

Focused On You

Special Issue 2022

Health News and Information from MedStar Montgomery Medical Center



Harvesting gratitude

Inside: Oncology team inspires philanthropic gift of gratitude | Local philanthropist leaves a lasting legacy for new Oncology Pavilion | Sandy Spring Bank philanthropic partnership marks another milestone in community and compassion | A community comes together to enhance cancer patient care

The role of gratitude in advancing health care for our community.



At MedStar Health, we know that **gratitude matters**, and we are grateful for your continued support!

As we enter the time of year to give thanks and celebrate, I also like to take the time to reflect. As I look back on my year, I can say with tremendous certainty that I am thankful for many things, one of which is the privilege to be a part of MedStar Health and our

MedStar Montgomery Medical Center community. I am grateful to work alongside brave and bright associates and for the patients and families who put their trust in us.

In health care, gratitude offers many benefits for those who express it and those who receive it. Expressing gratitude enhances provider wellness, reduces burnout, and improves patient satisfaction. At MedStar Health, we value expressions of gratitude from our patients, their families, and our community.

In this special edition of *Focused On You*, we highlight the importance of philanthropy and the ways philanthropy has positively impacted our community. I recently spoke about philanthropy with Jennifer Smith, our vice president of Philanthropy at MedStar Montgomery. I hope you enjoy her reflections on the topic.

What is gratitude and why does it matter?

Gratitude is the quality of being thankful. It is being ready to show appreciation and return kindness.

Throughout our system every day, patients and their families are experiencing care that is life changing. These experiences often lead to a feeling of gratitude for an outcome or a caregiver. Regardless of the reason, our patients and their families often look for a way

to express their gratitude by doing something that is personal and meaningful to them. Although it may be a seemingly simple concept, the impact of gratitude is truly remarkable!

How do we approach philanthropy?

At MedStar Health, we take an innovative approach to philanthropy. We recognize that every person's expression of gratitude is different. When a patient or family chooses to express gratitude through a philanthropic partnership, they are showing the true definition of philanthropy, the love of humankind. The definition of philanthropy does not focus on money, rather, it focuses on the way we show gratitude.

What are the benefits of philanthropy?

Our team is proud to partner with many patients, families, and community members as they express gratitude through philanthropy. Our hospital's legacy of philanthropic partnerships has allowed MedStar Montgomery to become the cornerstone of the community it is today. The love of humankind is visible throughout MedStar Health!

In this newsletter, we feature the stories of patients who chose to express their gratitude through a philanthropic partnership. Each person has positively impacted our ability to meet the care needs of our community in Montgomery County. These partnerships uplift our vision of being the trusted leader in caring for people and advancing health.

Gratitude matters. We are grateful to you.

Thomas J. Senker, FACHE

President, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center,
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

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Kenneth A. Samet, FACHE
President and CEO, MedStar Health

Gary Fernandes
Chair, MedStar Montgomery Medical
Center Board of Directors

Thomas J. Senker, FACHE
President, MedStar Montgomery
Medical Center, Senior Vice President,
MedStar Health

Tonja Paylor
Director of Marketing & Communications

Stefanie Bryant
Senior Marketing & Communications
Specialist

Writers
Karen Hansen
Ronna Borenstein
Jenne Young

In this edition of *Focused On You*, we highlight the invaluable role that philanthropy has played in helping expand our MedStar Montgomery Medical Center Oncology Pavilion.

Oncology team inspires philanthropic gift of gratitude.

By Ronna Borenstein

The height of the COVID-19 pandemic was a time of fear and uncertainty. For Varda Fink of Silver Spring, a mother of five and grandmother of six, the stakes grew even higher when she was diagnosed with breast cancer during the winter of 2020.

Varda's surgery took place at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, where she began her initial treatment. Facing four weeks of radiation therapy five days a week, and 18 appointments for infusion therapy, she was delighted to learn she could continue treatment closer to home at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. "While the oncology team at MedStar Georgetown was outstanding, the convenience of receiving that same high level of care right here in my community helped me reduce the stress of my illness," she explains.

The rigors of radiation therapy were of particular concern for Varda. "I was in a complete panic until I met with my radiation oncologist, Luther Ampey, MD, who allayed my fears," she says. "Not only was it clear to me that MedStar Montgomery has the most advanced technology, but the staff were also extremely comforting and attentive, and even played music to help me relax. I know it sounds strange, but I actually looked forward to my 10 minutes of lying there each day."



Luther Ampey, MD

When her treatment concluded, Varda sought a way to express her gratitude. Dr. Ampey referred her to the philanthropy team, where she learned how a philanthropic gift to MedStar Montgomery could make a significant difference for the hospital and her community.

"While we certainly don't expect it, caregivers feel an enormous sense of pride whenever a patient or family member expresses their gratitude in any way," notes Dr. Ampey. "Dr. William Osler, considered to be the father of modern medicine, once said, 'A good physician treats the disease; a great physician treats the patient who has the disease.' That's



Varda Fink, mother of five and grandmother of six, wanted to ensure her community continued to have access to exceptional oncology care.

certainly the intent of our team. We often develop a very intimate relationship with our oncology patients based on trust. When patients express gratitude, whether with words, gestures, or through philanthropy, it's an affirmation that they really have trusted the care we provided and are confident that we provided it to the very best of our abilities."

"Patients get really excited when they find ways to show their heartfelt appreciation for those who cared for them."

– Luther Ampey, MD

Dr. Ampey also points out that the ability to express gratitude can be part of the healing process for patients, enabling them to give back, take charge, and restore their sense of wellbeing. "Patients get really excited when they find ways to show their heartfelt appreciation for those who cared for them. That's why we offer to connect them with the philanthropy team."

A former attorney and now a financial advisor, Varda has always had philanthropic inclinations. "I believe I have an obligation to make the world a better place, and one way I can do that is to strengthen my own community," she explains. "My legacy gift to the hospital's oncology program will help to ensure that area residents continue to have a superb experience at MedStar Montgomery."

Varda also volunteers as a member of the philanthropy committee. She serves as a champion for the hospital and encourages others to consider the impact their philanthropic gifts of gratitude can have on the hospital.

"While I've chosen oncology because that's where I received my care, the hospital has many important programs and services that are deserving of support."

Local philanthropist leaves a lasting legacy for new Oncology Pavilion.

By Karen Hansen

What does it mean to be rooted in a community? For many, it's having an abiding personal connection to a place.

For Robert "Bobby" Smith, it also meant being invested in the wellbeing of those who live there. So, after a lifetime of philanthropy, Bobby left a posthumous philanthropic investment of \$1.8 million to MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, dedicated to the new Oncology Pavilion.

Bobby's philanthropic gift was not the first landmark legacy he left to Montgomery County. For more than 60 years, his family operated the historic Red Door Country Store (at the crossroads of Sandy Spring and Olney), where neighbors in need could always find a helping hand. Many who knew Bobby think this is where his generosity took root. Today, this pre-Civil War landmark is a Montgomery County Historical Cultural Park.

"The Oncology Pavilion is being 100% funded through philanthropy."

—Jennifer Smith, vice president of Philanthropy, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center

"Bobby's bequest to MedStar Montgomery represents the largest individual philanthropic partnership we have ever received," says Jennifer Smith (no relation to Bobby), vice president of Philanthropy at MedStar Montgomery. "It is especially meaningful because it comes from a member of the community we're honored to have served." His generosity has inspired others to be involved. "The Oncology Pavilion is being 100% funded through philanthropy," says Jennifer.

Bobby's support of MedStar Montgomery was longstanding and personal. He deeply appreciated the care his beloved wife of 48 years, Shirley, received here. When she died in 2013, Bobby helped establish the Shirley A. Smith Infusion Center in her honor. Now, the new Oncology Pavilion will expand and unify the hospital's approach to cancer care, while providing a haven of healing and peace for thousands of families whose lives are touched by cancer.



Bobby and Shirley Smith believed in the importance of giving back; their generous legacy will help to improve the lives of our community for generations to come.

Luther Ampey, MD, director of Oncology, MedStar Montgomery, was a key member of Shirley's care team. "People in this area appreciate that we provide a broad range of healthcare specialties, technologies, and treatments that you don't usually find at community hospitals, including our top-rated oncology service. With the new pavilion, we will have an even greater impact on the health and wellbeing of the community."

Aside from top-rated care, patients and their families will enjoy a greater sense of ease, thanks to easily accessible parking, a graceful new building facade, and a welcoming lobby. It is all designed to add greater peace of mind, which is so important to those dealing with cancer.

Todd Greenstone, a lifelong friend of Bobby's, recalls, "For Bobby, everything always had to be top shelf. He was always concerned about others and making sure that their needs were met." Thanks to Bobby's foresight and generosity, our new Oncology Pavilion will achieve those goals. "He realized the positive impact his philanthropic gift would have on the community," says Todd, "and that made him happy."

Building the future of cancer care.

Watch Luther Ampey, MD, the medical director of oncology at MedStar Montgomery, and grateful patients and philanthropic partners Varda Fink and Todd Greenstone talk about the impact of philanthropy on the Oncology Pavilion at MedStar Montgomery. With the support of philanthropic partners, we are transforming the oncology center's external environment and enhancing the footprint of our internal space to optimize access for the patients and families we serve.

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/OncologyPavilion](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/OncologyPavilion) to learn more about the impact of philanthropy on the Oncology Pavilion.



Todd Greenstone and his wife Anita are grateful for the outstanding personal care that is the hallmark of MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.

Todd Greenstone: philanthropic partner and community farmer



Todd Greenstone sees his passionate support of MedStar Montgomery Medical Center as a way of helping care for his community.

Todd Greenstone, a grateful patient and philanthropic partner, describes himself as a farmer whose main crops are wheat, barley, corn, and sorghum. But for more than 66 years, he has also sown the seeds of generosity among his friends and neighbors in the community to support MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.

As a longtime member of the hospital's philanthropy committee, Todd has helped raise funds for many projects, including hospital expansions, new CT scan machines, a new emergency department, da Vinci® surgical robotic equipment, and more. He was instrumental in facilitating the landmark \$1.8 million philanthropic gift from his friend Bobby Smith, which will be used to develop the new Oncology Pavilion. But Todd doesn't rest on his laurels. "I'm always looking for the next project or goal we need to accomplish," he says.

Todd understands that sometimes, even the smallest gestures yield bountiful outcomes. As a Boy Scout, Todd helped to cut material that volunteers would sew into privacy curtains for patient rooms. He also recalls, "In 1966, we used to have hospital suppers. My first job was cutting cabbage to make the coleslaw! I believe that was the start of philanthropy for many people who committed so much of their time and effort on those hot days serving meals to help increase philanthropic support for our hospital."

Todd says, "I just love talking to people. I always tell them, 'You might save your own life or the life of someone you love by partnering with MedStar Montgomery. It is about taking care of our community! That inspires most people, and the truth is, they feel good after they give.'"

To share gratitude for your caregiver, please contact Jennifer Smith at jennifer.t.smith@medstar.net or call **301-774-8804**.

Sandy Spring Bank philanthropic partnership marks another milestone in community and compassion.

By Karen Hansen

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.”

These words by Coretta Scott King certainly ring true for the MedStar Montgomery Medical Center community, whose 100-year legacy of compassionate care can be traced back to dedicated individuals.

Jacob Wheeler Bird, MD, came to Sandy Spring, Maryland, with the dream of establishing Montgomery County’s very first hospital. In 1917, Bird’s dream became a reality, thanks to the support of Robert Miller, one of the original Sandy Spring Bank directors. Miller arranged for the bank to make a philanthropic investment so what was then called “Montgomery General Hospital” could begin serving patients.

That partnership continues today—as does the generosity. In July, Sandy Spring Bank announced a \$250,000 philanthropic gift to the new Oncology Pavilion at MedStar Montgomery. “Our organizations are pillars in the community,” says Daniel (Dan) J. Schrider, president and CEO of Sandy Spring Bank. “This philanthropic commitment is our way of showing our appreciation for our original hometown hospital.”

“When someone is battling cancer, it is deeply personal for the patient and their loved ones,” says Dan. “We have employees, clients, and friends in the community who have received outstanding cancer care at MedStar Montgomery, so it’s personal for us, too. We want to do our part to make it as easy as possible for patients to access high-quality care in a comfortable and welcoming setting, right here at home.”

It’s personal for the MedStar Montgomery team, too. “I am honored to be a part of a relationship that spans more than a century. It’s a continuing tradition of people from the bank and the hospital supporting each other. We continue to learn from those who served before us, and hopefully, through our actions, we will inspire future generations to care for each other,” says Thomas J. (T.J.) Senker, FACHE, president of MedStar Montgomery.

The relationships run deep between Sandy Spring Bank’s employees and clients and the MedStar Health community. For many years, employees volunteered at the Women’s Board annual picnic and bazaar and helped facilitate philanthropic commitments for MedStar Montgomery. Additionally, Gary Fernandes, chief human resources officer at Sandy Spring Bank, was recently named the chairman of the board of directors at MedStar Montgomery. Dan is also a past director, and Christine Hill Wilson, a senior trust officer at Sandy Spring Trust, is a past president of the Women’s Board.

Sandy Spring Bank was there in 1919, when the hospital first opened, and faced one of its first great challenges helping the community cope with the deadly Spanish flu pandemic. Over the past 15 years, the bank has philanthropically gifted \$300,000 to MedStar Health, including \$50,000 in 2020 for COVID-19 relief.

While things may appear to have come full circle, the circle of care itself is ever widening. “This philanthropic gift will impact so many lives in our community, giving people expanded access to our world-class cancer care. Our longtime friends at Sandy Spring Bank have made a life-changing philanthropic investment, for which we are deeply grateful,” says T.J.



Gary Fernandes, chief human resources officer at Sandy Spring Bank, and Thomas J. Senker, president of MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, are proud of their organizations’ longtime partnership in supporting their community.

A community comes together to enhance cancer patient care.

By Ronna Borenstein

The saying “we take care of our own” is poignantly illustrated by the generosity of our community at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.

Thanks to philanthropic gifts from local supporters, the new MedStar Montgomery Oncology Pavilion will encompass an entire continuum of care—from easily accessible patient parking to a graceful new building facade and welcoming lobby.

“The Pavilion is being 100% funded through philanthropy,” explains Jennifer Smith, vice president of Philanthropy at MedStar Montgomery. “We are so grateful for the generosity of this community. So far, we’ve raised \$2.7 million of our \$3 million goal.”

As the number of patients affected by cancer steadily increases every year, so does the demand for our services. The Oncology Pavilion renovation and expansion project has transformed our oncology center’s environment, including the Helen P. Denit Center for Radiation Therapy, Shirley A. Smith Infusion Center, and Medical Oncology/Hematology Suite—dramatically improving the overall quality of health care and comfort for our cancer patients and families we serve.

“We are so grateful for the generosity of this community. So far, we’ve raised \$2.7 million of our \$3 million goal.”

—Jennifer Smith, vice president of Philanthropy,
MedStar Montgomery Medical Center

All the enhancements will reflect our unified approach to cancer care while inspiring our community with a warm and welcoming atmosphere.



Jennifer Smith and Dr. Ampey review plans for the new MedStar Montgomery Medical Center Oncology Pavilion.

Having all our cancer services in one newly renovated space with a congenial pavilion entrance will help to:

- Optimize the coordination of patient care
- Enhance effective communication—physicians will be able to communicate with patients and the patient’s healthcare teams easily
- Facilitate multidisciplinary care and enhanced staff collaboration with caregivers working side by side every day
- Provide patients with a better care experience and improve patient satisfaction
- Improve wayfinding through the dedicated entrance to the cancer center and a more open floor plan

Studies have shown the positive effects of a well-designed, healing environment. The improvements we wish to make will provide a relaxing environment that will help patients heal faster and lead to a more positive care experience.

For more information about the Oncology Pavilion campaign or to get involved, visit [MedStarHealth.org/OncologyPavilion](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/OncologyPavilion) or contact the philanthropy office at **301-774-8804**.

Meet our **oncology team.**

Our highly skilled oncology team at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center provides a comprehensive approach delivered with compassion. They work together to develop a personalized care plan for each patient. We offer a full spectrum of cancer services, including screening and prevention, research, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, social/emotional support, and survivorship programs.



Luther Ampey, MD
Radiation/Oncology



Behzad Doratotaj, MD
Hematology/Oncology



Nora Sudarsan, DO
Hematology/Oncology



Erin Ruane, CRNP
Hematology/Oncology

It's how we treat people.