

A PUBLICATION
FOR THE FRIENDS OF
MEMORIAL HERMANN

Memorial Hermann Foundation
SUMMER 2023

ADVANCING THE

VISIONS



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DEAR FRIENDS,

As much as I love clear blue skies, I admit to longing for an occasional cloud and a few raindrops these days. Still, when I look up, I think of Life Flight and feel enormously grateful for their lifesaving work and your generous support of it. Thanks to our wonderful chairs, Maureen and John Graf, this year's gala events were spectacular, with record-breaking contributions topping \$4.2 million.



In other important news, Memorial Hermann Health System won the prestigious 2023 Foster G. McGaw Prize. This national award recognizes the system's commitment to community health and provides funding for more outreach services and resources.

In this issue of Vision, we also share individual success stories that show a range of experiences Memorial Hermann helps patients through every day—from surviving a horrific disaster to healing from the emotional trauma of a heart attack to using the power of positive thinking to beat a frightening cancer diagnosis.

Let's all keep looking up,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne".

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

**“We’re an extension
of the hospital itself. We
bring the ICU to you.”**

Tony Herrera, CFRN, Life Flight



Life Flight crews are equipped to provide blood tests, blood transfusions, ultrasounds and lifesaving early intervention for stroke patients and those with internal bleeding and more.

CATASTROPHE

In the blink of an eye, a young woman's life takes a dramatic turn as she finds herself in the middle of a disaster zone, desperate for the intervention of Life Flight and Memorial Hermann.

In October 1989, Stephanie Sneed, fresh out of college, got her first job as a project engineer at a large chemical complex in Pasadena, Texas. She was engaged to be married and had her whole life ahead of her. Four months later, just after lunch, an alarm went off, and all hell broke loose.

Stephanie worked in a two-story office building in the plant. She and her colleagues quickly gathered their things to evacuate, and then the explosion happened.

"I jumped off the second floor of the building," says Stephanie. "It was the only way out after a ball of fire headed down our hallway."

Things got worse fast.

"It was clear I was very seriously injured and that this was a catastrophe that not everyone was going to survive," she remembers. "I had skin hanging off my arms. It was bad."

With burns covering most of her body, Stephanie managed to get to the side of the road where an ambulance crew initiated medical aid and drove her to a spot where Life Flight was waiting. Life Flight flew her and three of her coworkers to Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center, then known as Hermann Hospital.

Tom Flanagan, the recently retired vice president of the Trauma Service Line and System Integration, remembers that terrible day well. He was part of the Life Flight response team. "Everybody flew that day," he says. "It was such an awful scene with so many people in need of critical care." Hundreds of employees were injured in the horrific accident; 23 of them lost their lives.

The long, slow healing process

"I was in the hospital's burn center for two months, with burns all over my face and no hair. I had a feeding tube, a breathing tube, and as I learned later, years of surgery ahead of me," Stephanie says.

"I jumped off the second floor of the building. It was the only way out after a ball of fire headed down our hallway."

Stephanie Sneed Langenstein





Photo: WALT FRERCK/AFP via Getty Images

“Everybody flew that day. It was such an awful scene with so many people in need of critical care.”

Tom Flanagan was part of the Life Flight response team in 1989.

Still, the experience was positive in many surprising ways. “You’re there for so long with the same people every day, you just become friends and family with the other patients and therapists,” Stephanie says.

Memorial Hermann’s John S. Dunn Burn Center is the only comprehensive burn center in Houston and is verified by the American Burn Association. Its affiliated board-certified physicians care for all types of burn injuries, inhalation injuries and various skin disorders.

“I’m alive today because Life Flight was able to get me to Memorial Hermann and their burn center.”

Stephanie’s road to recovery was extremely challenging. Severe burns require continuing care, including critical care, acute inpatient care, scar reconstruction, scar management and rehabilitation. She remembers in particular David J. Wainwright, MD, professor of plastic and reconstructive surgery with McGovern Medical School and burn specialist affiliated with Memorial Hermann.

“I needed the top care as fast as possible,” Stephanie says. “I’m alive today because Life Flight was able to get me to Memorial Hermann and their burn center. Dr. Wainwright and his team had the knowledge, the skills and the facilities to care for injuries like these.”

Accepting a new reality

Once Stephanie was able to leave the hospital, she spent a month in intense rehabilitation to regain her strength and learn to walk again. Impressively, within a year of the accident, Stephanie was back on the job in a different department, easing her way from a few hours a day to full time. She spent several years in outpatient physical therapy.

On top of that, every few months she was back at Memorial Hermann for surgeries to release her scars. This is a common practice for people who have had serious burns. As new skin grows back, it must be released to avoid other problems. For Stephanie, without surgery, extensive scarring across her neckline could have eventually pulled her neck out of alignment. She also needed surgeries to keep her hands as open and her fingers as usable as possible.

Inspired philanthropy

The experience 30 years ago changed Stephanie’s life. She did marry her fiancé, Rich Langenstein, 10 months after the explosion. She remained seated because she was not yet able to stand for the 10-minute ceremony.

The couple’s four children are grown now, so Stephanie feels ready, willing and able to engage in philanthropic endeavors that are meaningful to her. She appreciates programs and organizations that benefit or bring

together people of all colors, ages and backgrounds. She recently made a generous gift to Life Flight in gratitude for the lifesaving team that benefits our entire community in their moments of dire need.

“I want Life Flight to be available for other people,” she says, “and I know that not everybody who gets injured is lucky enough to be able, years later, to give back.”

Your gifts to Memorial Hermann Foundation help keep Life Flight’s promise in the air.

“I want Life Flight to be available for other people.”

Stephanie Sneed Langenstein with Tom Flanagan in 2023



SEAMLESS MEDICAL EXPERTISE

WHEN SECONDS COUNT



“When the unthinkable happens, we are there. For our patients, the difference is survival.”

James “Red” Duke Jr., MD (1928–2015)

Memorial Hermann is Houston’s only integrated trauma network, from Life Flight’s pre-hospital air ambulance care through the hospital’s trauma care and post-acute rehabilitation at TIRR Memorial Hermann.

By the Numbers

TRAUMA CARE

126,000+

trauma and critical care patients annually

1st pediatric Level I trauma center in Houston

The nation’s busiest

Level I adult and pediatric trauma centers

Houston’s only

verified burn center (John S. Dunn Burn Center)

LIFE FLIGHT

166,000+ total missions

4,200 missions per year

350+ units of blood annually

2–3 minutes between landing and surgery

TIRR MEMORIAL HERMANN

1,600 patients treated per year

42,000 square-foot research center

10%–15% international patients



GOOD VIBRATIONS

A lively crowd took a step back in time to benefit Memorial Hermann Life Flight.

Chairs Maureen and John Graf brought fun to this year's gala opener event. In dress and in spirit, a group of 400 guests took the "Good Vibrations" theme to heart as we gathered to celebrate Life Flight for its many years of service and to honor Elizabeth and Gary Petersen for their generous support of Memorial Hermann. The outdoor shindig at Hermann Park's McGovern Centennial Gardens featured

dinner and dessert stations by Churrasco's, followed by dynamite dance tunes by Infinite Groove. Memorial Hermann President and CEO David L. Callender, MD, shared his thoughts about the importance of Life Flight to the health of our community, and almost as if on cue, a Life Flight helicopter took off from its nearby helipad, a poignant reminder of their vital presence day and night.



John Graf, Gary Petersen, Anne Neeson, Maureen Graf



Caroline Fant, Sue Payne, Sue Kean, Linda O'Black, Susan Pennebaker, Jane Jones



Bill Easter, Barbara Easter, Gary Petersen



ID Boyejo, Titi Boyejo, Ann Embrey, Mike Embrey



Greg Kurmadas, Lainey Kurmadas, Melissa Bedre, George Bedre



Courtney Meadows, Sonya Reed, Zhanna Golodryga, Claudia Kreisle



WALKING ON SUNSHINE

A moving tribute wows guests at our two-tiered annual gala finale and inspires a record-breaking \$4.2 million in gifts.

Pulling out all the stops, "Walking on Sunshine" was a spectacular affair. It began with a powerful tribute video of a Life Flight helicopter taking off on another of its 4,000+ annual missions, its goose-bump-inspiring sounds filling the room. In recognition of Life Flight's uniquely essential service to our community, gala guests contributed an extraordinary

\$4.2 million, in part to help replace its now aging fleet. The event, honoring longtime Memorial Hermann and Life Flight supporters Elizabeth and Gary Petersen, featured a dinner created by chef and next-generation restaurateur Aaron Bludorn in collaboration with the Hilton Americas-Houston culinary team. Music by Affinity enticed guests to dance the night away.

Dr. David Callender, Tonya Callender, John Graf, Maureen Graf, Elizabeth Petersen, Gary Petersen



Karen and Roland Garcia



Bill Baldwin, Fady Armaniou, Hallie Vanderhider, Bobby Dees



Myron Blalock, Rosanna Blalock, Elizabeth Galtney, Will Galtney



Jim Smith, Sherry Smith, Nina Hendee, Edd Hendee



Suzie Johnson, Tom Flanagan, Lisa Simon



Stacy Methvin, DeWitt Methvin



Dr. Yvonne Cormier, Alice Mosing



Kristina Somerville, Elizabeth Petersen, Carrie Brandsberg-Dahl



Pam Erwin, Jimmy Erwin



Scott McLean, Anna McLean, Corina Perez, Armando Perez



Steve Trauber, Leticia Trauber



Rob Wilson, Bess Wilson, Tom Flanagan, Dave Norman



Allison Wells, Felicia Stone



April McGee, Melissa Sugulas, Melissa Juneau, Amalia Stanton, Vicsandra Jones



John Graf, Maureen Graf, Chef Aaron Bludorn



Anne Neeson, Craig Janies



Gail Garland, Greg Garland



Steve Trauber, Doug Schnitzer, Scott Wise, Bill Campbell



Beverly Postl, Jim Postl, Judy Miller



Gary Petersen, Jill Holstead, Sherry Smith, Scott Holstead

HEALING FROM HEART TO SOUL

A heart attack and personal trauma led to a mental health crisis for one man. Now he uplifts others with his story.

Outwardly, Ed Lee was in shape and enjoying life, but inwardly he was struggling. At age 58, he experienced a massive heart attack followed by sudden loss that sent him on a healing health journey.

“Before this happened, I was in the gym like crazy,” remembers Ed. “If you saw me, you’d think I played for the Texans. But as my friend said later, I had a Cadillac body with a Pinto engine. I was stressed out, working a lot and not eating healthy. I was pushing my limitations.”

Time catching up

“I was at a family barbecue when my chest felt like it was getting tighter and tighter. Everyone was saying, ‘Man, you don’t look well.’ My nephew called 911. Turns out, I was having a massive heart attack.”

Several minutes later, Houston Fire Department EMS rushed Ed to Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital where the care team, led by affiliated cardiologist David Portugal, MD, put in a tiny stent that saved his life.



“When they asked if I wanted to see the chaplain, I realized, oh wow, this is real.”

“Dr. Portugal was so calm, so mild mannered about it,” Ed says. “He took the time to really talk to me, and I thought that was so important. When they asked if I wanted to see the chaplain, I realized, oh wow, this is real. I didn’t know if I was going to wake up, but Dr. Portugal assured me I would see him on the other side.”



“What does a heart attack look like? Me.”

“All I could think about was suicide. Dr. Portugal encouraged me to get the mental health I needed.”



Ed really didn't expect to make it. He saw his own funeral as he lay there on the operating table.

Ed remembers hearing Dr. Portugal tell the care team they needed to insert the stent through Ed's groin or arm. Nearly under anesthesia, Ed asked if they could go in through his arm. His question shocked the care team—something he loves to joke about now.

“I know these doctors do this every day, but to me, it was amazing—this tiny incision in my arm and going all the way to my heart. You can't even tell where it was now. And I forgot to tell them thank you for going in through my arm.”

Recovery and loss

Ed attended a 12-week cardiac rehabilitation program at Memorial Hermann Heart & Vascular Institute at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center. While his physical recovery went smoothly, he also experienced deep emotional loss.

“I lost my mom two weeks after my heart attack. I tried to keep everything together, but mentally I wasn't there.

A month after that, my wife asked for a divorce. And all I could think about was suicide.”

These life-changing events brought Ed's mental health into focus, and he credits Dr. Portugal for encouraging him to get the help he needed. Ed began seeing a psychiatrist recommended by Memorial Hermann and later started grief counseling.

“Every time I would see Dr. Portugal, he asked how I was doing. I would tell him, physically I feel like I'm good. It's the mental thing I'm still addressing. But overall, he has had a big effect on me because of the calm way he dealt with it. And he still makes time to check on me.”

Uplifting others

Ed has turned his recovery into helping other men understand and address mental health issues by establishing a mental health coaching business, Life 360. He shares his own story to help men understand that they can talk about anything and feel at ease opening up, even crying, to let out their emotions.



On the anniversary of his heart attack each year, Ed tries to celebrate with Dr. Portugal, his care team and the EMS team who saved his life.

“They changed my life and changed my world. They're a part of my family now.”



Ed shares his story to help other men understand the healing value of letting their emotions out.

“As I help other people, they're helping me. It's hard to put myself in front of others and tell them I have mental health and grieving issues, and I can't do it without crying. I speak on it. I claim it. I'm a work in progress.”

Ed's business is growing as he continues the healing process, hoping to inspire others by sharing his story through client classes and speaking engagements.

“It's been a tough time in my life. Still, I know that I'm blessed to be here.”

An annual celebration

It's been four years since Ed's heart attack. Inspired by Dr. Portugal to focus on his health and well-being, he has lost more than ten pounds and is taking better care of his body—and mind.

On the anniversary of his heart attack each year, Ed tries to celebrate with Dr. Portugal, his care team and the EMS team who saved his life.

“They changed my life and changed my world. That's a second chance of life they've given me. I want to thank them. They're a part of my family now.”

Your gifts to Memorial Hermann Foundation help connect people to advanced heart care.



HEALTHY WINS

Memorial Hermann wins national recognition from the American Hospital Association for outstanding community service.

Each year, the American Hospital Association awards its Foster G. McGaw Prize to a health organization that demonstrates an exceptional commitment to community health and health equity. Memorial Hermann took top honors this year, standing out in a field of impressive finalists.

The significance of earning this recognition cannot be overstated. It speaks to the compassionate nature of the Memorial Hermann family as they work tirelessly to bring health-inspiring opportunities to underserved communities across Greater Houston.

“Winning the Foster G. McGaw Prize is especially meaningful to us,” said David L. Callender, MD, president and CEO of Memorial Hermann. “It reflects what we are here to do, to reach out beyond our hospital walls to help families live healthier, more satisfying lives.”

“The Foster G. McGaw Prize reflects what we are here to do, to reach out beyond our hospital walls to help families live healthier, more satisfying lives.”

David L. Callender, MD
President and CEO
Memorial Hermann Health System

Program Highlights

Nurse Health Line – A free 24/7 nurse triage phone service for anyone living in Texas, regardless of health insurance status

Health Centers for Schools – Provides medical, mental health, dental, nutritional, navigation and exercise programming to eligible children and adolescents in more than 80 Houston-area schools

Community Resource Centers – One-stop locations give individuals and families access to care, health education and social services

StepHEALTHY – Programs promote exercise as a tool to improve the health and well-being of our community

Mental Health Crisis Clinics – Provide walk-in psychiatric urgent care for anyone in need



It's not enough to put programs in place and count the number of people served. Memorial Hermann has living proof that these programs are creating a healthier Houston, neighborhood by neighborhood.

No story of Memorial Hermann's community service innovations is complete without acknowledging the contributions of Carol Paret, the system's recently retired senior vice president and chief community health officer. For the last 26 years, she and her special team have played a unique and vital role, collaborating with other healthcare providers, government agencies and community stakeholders to improve the overall quality of life in our most vulnerable neighborhoods.

Today, under the leadership of Teal Holden, senior vice president of Ambulatory Services and Post-Acute Care at Memorial Hermann, the team continues to meet people where they are with the resources to make better health a real and sustainable possibility.

Honors like the Foster G. McGaw Prize remind us of the powerful influence our financial support can have on the lives of Houstonians who may not even be patients of the system. As we help provide resources for our neighbors, we help our entire community thrive.

**“I was numb
and in shock.”**

Rita Villanueva's reaction to hearing she had triple-negative invasive ductal carcinoma



THINK POSITIVE

For Rita Villanueva, life after beating an aggressive form of breast cancer is all about helping others find joy and empowerment at Canopy Cancer Survivorship Center at Memorial Hermann The Woodlands

Rita Villanueva was getting a massage in August 2018 when she noticed a slight pain in her right breast. She shrugged it off as discomfort from lying face down. The next day, she felt sharp, sporadic breast pain and immediately called her OB/GYN.

At the time, Rita was director of Human Resources at the Children's Museum of Houston. She considered herself in good health and was diligent about annual mammograms.

Rita had a diagnostic mammogram, ultrasound and biopsy the next week. On Sept. 6, she was sitting in her office when a nurse from the imaging facility called and asked, "Are you driving?" Right then, she knew she was in for bad news. That's when she learned she had triple-negative invasive ductal carcinoma, one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer.

"I was numb and in shock," recalls Rita. "I couldn't absorb it, so I asked if we could call my sister, Lollie, who was a science teacher. I knew she would ask the right questions. The nurse explained the diagnosis and immediately counseled me on oncology options."

Rita openly shared her cancer news with her boss and colleagues and took a six-month leave of absence to focus on fighting for her life.

Beating cancer with positivity

Treatment happened fast. Surrounded by close-knit family and friends, and under the compassionate care of oncologist Paula D. Ryan, MD, Rita began six months of chemotherapy on Oct. 1, with surgery to follow.

Rita tackled the challenges of chemotherapy with a determined, positive attitude. She even had a champagne party with Lollie and her niece, Luz, to celebrate shaving her head. Rita's brother-in-law, Reynaldo, became her chauffeur and caretaker.

**“People think it's a death sentence.
I never thought that. I knew I would
beat cancer. I had God on my side.”**

"I knew I would beat cancer," says Rita. "I knew my faith, my God, my family and friends were the support system that would and did get me through it."

Affiliated breast surgical oncologist Diana M. Hook, MD, planned to perform Rita's surgery a month after her chemotherapy ended. In the meantime, she introduced her to Canopy, a first-of-its-kind cancer survivorship at Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Medical Center.

Rita and Lollie took a tour, and Rita was immediately impressed by the warm and welcoming volunteers they met. “They gave me a little goodie bag, which was so nice,” Rita says. “I knew then that I wanted to keep checking this place out.”

During treatment, Rita received head scarves and a wig at Canopy at no cost.

Honoring every milestone

Rita rang the bell on her chemotherapy treatments on Valentine’s Day 2019. Next up was a double mastectomy, which she elected to avoid future problems. Always ready for a celebration, Rita hosted her high school girlfriends for a “Bye-bye, boobies” party complete with a decorated pink ribbon cake.

“We had to say goodbye, so they got their own farewell party,” laughs Rita. On March 13, Rita underwent surgery at Memorial Hermann The Woodlands with Dr. Hook.



Lollie helped Rita preempt gradual hair loss from chemotherapy with a celebratory head-shaving party.

“The Memorial Hermann care team was great at calming me, including the therapy dog that visited me at the hospital.”



“Dr. Hook told me what to expect, what to do and not do—so I was prepared,” says Rita. “The Memorial Hermann care team was great at calming me, including the therapy dog that visited me at the hospital.”

She was home the next day with her tribe of helpers ready to do whatever she needed during her short recovery. Again, Rita maintained her positive attitude. “It wasn’t bad,” she says. “They cooked for me. They cleaned my house. They helped care for me. That’s when I knew I could do this.”

When she felt ready, Rita began visiting Canopy. She was fitted for breast prostheses, and she and Reynaldo attended a cooking class together with an Italian chef.

“I was kind of sad when I went back to work because I couldn’t attend more classes at Canopy,” says Rita.



CANOPY

A Cancer Survivorship Center at Memorial Hermann The Woodlands

Canopy offers a wide variety of programs and services to address the emotional, physical and social needs of anyone who has been touched by cancer. Complimentary services include an oncology nurse navigator, support groups for survivors and caregivers, exercise classes, breast prostheses, bra fittings and a wig salon.

“I’m sure everyone knows Memorial Hermann, but I believe Canopy is still a hidden gem,” says Rita. “I wish everyone knew this is available to cancer survivors to support and encourage one another, lend an ear and just be there.”

Canopy features a caring community of hope, healing and empowerment to enhance the quality of life for individuals affected by cancer, as well as those who support cancer survivors during their journeys.

“I’m sure everyone knows Memorial Hermann, but I believe Canopy is still a hidden gem.”

Rita Villanueva

A meaningful retirement

Fast forward to May 2020 when the COVID-19 shut-down at Rita’s office was about to end. She only had a few months until her planned retirement at age 70.

“I thought, why go back and stress out?” laughs Rita. “It was time for a new chapter—a new me.”

Rita wanted to stay busy and kept thinking about Canopy. When the center reopened for in-person visits after COVID-19, she immediately took classes and asked about volunteering.

“I’m grateful every day to enjoy life to the fullest.”

Rita knew she wanted to give back to Canopy, a place she loves. She is now the volunteer coordinator and the *Look Good Feel Better* program liaison. She is also certified for prosthesis and wig fittings. Rita loves attending classes like Pilates, Zumba, art, nutrition and mixology.

“I’m grateful every day to enjoy life to the fullest,” says Rita. “I know that I need to take care of myself—both physically and mentally.”

Your gifts to Memorial Hermann Foundation support advanced cancer care and programs like Canopy, which is solely funded by philanthropy.



Memorial Hermann Foundation

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To health. TOMORROW'S PROMISE.

DON'T MISS THE EVENT OF THE YEAR!

MEMORIAL HERMANN

IN THE
Pink
OF HEALTH

23RD ANNUAL
IN THE PINK OF HEALTH LUNCHEON

Friday, September 15, 2023

The Woodlands
Waterway Marriot Hotel
and Convention Center

Featuring *The New York Times*
best-selling author

Elin Hilderbrand

inthepinkofhealth.org

MEMORIAL HERMANN FOUNDATION

razzle dazzle

FEATURING

CONNIE BRITTON

ACTRESS & ACTIVIST, FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS
AND THE WHITE LOTUS

OCTOBER 12, 2023

11AM AT THE POST OAK HOTEL

Honorees

**TONY BRADFIELD
WHITNEY CRANE**

Chairs

**AMY PIERCE
KRISTINA SOMERVILLE
STEPHANIE TSURU**

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