland, Palmer and Freeman also taught math. At times, the boys accompanied Dr. McCluskey to the hospital. Leland and Freeman assisted at the HIV outreach clinic, too, packing medications and such.

Playing with HIV orphans at the Little Lambs orphanage was also part of the family’s experience. Dr. McCluskey says his most fun day was joining Suzanne and his boys at the orphanage on their last day in Kenya.

“Watching my wife and boys with the children was one of my favorite things,” he says. “One of the youngest children, Baby Faith, wouldn’t let any of the volunteers touch her when we got there, but Freeman buddied up with her. That last day, she smiled…and seemed to be enjoying the attention.”

The agency the McCluskeys served with—World Medical Mission, a ministry of Samaritan’s Purse—specializes in short term placement of physicians. Dr. and Mrs. McCluskey first learned of it while attending “Prescription for Renewal,” a retreat for physicians and their spouses at the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove near Asheville, NC.

“There are other organizations that do what they do, but without the spiritual component,” explains Dr. McCluskey. “The spiritual aspect of this group adds a special meaning to the whole experience for me. You get an opportunity to share that you might not have otherwise. Without words, you have an opportunity to witness to people. With every patient, we prayed with them right before they went to sleep. It is part of the routine and the culture. In front of the hospital, there was a garden with a sign, ‘We treat. God heals.’”

Dr. McCluskey says he felt a nudge to go to Kenya and explains, “I’ve learned that if you have a nudge to do something, do it. In his book, “Jesus, MD,” David Stevens, MD, suggests, ‘Even God can’t steer a parked car.’”

To learn more about World Medical Mission, visit www.samaritanspurse.org
New and Noteworthy

New Outpatient Pharmacy Offers Convenience

St. Francis’ new Outpatient Pharmacy in the hospital’s Medical Office Building offers added convenience for patients visiting their physicians on the St. Francis Hospital campus. The pharmacy is open from 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. on Monday-Friday and can be found just inside the main entrance of the building.

The pharmacy’s phone number is 706-320-3078; refills may be ordered by phone or via e-mail at Refill@sfhga.com.

Rapid Response Team Receives National Recognition

St. Francis’ Rapid Response Team (RRT) approach has been recognized by the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ) with a first place award for its three-year track record of life-saving results. The award was given at the organization’s annual conference in September in Boston.

Since the RRT approach was implemented at St. Francis, the hospital has helped save the lives of patients showing one or more signs of deterioration, such as an acute change in heart rate, respiratory rate, systolic BP, oxygen saturation or mental status. Any caregiver at St. Francis who becomes concerned about a patient’s overall condition may activate the team by calling the RRT hotline. Team members, including a critical care physician, hospitalist, critical care nurse, a respiratory therapist and a critical nurse educator, respond within three minutes.

Fifth Hospitalist Joins St. Francis Hospital

Jessica Ramos Codjoe, MD, joined St. Francis’ expanding team of hospitalists on August 1, bringing the total number of hospitalists to five. She and fellow hospitalists consult with patients’ primary physicians and surgeons on care and progress and are responsible for ensuring the quality of clinical care of all hospitalized patients.

Dr. Codjoe comes to St. Francis via the University of Pennsylvania, Department of Family Medicine, where she was a resident the past three years. Having graduated cum laude with a bachelor of arts in biology from Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ. Dr. Codjoe earned her medical degree from the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in Camden. She was a Women in Medicine scholar from 1995-1999 and won the Achievement in Sisterhood Award from Chi Upsilon Sigma. She is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American Medical Society.

St. Francis Orthopaedic Institute Welcomes Thomas Walsh, MD

The St. Francis Orthopaedic Institute continues to grow with the addition of spine surgeon Dr. Thomas Walsh. Walsh joined the institute in September with the goal of developing spine services at St. Francis.

“I have a long term loyalty to St. Francis. This is my home hospital and has been since I started in 1993. I want to supplement the St. Francis Orthopaedic Institute with spine services and establish the St. Francis Spine Institute,” explains Dr. Walsh.

Dr. Walsh has 19 years of orthopaedic experience, having practiced in Columbus since 1988. He specializes in neck and back surgery related to ruptured disks, spinal stenosis, pinched nerves, arthritis, spinal fusion, treating work place injuries and non-surgical back and neck pain management. Having him as part of the orthopaedic team will benefit patients in many ways, one of those being the coordination between Dr. Walsh and interventional pain management specialist Dr. Bobbi Farber. The St. Francis Orthopaedic Institute is the only hospital in this area with collaboration between a surgeon and the only board-certified orthopaedic surgeon specializing in pain management.

“Being in the same institute as Dr. Farber will allow better patient care coordination. We are able to more easily discuss surgical and non-surgical options with the patient, sometimes in one patient visit,” Dr. Walsh explains.

As the Orthopaedic Institute continues to grow, Dr. Walsh hopes to increase the department by adding another spine surgeon.

Dr. Walsh is now seeing patients at the St. Francis Orthopaedic Institute in Columbus and at the Institute’s satellite office in Valdosta.

For more information or an appointment, call the St. Francis Orthopaedic Institute at 706-322-6646.

—Amy Adams
The number of problem wounds is on the rise, due largely to an aging population and an increase in diabetes. Approximately 18.5 million Americans have diabetes; of that population, about 1.8 million will suffer from a problem wound.

The new St. Francis Wound Care and Hyperbaric Center offers patients with non-healing wounds the latest, state-of-the-art hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) and a highly-skilled team of experienced physicians and certified wound nurses for the best results.

“We wanted to make our wound care program the best in this community,” says Scott Vinsant, program coordinator at the center. “That’s why we’ve added hyperbaric oxygen therapy. It will offer our team of experts another tool for further enhancing the treatment of chronic wounds.”

HBOT, a treatment in which patients breathe 100 percent oxygen inside a pressurized chamber, quickly delivers high concentrations of oxygen to the bloodstream and assists in the wound healing process. It also effectively fights certain types of infections, improves circulation and simulates the growth of new blood vessels. The center’s HBOT chambers incorporate the latest technology available, ensuring comfort and safety for the patient.

Most often, HBOT will be used to treat difficult-to-heal diabetic foot and lower leg wounds. The treatment has been shown to:
- Accelerate wound healing
- Reduce amputation rates
- Help patients stay out of the hospital

Additionally, HBOT may be used to treat crush injuries, osteomyelitis, failed skin grafts and flaps and brown recluse spider bites.

The center provides the only wound care service in Columbus staffed by certified wound care specialists. Scott Hartt, RN, and Christine Johnson, RN, are certified in wound care and have a combined 25 years of successful experience in treating difficult-to-heal wounds.

The center’s hospital-based, outpatient program operates by appointment. Patients are referred by their primary care physician or physician specialist.

—Karen Johnson

For more information, call 706-257-7680 or visit www.wecareforlife.com.
St. Francis Hospital wants to make aging in our community a little more fun. The hospital launched its new senior program, Primetime Seniors, in September. The free program is for adults age 55 and over.

“We talked to several groups of seniors in our community and found they all wanted a program that was fun, educational and gave them an opportunity to be more involved in the activities at St. Francis,” Senior Services Coordinator Stacy Scherr explains.

Primetime Seniors is a mixture of all those things. Members can attend physician lectures in the Creative Living series, learn about senior wellness topics at the Coffee Talk Club and enjoy discounts on lab screenings and on prescription drugs, among numerous other benefits.

New Fitness Program Keeps Seniors Forever Young

Another component of Primetime Seniors is exercise. Members can join the “Forever Young” fitness program at the Fitness and Wellness Center on St. Francis’ Park Campus at a discounted monthly rate. This professionally developed, medically-sound exercise program was designed especially for Primetime Seniors by nationally-known fitness expert Bill Rieger, the program’s director.

“The objective is to improve the function of activities of daily living and increase strength, endurance and mobility,” explains Rieger. “A primary goal for seniors is to maintain their independence. That’s what we help them do.”

Group exercise classes led by Rieger, who is certified by the American College of Sports Medicine, are held twice daily five days a week. Plus, Rieger provides individual consultation after each class.

Since the program was launched in September, membership has more than quadrupled. Read more about Forever Young and how members are benefiting on page 16.

—Amy Adams

Joining Primetime Seniors is easy! Just call 706-596-4030 or visit www.wecareforlife.com
Shirley Traugh (R) makes a delivery to the St. Francis Hospital Laboratory staff.

Shirley Traugh likes to stay busy. That’s why after retiring from Martin Army Hospital, she began volunteering at St. Francis Hospital. That was 31 years ago. Since then, Shirley has volunteered more than 3,425 hours, many of them in the Auxiliary Gift Shop, waiting on customers, stocking shelves and wrapping gifts—anything that needed to be done. She has also served as Gift Shop chairwoman as well as on the Auxiliary board. Currently, she serves as chairwoman of Patient Services.

Three years ago, Shirley decided it was time for a change. So, she began volunteering for the Transport department, which keeps her on the move every Wednesday morning. Shirley is a vital part of the hospital to the St. Francis Laboratory. One of the benefits is all the exercise she gets walking during her shift.

What does Shirley like best about volunteering? “I love the interaction with the people,” she explains. “I love this hospital. The people have always been so nice to me.”

Volunteer Services Director Kathy Riley says Shirley is the kind of volunteer who can always be counted on. “She is a good and faithful volunteer who never seeks the limelight,” says Kathy. St. Francis isn’t the only place Shirley volunteers. She also helps out at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, where she and husband Dick are charter members. The two have done a bit of everything over their years there. Recently, their congregation helped the couple celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary with cake and champagne after the early service.

—Karen Johnson

Members say:

“I had lost some height in recent years. By strengthening my trunk muscles, I am now able to stand straighter and have regained height.”—Virginia Connelly

“I can’t say enough about how impressed I am with the program...the instructors helped me walk with my cane better and to walk straighter...”—Patsy Myrick

“This is a great program! The exercises, which emphasize muscle strength, are appropriate for all levels.”—Marie Hatcher

“My family and friends notice that I am stronger...”—Anne Baker

“I’ve never been in a class this good.”—Sandy Steele

“I’ve lost a few inches in my waist...”—Jenny Hubert

Ann Baker feels safer around her home now. After breaking her hip and having a stroke, she was falling down a lot, but now her balance is better.

Patsy Myrick also had balance problems after breaking her foot, but walks more easily now. And Frank Johnson, age 89, feels the difference in his trunk and especially his back.

“The last time I trimmed the hedges, I injured my back and could barely move for a week,” explains Johnson. “I trimmed the hedges again without injuring my back.”

All three attribute their improved physical well-being to the Forever Young fitness classes they attend at St. Francis’ Fitness and Wellness Center.

Program Director Bill Rieger, a certified fitness professional who previously developed health and fitness programs for the military, applies the same approach to teaching seniors. The idea is to help individuals better perform necessary activities with more energy.

Forever Young classes focus on posture and proper body mechanics. Participants use towels, books, weights and other tools to enhance exercise. The class moves along quickly, with Rieger explaining each movement and its importance. Education is integrated into every session, and participants maintain three-ring binders of daily handouts.

“Every movement, every exercise we do has a purpose,” emphasizes Rieger. “We provide members with a professional exercise prescription that promotes health and performance and is consistent with the quality of care St. Francis offers.”

As far as Rieger knows, no one else in the area has developed a program like Forever Young that specifically supports seniors, treating them with dignity and respect.

One member, Carolyn Asbell, describes the overall program as informative, fun and encouraging. Speaking for herself and on behalf of other members, she says, “We just think this program is wonderful.”

—Karen Johnson
Hugh Downs, winner of six Emmy Awards, is one of American television’s most familiar figures and was anchor of ABC News’ 20/20 from 1978 to 1999. He will recount a few of his numerous adventure stories and travels around the globe to inspire and entertain guests at this year’s Butler Service and Leadership Award dinner. Much of Downs’ 66 years of reporting have focused on issues of medicine, science, family, adventure, aging, space, and the arts.

Special anniversary editions of his 20/20 stories aired in 1988, 1993 and 1998. Among others, segments featured glider aerobatics; the Great White Shark (from a cage); and taking the same astronaut training as John Glenn to cover Sen. Glenn’s return to space in 1998.

In 1985, Downs hosted a three-hour ABC News Close up documentary, “Growing Old in America,” which examined the problems and harsh realities facing millions of America’s aged and their families.

ARA Living Services presented Downs with their 1991 National Media Award for “excellence in long-term health care reporting” for his 20/20 segment on the problems families face when attempting to place loved ones in nursing homes.

Downs was host of NBC’s TODAY Show from 1962 to 1971, interviewing statesmen and leaders from around the world. He has hosted and narrated a number of NBC news documentaries and specials, including “The Everglades,” for which he won an Emmy. He hosted PBS’s Live from Lincoln Center for a decade.

Mr. Downs holds a post master’s in social gerontology from Hunter College, NY. He has served as a member of the Board of Overseers of the Brookdale Center on Aging of Hunter College since ... are about planning for later years. His latest book, “Letter to a Great Grandson,” was inspired by his great grandson.

Downs and his wife, Ruth, co-authored “Pure Gold,” a book on marital longevity. The couple have been married 63 years and live in Paradise Valley, Ariz.
A Grateful Community Says...

“The entire staff of the orthopaedic branch were caring, cheerful, simply wonderful people, who obviously take their jobs seriously. I found Dr. George Zimmerman to be a gentle, comforting, qualified surgeon, who also had a personal interest in his patients.”

- St. Francis Orthopaedic Institute patient

“The nurses and techs on the 2nd floor were so wonderful to me. They catered to my every need and more... the staff seemed to care and went the extra mile the entire time I was in the hospital. They took care of me as if I were one of their family members!”

- Patient on 2 South

“My therapist, Jo “JB” Barker, PT, was very pleasant and professional... the treatment plan she implemented for me facilitated a rapid recovery from surgery... My new knee has great ROM!”

- St. Francis Rehab patient

“Our family would like you to know how much we appreciated the things you did for my husband and the encouragement you gave to our family... you were amazing.”

- Wife of St. Francis patient

St. Francis Receives Third Consumer Choice Award

St. Francis Hospital has been named a Consumer Choice Award winner for the third consecutive year by National Research Corporation (NRC). The award recognizes hospitals nationwide that health care consumers have chosen as having the best quality, best physicians, best nurses and best reputation in their Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. St. Francis’s MSA includes Muscogee, Russell, Chattahoochee, Marion and Harris Counties.

“We are very pleased that residents in our area have again chosen St. Francis to receive this prestigious award,” says Robert Granger, president and CEO of St. Francis. “It truly reflects our staff’s commitment to quality and dedication to serving our customers.”

More than 200,000 households representing more than 400,000 consumers in the contiguous 48 states and the District of Columbia were surveyed for the 2007/2008 Healthcare Market Guide, making it the nation’s largest and most comprehensive study of its kind. Nationally, the study has a margin of error of only +/– 0.2 percent.

Congratulations Fellows Graduates!

Graduates of the 2007 St. Francis Fellows class will now join the Fellows Society and become ambassadors for health care in Columbus after investing a half day per month for six months to learn what goes on behind the scenes at St. Francis. The group toured the hospital’s Patrick Heart Institute, Emergency department, Surgical Suite, Orthopaedic Institute, Radiology department and the Rosemont Health Center to gain insight into the services and treatment.

Now that they’ve completed the program, they will share their knowledge with others in our community and help advance St. Francis’ mission of providing the best health care in the region.

The St. Francis Fellows Class of 2007 includes (front, l-r) Angie Hart, Katie Turner, Terrell Adams (middle, l-r) Joan Redmond, Audrey Hollingsworth, Sally Hatcher, (back, l-r) Ernie Smallman, Chris Jones, David Halbrust, Ben Holden, Larry Taylor and Fran McCormick.

Not pictured: Martha Bickerstaff.

For more information about the Fellows program, contact the St. Francis Foundation at 706-653-9375.
Dear Members of the St. Francis Family,

As we draw near to the end of 2007, I’m reminded of the saying that the only constant in life is change. That is certainly true at St. Francis. Never has there been a better time to be part of this organization. The ... going to be positive for the region we serve. The atmosphere of cooperation and joint endeavors bode well for the future.

The leadership on the St. Francis Hospital and Foundation Boards has been extraordinary. They have made some very deliberate decisions, based on input from a variety of sources, all with the best interest of the ... The Bradley Center to the partnerships undertaken with physician groups, the outlook is refreshing. There is more to come.

As we enter these new ventures, we will do our best to communicate to all of you how you can play a part in our future. Our community has a rich history of supporting those causes which are seen to be in the best ... serve you. Please let us know how we can do a better job, either directly or through contact with members of our boards.

Thank you for all you do for St. Francis and best wishes to you and your families for a Wonderful Holiday Season and a prosperous 2008.

Sincerely,
Mac Plummer Jr.
Vice President, St. Francis Foundation

St. Francis Hospital has implemented a new meal service that is guaranteed to suit any palate. With At Your Request dining, patients and guests can order from a broad menu and have it delivered within 45 minutes of placing their order.

The new hotel-style room service program enables patients to select the food they want, when they want it. Patients and guests can order meals, such as grilled chicken with portabella mushroom tops, seared salmon, chef salads and made-to-order omelets. With the help of a computer, St. Francis is able to track what hospital patients are eating and make sure they’re getting enough to eat, but not too much, either.

If a patient orders an item containing too many calories, too much sodium or too many carbohydrates, the operator will suggest an alternative. If a patient skips a meal, they’ll get a call from an operator asking if it was an oversight. If they miss more than one meal, a standard meal will be sent to their room.

Breakfast, lunch or dinner are available from 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. daily. A light meal or snack is offered until 8 p.m. Visitors may also order from the At Your Request menu.

St. Francis Hospital has recently renovated Medical-Surgical unit on the hospital’s 3 South floor. The unit also offers two negative pressure units for patients in isolation, one palliative care room with a family room, beds with safety features to prevent falls and pressure ulcers, and a waiting area for families and a sitting area for patients, both with big leather chairs. There is a classroom for patient and family education, too. The unit was open for patients in October.

Dear Members of the St. Francis Family,

As we draw near to the end of 2007, I’m reminded of the saying that the only constant in life is change. That is certainly true at St. Francis. Never has there been a better time to be part of this organization. The changes that are coming are really going to be positive for the region we serve. The atmosphere of cooperation and joint endeavors bode well for the future.

The leadership on the St. Francis Hospital and Foundation Boards has been extraordinary. They have made some very deliberate decisions, based on input from a variety of sources, all with the best interest of the community in mind. From collaborative efforts at The Bradley Center to the partnerships undertaken with physician groups, the outlook is refreshing. There is more to come.

As we enter these new ventures, we will do our best to communicate to all of you how you can play a part in our future. Our community has a rich history of supporting those causes which are seen to be in the best interest of all citizens, and that is exactly what we will endeavor to do. The banner hanging in our board room reads “Doing What Is Best For Health Care In Our Community.” It stays on the wall as a constant reminder that we serve you. Please let us know how we can do a better job, either directly or through contact with members of our boards.

Thank you for all you do for St. Francis and best wishes to you and your families for a Wonderful Holiday Season and a prosperous 2008.

Sincerely,

Mac Plummer Jr.
Vice President, St. Francis Foundation
Sally Walden

A veteran volunteer at St. Francis, Sally Walden has tremendous respect for the people who work diligently each day to offer the very highest level of care to people in our community.

“Employee participation in the CHEERS giving campaign is phenomenal. It speaks volumes that these people genuinely care about others,” explains Walden.

Walden has volunteered for the hospital’s Auxiliary since 1994, pushing the Cheer Cart, working at the front desk and taking care of junior volunteers. This year, she is the chair of special projects.

After serving as secretary and president of the Auxiliary, she was invited to join the St. Francis Foundation Board of Trustees in 2001. Now in her sixth year as a trustee, she serves as secretary of the Board and chair of the stewardship committee.

Walden says, “Serving on the board has been most gratifying. The revenue raised by the Foundation is used in so many significant and viable ways. It’s rewarding to be part of an organization focused on making our community safer, healthier and, therefore, a better place in which to live.”

One of Walden’s favorite events since becoming involved with St. Francis was the opening of The Women’s Center (now the Elena Diaz-Verson Amos Center for Breast Health).

“The Women’s Center provides something for women that our community did not have,” she says. “It is a place where women can go before or after work to receive care in a setting with many of the comforts and amenities of home. Cokie Roberts spoke at the opening and to a full house at the Springer in the evening.”

Walden has been actively involved in our community for many years. She has served as president of the boards of Girls Inc., Open Door Community House, Second Harvest Food Bank, Junior League of Columbus and the Museum Guild. She currently serves on the board of directors of Global Health Action, St. Luke School and the BRIDGE. She is a graduate of Leadership Columbus and an active member of Trinity Episcopal Church.

Walden is married to John, and they have two children, SaSa Bickerstaff and John III.

St. Francis employees show their support for CHEERS.

St. Francis employees did it again! They exceeded all expectations by pledging $131,831 to this year’s “A Million and One Reasons to Support CHEERS” campaign, a new record.

“The willingness of our people to give just amazes me,” says Campaign Chairman Wayne Lensch of the hospital’s Guest Services department. “I’ve just never seen anything like it anywhere else. It makes me proud to work here and to be a part of this effort. It’s our people who make it a success.”

Seventy-four percent of St. Francis’ staff made pledges during this year’s campaign. Their gifts will help others by providing:

- Medication, transportation and other necessities for patients who cannot afford them
- Financial assistance for individuals and families in crisis
- Scholarships for health care students
- Support to numerous local community organizations through United Way

St. Francis employees have pledged almost $1.2 million to CHEERS since the annual effort began in 1994. An estimated 10,000 people have benefited from their generosity.

Co-chairs of this year’s campaign were Tina Etheridge and Kathy Reeves.

CHEERS is operated by the CHEERS board, composed of St. Francis employees. Funds are also distributed by a council of employees and hospital caseworkers who work with patients needing assistance.

It’s rewarding to be part of an organization focused on making our community safer, healthier and, therefore, a better place in which to live.”
More than 200 women played Bunco for Breast Care on October 2 at Peachtree Mall, raising $41,000 for breast health education and outreach and diagnostic services at the Elena Diaz-Verson Amos Center for Breast Health at St. Francis.

Several participants were breast cancer survivors. Others played to honor the memory of friends and loved ones who have lost their battles with the disease.

One such group, wearing Bunco for Betty sashes, played in memory of Betty Cason, a grandmother who put up a brave fight, living to see hernew granddaughter turn five years old. Cason had planned to play in the tournament, but the cancer had recently returned. She died in late September.

Cason had no history of breast cancer in her family prior to her diagnosis. That’s why experts like Dr. Chuck Scarborough, medical director of the Center for Breast Health, emphasize that women, age 40 and over, should have annual mammograms and perform monthly self exams.

“Early diagnosis is the key to beating this disease. New technology like digital mammography and breast MRI can help detect cancer at its earliest stages,” says Dr. Scarborough.

Bunco for Breast Care tournament winner Shelia Kiggins took home a $500 Peachtree Mall gift card. The event was sponsored by Synovus/CB&T/TSYS and Rob Doll Auto. Jenn Agnew served as this year’s chairwoman. The St. Francis Foundation coordinated the event.
Every year St. Francis presents an award to an extraordinary person or group of people in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, who lived his life selflessly for others. This year, the staff of the St. Francis Center for Surgical Care became the first department to be presented with the prestigious award. The group was chosen for exemplifying St. Francis’ Mission, Vision and Values in extraordinary ways that have impacted our community.

“This amazing group of women embodies the true spirit of St. Francis,” says Lynn Thompson, director of the St. Francis Center for Surgical Care. “Most of these 15 women have worked together for a long time. They not only care about each other and the work they do, but they also truly care about their community.”

The team has participated in the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life for the past five years, raising $5,000 in 2007 alone. When the hospital’s Mission Awareness Team sponsored its annual Adopt-a-Bunny project last spring, these women donated two or more super-sized baskets apiece to brighten the faces of needy children at Easter. In October, the staff joined the St. Francis Foundation’s Bunco for Breast Care tournament at Peachtree Mall, helping to raise funds to defeat breast cancer in our community.

“They are the best staff in town,” claims Dr. Chuck Scarborough, a surgeon at the center. — Sara Hutchinson

SAVE THE DATE

THE HEART TRUTH FOR WOMEN LUNCHEON
Thursday, February 14, 2008
11:30 am–1 pm
Columbus Convention and Trade Center
WEAR RED!