

A PUBLICATION
FOR THE FRIENDS OF
MEMORIAL HERMANN

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Memorial Hermann Foundation
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ADVANCING THE

VISION



ENDOVASCULAR INNOVATIONS

A BRANCH OF HOPE

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DEAR FRIENDS,

If the azaleas are in bloom, it must be spring. And that means it's time for our 2023 *Walking on Sunshine* event, the grand finale to our groovy *Good Vibrations 2023* evening in March. Thanks to Maureen and John Graf for chairing both events so creatively and to our honorees Elizabeth and Gary Petersen for their incredible support over many years.



In this edition, we share thoughts from our recent visit with the Petersen family in their beautiful home.

We also share stories of Memorial Hermann patients whose lives have been forever transformed by the medical care and compassion they received—one, a stroke survivor who required a craniotomy and intensive rehabilitation; the other, a woman whose mysterious symptoms have been resolved after years of struggle and more than a dozen difficult surgeries.

We invite you to learn about Code Lilac, an impressive program that has provided peer-to-peer emotional first aid to more than 2,000 Memorial Hermann workforce members since December.

We also present highlights from our CEO Dinner honoring 2022 Heroes in Health members for extraordinary gifts of \$25,000 or more.

And, for fans of Memorial Hermann Life Flight® (and how can anyone not be?), we give you the inspiring answers to frequently asked questions.

Happy springtime, everyone,

Anne E. Neeson
Executive Vice President & CEO
Memorial Hermann Foundation

A BRANCH OF HOPE

A rare genetic disorder caused years of unexplained bleeding. A medical journey to Houston gave answers and led to an innovative endovascular solution.



“If I had the surgery in New Orleans, I’d have a 50% chance of surviving. In Houston, I’d have an over 90% chance.”

Anne Accardo

While out for dinner one evening, Anne Accardo, a New Orleans resident, felt pain in her jaw. Her boyfriend reassured her that she was healthy and probably just hungry. Anne was sure she was having a heart attack and insisted on going to the hospital.

In the ER, doctors ran blood tests, X-rays, EKGs and a CT scan. The CT scan revealed something shocking: Anne’s entire aorta, ascending and descending, had dissected.

As the main artery and largest blood vessel, the aorta carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body. An aortic dissection is an abrupt tear that can lead to rupturing and death if it’s not quickly identified and treated.

The cardiovascular surgeon at the ER urged Anne to see affiliated cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon Hazim J. Safi, MD, and his team at Memorial Hermann Heart & Vascular Institute for lifesaving open heart surgery.

“He said if I had the surgery in New Orleans, I’d have a 50% chance of surviving,” she recalls. “In Houston, I’d have an over 90% chance.”

Transported by medical airlift, Anne was on the operating table at the Institute by 8:00 the next morning for her first open heart surgery.

A long journey

This was not by any means the beginning of Anne’s medical issues. Since 2000, she had been in and out of hospitals for years, seeking relief from severe bleeding issues. Doctors tested for every possible blood disorder, finally performing a partial hysterectomy.

Pathology and MRI following the hysterectomy showed normal results. The bleeding stopped, so she decided to go on with her life. Her health had seemingly improved until the night in 2008 when she was airlifted to Houston.

Finally, some answers

During Anne’s first open heart surgery, affiliated vascular surgeon Anthony L. Estrera, MD, and his team discovered an aneurysm over her heart and repaired the ascending aorta to save Anne’s life. Consequently, she met Dianna M. Milewicz, MD, who suspected Anne had Loey’s-Dietz syndrome.

Loey’s-Dietz syndrome is a rare and only recently identified genetic disorder that causes weakening of the aortic wall, resulting in aneurysms and dissections. Tests confirmed her diagnosis, which finally explained past bleeding issues.

Anne’s diagnosis was also the beginning of many more surgeries, including an extremely complex repair and replacement of her dissected descending aorta in 2009. She spent a month in the ICU and needed two more weeks of hospital rehabilitation to recover. Three years later, she had another open heart surgery.

Fast forward to 2021

Anne noticed what felt like a bump on her back and alerted Dr. Estrera. He confirmed her fears: It was an aneurysm that had grown quickly. At his recommendation, less than a week later, Anne met with affiliated vascular surgeon Gustavo S. Oderich, MD, who had already designed a custom branch stent just for her.

Dr. Oderich is world-renowned for his advances in branched endovascular repairs of complex aneurysms. He’s also one of only 10 U.S. physician researchers with access to the innovative stent technology being engineered in Australia by Cook Medical.

“These aneurysms are not straightforward to fix and require a great deal of planning,” says Dr. Oderich. “We can measure precisely the distances between vessels and their exact location. Then we request from engineers a specific shape and length, with branches in the places we want.”



Dr. Oderich custom-designed a branch stent for Anne

A Cinderella story

Dr. Oderich scheduled Anne’s surgery for Aug. 31. When the clock struck 12:00 a.m. the night before, her custom-fit stent was lost in transit. Today, Dr. Oderich calls it a Cinderella story. At the time, he prepared to make his

own stent as Anne’s situation was becoming urgent.

She and her partner, Ken Daigle, had traveled to Houston early to avoid Hurricane Ida’s imminent arrival in New Orleans. In the nick of time and in true fairy-tale fashion, Cook Medical called to say they had Anne’s stent and were personally flying it to Houston. That same day, Dr. Oderich completed her minimally invasive surgery in a few hours. Four days later, Anne left the hospital.

A special reunion



Anne has reunited and formed new ties with her daughter and family

Not only did Anne’s Loey’s-Dietz diagnosis bring clarity to her medical issues, but it also helped reconnect Anne with her daughter, whom she’d placed for adoption at age 19. Because the syndrome is genetic, Anne wanted to be sure her daughter, Mary Ellen, would get screened.

“She doesn’t have it, so that was the best day of my life,” says Anne. “And since reconnecting, we’re all a big family now.”

Life-changing innovation

“I fell in love with Houston because of its history of cardiovascular surgery,” says Dr. Oderich. “I want to help write the next chapter.”

Anne is eternally grateful. “This technology is life-changing. I don’t know if I could have survived another surgery like the one I had in 2009,” she says. “And now, so many others can be saved with this incredible new procedure.”



BIG NIGHT

CEO Dinner at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, honors Heroes in Health members

On Jan. 18, 2023, Memorial Hermann President and CEO David L. Callender, MD, recognized our 2022 Heroes in Health for annual contributions of \$25,000+ in support of Memorial Hermann and the health of Houston. Biswajit Kar, MD, and Igor D. Gregoric, MD, esteemed chiefs and program directors of the Center for Advanced Heart Failure at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center; and Steve Trauber, Memorial Hermann Foundation Board Chair, joined Dr. Callender in celebrating these especially generous members.



Nina Hendee, Edd Hendee



Dr. Biswajit Kar, Dr. Igor Gregoric



Sheridan Williams, Suzie Johnson



Dee Methvin, Stacy Methvin, Bill Easter



Jerry Simon, Lisa Simon, Tricia Futcher, Jack Futcher, Anne Neeson, Craig Janies



Daphnee Michelle, Kel Mabatah



Myron Blalock, Rosanna Blalock



Dr. David Callender, Tonya Callender

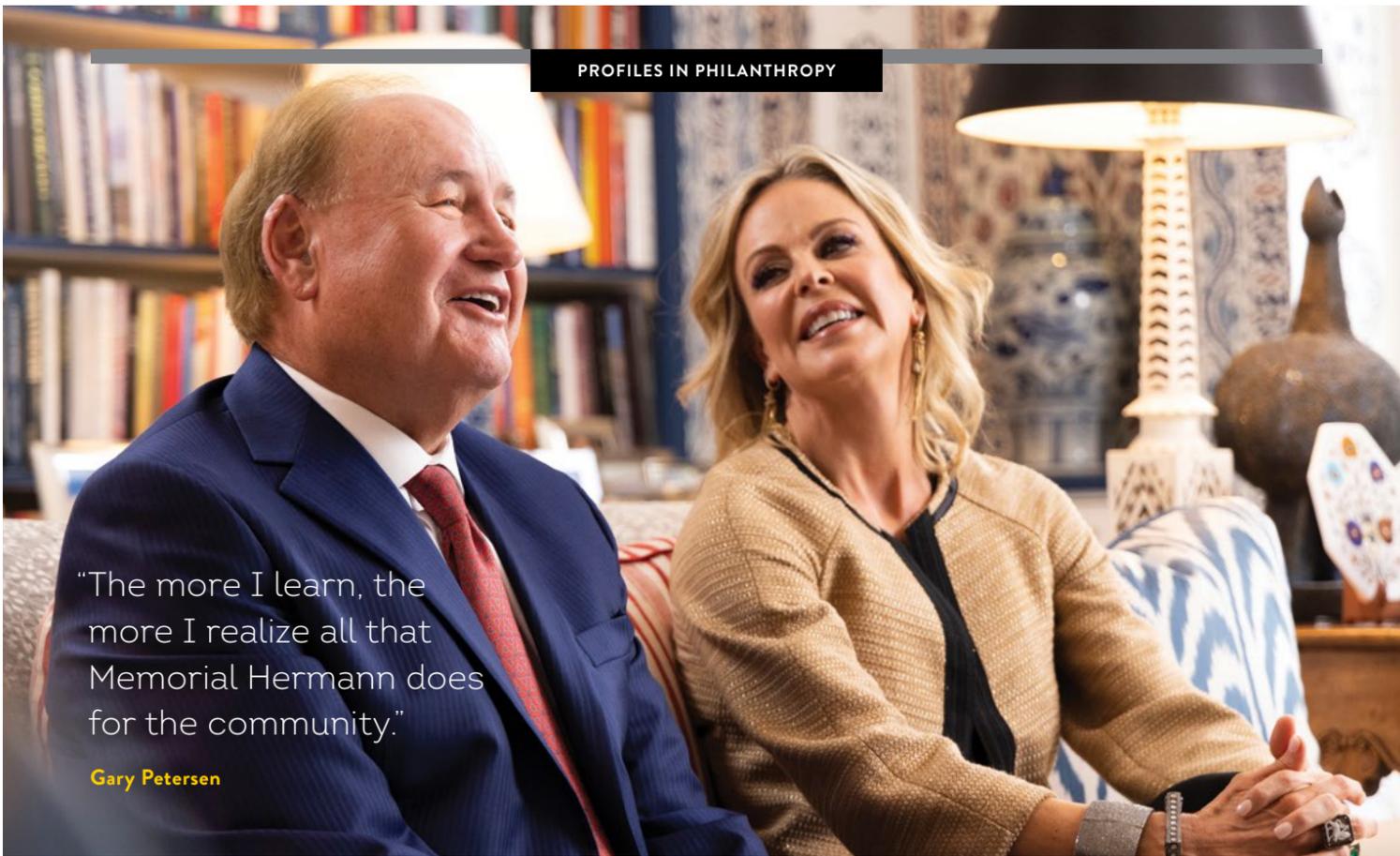


Leticia Trauber, Steve Trauber



FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Walking on Sunshine honors Elizabeth and Gary Petersen for their many years of generous support and service.



“The more I learn, the more I realize all that Memorial Hermann does for the community.”

Gary Petersen

Recently, a group from Memorial Hermann Foundation stopped in for a visit with Elizabeth and Gary Petersen, the honorees of our 2023 *Good Vibrations* and *Walking on Sunshine* events and longtime friends and supporters of all things Memorial Hermann. The couple’s River Oaks home is a feast for the eyes: Eclectic art is everywhere, as well as contemporary pieces, vintage oil paintings and a spectacular peacock taxidermy. Every room is mesmerizing.

The Petersens are both friendly and remarkably unpretentious considering the significance of their support to the Memorial Hermann Health System’s progress and reputation over many years.

Neither of them is a Houston native. Elizabeth, a self-proclaimed Midwesterner at heart, was born and raised in Dallas where her dad was head coach at SMU “back in the Pony Express days.” Gary grew up in West Texas and, after

graduating from Texas Tech and serving a stint in the Army, went into banking in Dallas before coming to Houston and creating EnCap Investments, one of the largest oil-and-gas private equity firms in the country.

Even so, they both have a fondness for this city they now call home and where they’re raising their 13-year-old twins, Margaux and Meyer.

Gary is currently a Memorial Hermann Health System board member and serves on several committees. But the couple’s service to the system and the Foundation goes back nearly two decades. He and Elizabeth chaired the Foundation Circle of Life Gala in 2008 and then again in 2020 when it had to be a virtual affair, which Gary famously attended in his tuxedo jacket and banana-print shorts.

Gary often jokes about his longtime involvement with Memorial Hermann. “I tell people all the time, once you check in, you can never check out,” he says, with a laugh.

“Life Flight is amazing. Every time I see that helicopter fly over our house, I know what’s going on—it’s an ICU in the sky, and it saves lives.”

Elizabeth Petersen

“I’ve been a member and chairman of the Foundation board, I’ve worked on a TIRR Memorial Hermann committee, then back to the Foundation and now the System board. The more I learn, the more I realize all that Memorial Hermann does for the community.”

Together, the Petersens are especially involved in supporting Memorial Hermann Life Flight. “We have the busiest Level I trauma center in the country,” Gary says. “Life Flight plays a huge role in getting people to it.”

“Life Flight is amazing,” Elizabeth adds. “Every time I see that helicopter fly over our house, I know what’s going on—it’s an ICU in the sky, and it saves lives. We’re very proud to be part of that and the city that leads the nation in that service.”

The couple makes a point several times to explain part of what they believe makes Memorial Hermann so special and why supporting the institution is so important for all of us.

“Patients come to Memorial Hermann emergency centers after a car wreck or with serious illnesses, trauma or injuries, and the teams take them in and try to mend and heal them. Some of the time, the patients can’t pay, but the System helps them anyway,” Gary says.

“They turn no one away,” says Elizabeth. “That really has touched both of us, and it’s why we are 100% behind Memorial Hermann.”

“If you want to help someone,” Gary adds. “I don’t know a better way than to support Memorial Hermann because of that one great point.”

The Petersens support several other charitable organizations with a special interest in addiction recovery and research. Gary chairs the board of one such organization in Houston where he’s been a member since 1990; Elizabeth serves on the board of another based in Los Angeles. As an alcoholic and addict in recovery, she supports the organization’s mission to end addiction by funding research and the development of new therapies to break the cycle of substance abuse disorder.

They feel obliged to share their good fortune in life with others in need, and they hope to pass on to their children a foundation of faith and a sense of giving back to the community. As if on cue, Margaux and Meyer walked into the room.

“Speaking of future generations,” Elizabeth teased as she invited the twins to join Gary and her on the sofa.



The kids are charming, and clearly, this is a family of sports enthusiasts. When they’re not riding bikes, they’re cheering on the Houston Astros and the Houston Texans in which Gary is a minority owner. And, of course, Gary remains a loyal Texas Tech Red Raiders fan and supporter.

Some things never change. And that’s a good thing when it comes to the special relationships of Memorial Hermann Foundation friends and family.

World-renowned critical care air ambulance service
when every second matters

MEMORIAL HERMANN LIFE FLIGHT

How much do you know about this familiar icon of preeminent emergency medical care in the air? Here are the answers to frequently asked questions about this unique program serving Greater Houston and Southeast Texas that was founded in 1976 by the equally famous and iconic James “Red” Duke, MD.

Is Life Flight merely a means of transportation?

Life Flight delivers trauma care en route, significantly improving the likelihood of patient survival. Highly skilled crews provide trauma, diagnostic and interventional care in flight to patients of all ages, from newborns to seniors. The aircraft are equipped with advanced technology, blood products and lifesaving devices to treat heart attack and stroke, high-risk pregnancies, advanced trauma and severe illness.

How many missions does Life Flight perform annually?

Crews average 4,000 missions a year, making the John S. Dunn Helistop one of the busiest helipads in the world. In 2022, Life Flight completed a record-breaking 4,273 missions. Since its inaugural flight, Life Flight has flown more than 162,000 missions.

Who can call Life Flight?

Life Flight is a true second responder. Police, fire, emergency medical service units, hospitals, safety officers at Houston Ship Channel and specified industrial organizations are trained to contact Life Flight dispatch when air transport can make a significant difference for a patient in need of surgery or critical care, including blood products.



Does Life Flight only respond to car accidents or emergency scenes?

While Life Flight is known for extraordinary trauma care, the teams also provide essential intra-hospital transport for patients who need a higher level of care. Last year, 40% of Life Flight missions were in response to a car accident, emergency, fire, mass-casualty incident or other scene; 60% involved transporting patients from another hospital to receive specialized care at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center.

What if Life Flight is needed beyond the 150-mile radius?

The Life Flight fleet also includes fixed-wing aircraft available for patient missions around the world.

Does the city or county pay for Life Flight?

No. Memorial Hermann annually invests close to \$15 million, none of which comes from tax dollars, to support the program as a community service. Philanthropy is almost exclusively responsible for Life Flight’s success and growth. We are actively seeking funds to replace its aging fleet to enhance the program’s safety, technology and reach.



Thomas Savage’s sudden stroke taught him the meaning of hard work and extreme gratitude for the comprehensive care he received through Memorial Hermann.



One awful November day, Jessie Savage got a call no mother ever wants to receive. Her 37-year-old son's girlfriend, April, was on the line: Thomas had suffered a stroke.

When he arrived by ambulance at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center, his situation was dire. A brain bleed was causing severe swelling in his skull. Within 30 minutes of Thomas's arrival at the hospital, the care team was calling for emergency surgery.

"I could hardly believe this was happening," Jessie recalls. "They told me they needed to do a craniotomy immediately to relieve the swelling, which could kill him."

Affiliated neurosurgeon Ryan S. Kitagawa, MD, who specializes in traumatic brain injuries, performed the delicate surgery to save Thomas's life.

Tense moments as the waiting begins

It took four hours for Dr. Kitagawa and his team to carefully remove part of Thomas's skull. They spent the next 24 hours making sure the bleeding in his brain had stopped. It had, and

that was great news. Still, the road ahead would be extremely difficult for Thomas.

He spent six weeks in the hospital trying to regain his strength and mobility, along with the most basic of vital life processes. The stroke had left part of his tongue and the left side of his body paralyzed. He couldn't swallow, and even worse, he didn't understand just how much he had lost.

To see her firstborn child, a grown man, so helpless and confused was painful for Thomas's mom.

"He knew what had happened, but he didn't realize how serious things were," Jessie says. "He thought he could swallow. He assumed he could walk. As moms do, when our children want things, we try our best to make them happen. It was very hard to see him so frustrated and not be able to help."

The harsh reality sinks in

His physical therapists helped him learn to swallow again, which took two weeks to accomplish. At the same time, they helped him work on getting the feeling back on his left side, a process that becomes considerably more difficult for a patient who is missing part of his skull. Raising his head more than 30 degrees required him to wear a helmet to avoid injuring himself.

When Thomas was stable, he left the hospital and received care at a skilled nursing facility near his home. Because of insurance issues, the facility was unable to provide anything beyond the basics of care, so Jessie and April stepped in, doing their best to help Thomas perform exercises the team at Memorial Hermann had taught them to help keep his left leg and arm moving.

It wasn't until he returned to Memorial Hermann months later to have his skull repaired that his remarkable comeback journey could truly begin. After a successful surgery to close his skull, a patient advocate at the hospital helped him start the process that would allow him to transfer to TIRR Memorial Hermann for the comprehensive rehabilitation he needed to get his life back.

Intensive multidisciplinary rehabilitation

The TIRR Memorial Hermann team had him up and moving many hours a day, every day. He received physical, speech, occupational and group therapy to address every aspect of his recovery. He was exhausted and grateful for the TIRR Memorial Hermann experience.

"TIRR Memorial Hermann was amazing," Thomas says. "They gave me a plan and a direction to go."

Thomas spent a month as an inpatient at TIRR Memorial Hermann before joining their outpatient Challenge program. He participated in that program four days a week for another six weeks, continuing with all the same therapies.

Now, following instructions for continuing his rehabilitation work at home, Thomas is walking his way back to a full life again.

Jessie and their family, including Thomas's three daughters, ages 7, 8 and 13, and April, the woman who deserves much of the credit for recognizing his stroke symptoms and summoning emergency care that saved his life, are thrilled with his progress.

"He's doing so well now, it's unbelievable," Jessie says.

Thomas is also pleased and thankful for the second chance he's been given at life.

"This experience changed my life in every way that I know. It taught me patience and how to be a better me and work for the goals I want to accomplish," he says. "It wasn't easy, but I definitely made it, so I'm really happy for that."

CODE LILAC



It's easy to assume that health care professionals are trained to compartmentalize the distress of working with patients and families in dire situations as a coping mechanism to protect their own mental health.

The truth is that health care professionals do become emotionally impacted as they see patients suffering from medical crises, including traumatic injuries, severe illnesses and death.

Dealing with this constant stress takes an enormous toll on health care workers at every level.

Code Lilac lends vital emotional first aid

In 2015, a group of Children's Memorial Herman Hospital employees, including nurses, chaplains, physicians, Child Life specialists and others, gathered for a seminar on vicarious trauma. They understood the emotional toll of working in a Level I Pediatric Trauma Center and were determined to create a program that would allow them to take care of one another when they experienced high-stress events involving acutely ill children.

One year later, the team established Code Lilac as a peer-to-peer emotional first-aid program.

After its successful launch, the grassroots program spread to several community hospitals, with health care team members, often led by chaplains or nurses, organizing to provide care.

In 2020, as COVID-19 pushed critical care caseloads beyond capacity, Memorial Hermann Health System saw the tremendous impact the pandemic was having on health care teams. As part of a strategic effort to address widespread employee burnout and "compassion fatigue," Memorial Hermann worked to expand the Code Lilac program across the system.

To accomplish this major undertaking, the system forged a partnership with the Maryland Patient Safety Center in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins RISE (Resilience in Stressful Events) peer-to-peer support program.

Shared experiences, passions and commitment

Laura Salazar-Hopps joined the team as the chaplain manager for Code Lilac in August 2021 and worked with Memorial Hermann leadership and RISE program consultants to

THE MISSION OF CODE LILAC

To provide compassionate, confidential, and timely peer-to-peer support to members of Memorial Hermann's workforce experiencing stressful patient or work-related events.



expand Code Lilac to all hospital campuses. In November 2022, she helped launch a 24/7 Code Lilac hotline.

During the pandemic, Laura was a frontline palliative care chaplain. She and her team cared for many dying COVID-19 patients.

"When we talk about burnout, compassion fatigue and moral injury, I've been there," Laura said. *"My whole team was there. I know what these things feel like in my body. I know what it feels like to cry on the way home about a tragic patient case. I'm still working to heal the effects of the last few years, and so are my colleagues, even as we face a barrage of new stressors. That's why I'm so passionate about this work."*

Today, Code Lilac provides this vital support to the entire workforce, including clinical and nonclinical staff, contract and supplemental employees and employed and affiliate providers.

Former pediatric chaplain Joel Blest, a founding member of the program, currently serves as the Code Lilac campus coordinator at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center.

"The things you see on the nightly news—horrible situations—show up here, but the tendency of caregivers is to feel like

somehow, we're responsible," Joel explains. *"When we gather in this room after a crisis, people feel a sense of connection, of us all feeling these emotions together. The reason we need this is because we care."*

The innovative approach of the program, training volunteers within the system to provide support to each other, makes a big difference in the outcome.

"I really feel like we're building teamwork. People know when they leave a session that they have our support, that this is a family environment," said Jennifer Esparza, a registered OB nurse and Code Lilac campus leader.

The resources, skills and education that Code Lilac provides benefit not only the emotional well-being of Memorial Hermann's workforce but also the care these team members provide to patients and their families. It just makes perfect sense.

As Laura Salazar-Hopps sums it up, *"Compassion is a key value at Memorial Hermann. And it is at the core of everything Code Lilac does."*

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You make their missions possible.

Thousands of people rely on Memorial Hermann Life Flight® each year. Our donors, including our *Heroes in Health* society, express a generosity of spirit that is truly awe-inspiring. Thank you for your ongoing support of the dedicated professionals across our health system as they offer hope and health to our community.

We celebrate our Heroes in Health donors for their especially generous annual gifts.

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