



Expanding Rural Access to Heart and Lung Care

Across Maine's rural communities, access to specialty care can mean the difference between catching a serious heart or lung condition early or discovering it after the disease has progressed. Thanks to a new rural healthcare grant, St. Joseph Healthcare is helping change that story.

Through the Rural Heart and Lung Tele-Care Collaborative (RHLT Consortium), St. Joe's is partnering with Community Care Partnership of Maine (CCPM) and four rural health centers to bring cardiology and pulmonology expertise directly to patients through virtual visits.

With just a click, a patient's primary care provider can connect with a specialist in seconds. Over time, this model will grow even more sophisticated, using real-time data to identify high-risk patients before health concerns escalate.



For people living in Washington, Hancock, Oxford and Penobscot Counties — regions where provider shortages are common, and people often must travel long distances to access care — this can mean earlier interventions, fewer hospitalizations and better quality of life.

This innovative work is rooted in St. Joe's mission to care for the whole person, especially in communities where accessing care isn't so easy. And with your support, these telehealth breakthroughs can extend even further, helping more rural families receive the care they deserve, right where they live.



Honoring Loved Ones at Lights of Remembrance

On December 3, nearly 100 community members gathered for St. Joseph Healthcare's annual Lights of Remembrance. Together, we paused to remember loved ones lost and welcome the Christmas season, finding comfort in ministry.

Attendees were serenaded with traditional Christmas songs by the St. John's Youth Choir and the John Bapst Choir, enjoyed visits from Mr. and Mrs. Claus and shared warm cocoa and cookies with family and friends.

During the ceremony, St. Joe's President Greg LaFrancois served as host and invited two children to turn on St. Joe's holiday lights.

A cherished part of Lights of Remembrance is the opportunity to purchase ornaments in honor or in memory of loved ones. This year, all donations supported St. Joe's Homecare and Hospice Program, helping to extend compassion and dignity into the homes of individuals and families recovering from illness or injury, and those caring for loved ones at the end of life.

To everyone who attended, donated or supported the event from afar, thank you. With your generosity, we raised more than \$4,500.

Whether you joined us in person this year, supported us as a donor or have been part of this tradition in years past, your support is what makes this gathering such a meaningful part of our ministry.



**You can extend your support by contributing
to the Homecare and Hospice Program
by scanning the QR code to give.**



See Your Impact in Action at Our Donor Luncheons

At St. Joseph Healthcare, we strive to connect donors like you with the programs you care about, offering a firsthand look at the impact you help create. One St. Joseph Felician Society member, a donor who includes the St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation in their estate plans, captured this connection perfectly:

"I'd like to get to know the people who provide the care," she said. "I don't really need a special thank you. I just want to see up close that my giving matters."

Inspired by her words, we launched a series of lunchtime conversations where Felician Society members, as well as Davis Society members (loyalty donors who have given for the last three years in a row or longer), attend sessions highlighting programs, the people behind them and the evolving health needs donors help address.



If you've included St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation in your estate plans, we would be glad to invite you to an upcoming luncheon. Please let us know by contacting us through scanning the QR code.



Strengthening Survivor Care Across Rural Maine

For survivors of sexual assault in Maine's most rural counties, compassionate, trauma-informed care can be hours away. St. Joseph Healthcare's Sexual Assault and Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Nursing program has long been a lifeline, offering expert forensic nursing, emotional support and coordinated advocacy. Now, thanks to new and continued federal and non-federal grant funding, this vital work is expanding even further.

The grants will help train and certify more sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs), increase access to specialized exams and ensure survivors can receive expert support close to home.

Through the Addressing Rural Violence SANEly initiative, St. Joe's will serve as the regional hub for Northern and Downeast Maine, partnering with rural critical access hospitals in Penobscot, Washington and Piscataquis Counties — regions facing some of the highest barriers to care.

Each aspect of the program promotes survivor safety, dignity and autonomy. From confidential, welcoming exam spaces to culturally sensitive care, SAFE empowers each person to make decisions that feel right for them.

By strengthening rural response teams and building a network of trained caregivers, St. Joe's is helping ensure that no survivor faces their journey alone. And with donor support, this work reaches even more communities, bringing healing and hope where it's needed most.



Support survivor-centered care in rural Maine. Donate here or scan the QR code.

A Beautiful Welcome: How Healing Arts Brighten St. Joe's



Visitors walking into St. Joseph Healthcare's Largay Building are now greeted by vibrant new artwork and a striking outdoor sculpture, welcoming every visitor with warmth, creativity and care.

These pieces are the latest additions from the Healing Arts Program, a decade-long effort by volunteers to create healing environments that support visitors' emotional well-being, foster creative expression and promote wellness throughout St. Joe's.

We are grateful to Birchbrook for sponsoring the Healing Arts Program again in 2026, helping ensure more meaningful moments of comfort and inspiration for our community.

Reflecting on the impact of the program for patients and families, Jeff Wahlstrom, a member of the Healing Arts Commission overseeing the program said, "It's really rewarding to see the looks on their faces as they make their way down the hallway, sometimes to an appointment they don't want to go to and are not looking forward to, and they have an opportunity to see some of the best art in the state."



Images courtesy of Kathy Lena



Thanks to volunteers like Jeff and your generosity, beauty and healing reach everyone who visits St. Joe's. You can continue bringing comfort and inspiration to patients and visitors by increasing your support of St. Joe's and making another donation by scanning the QR code.



Kendra Paradis, DO, St. Joseph Family Medicine –Broadway with patient, Nicole Pedone and her children.

Shared Values Inspire Collective Giving

If you've chosen a career in healthcare, it's likely because you believe you can make a measurable difference in people's lives. Together, members of St. Joseph Healthcare's Medical Staff have stepped up to make that difference a reality by launching the medical staff Giving Circle. It's a collective initiative, led by medical staff, to identify and fund patient care and programs with the philanthropic gifts of its members.

Members of the medical staff who contribute to the fund will review funding proposals submitted by employees of the hospital. They will then cast votes for their preferred initiatives at the close of each year. As direct caregivers, they will be in a strong position to make these decisions.

"The goal of this inspiring circle is to increase awareness of St. Joe's philanthropic efforts and magnify the expanded impact medical staff can have on their health system," shares Kendra Paradis, DO, St. Joseph Family Medicine – Broadway. "Participating gives me an opportunity to discuss our community's needs and determine how we can best allot funds to successfully address those needs. I'm incredibly happy to be a part of it!"



Mary's Legacy in Action: Building a More Accessible Future

Mary Prybylo, RN, MSN, FACHE, former president of St. Joseph Healthcare, retired last spring after 14 years of dedicated service to the hospital and the surrounding community. Around 300 colleagues, community members and friends gathered at Husson University's Gracie Theater to honor her leadership, vision and unwavering commitment to enhancing care across Maine.

During her tenure, Prybylo championed initiatives such as the Community Care Partnership of Maine and the Sexual Assault and Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Nursing program. She also strengthened access to age-friendly care, ensuring that St. Joe's met the needs of Maine's diverse, often rural population.

Reflecting on her legacy, Prybylo said, "I think I'm most proud of the fact that St. Joe's is a community hospital, and this community sees it in that way."

Her dedication extends beyond her professional career. Inspired by her own experience using a wheelchair after an accident last September, Prybylo and her husband established the Prybylo Accessibility Fund to improve handicap-accessible bathrooms at St. Joe's. With the help of generous donors, the fund has raised \$77,300, ensuring that patients and visitors will enjoy safer, more accessible facilities.



Mary Prybylo has retired, but her impact, emboldened through donor generosity, will be felt for years to come. Help carry it forward by supporting the Accessibility Fund by scanning the QR code.



CORNERSTONE

– St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation Newsletter –



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St. Joe's **COMMIT** to
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Supporting Victims of Violence & Abuse
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SAVE THE DATE
8th ANNUAL!
Sunday, September 27, 2026
Broadway Park



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