Just two years shy of breaking ground for expanded intensive care capabilities, Hartford Hospital opened the four-story Bliss expansion in October, offering care to patients with critical and specialized medical needs in a carefully designed state-of-the-art space.

“[The building] became a beacon of hope when most of all activities and commerce came to a halt in the city and state,” said Bimal Patel, President, Hartford and Northwest Region and Senior Vice President, Hartford HealthCare. “It is a testament to our tenacity and determination to complete the project.”

Home to cardiothoracic surgery and cardiac care, as well as advanced MRI technology, the new building expands the hospital’s ICU capacity by 20%, and expands diagnostic capabilities by 25%, and operating room capacity by 12%. “The generosity of our donors made this extraordinary healthcare facility a reality for our community, and for that we are deeply grateful,” said Lynn Rossini, Vice President of Philanthropy Hartford Hospital.

The building—developed with the help of teams from perioperative services, critical care, nurses, physicians, advanced practitioners, biomed, environmental services, and facilities management, among others—boasts the largest rooms on Hartford Hospital’s campus with adjoining spaces for visitors, allowing for family-centered care.

“This isn’t about buildings. It’s about people,” said Jeffrey A. Flaks, President and CEO Hartford HealthCare. “We’re going to be able to care for more people, particularly in that critical care situation, which is really when the healthcare system matters the most.”
Annual Meeting of Hartford Hospital Corporators Reflects on Year of Progress and Challenges

Hartford Hospital held its 2021 Annual Meeting of Corporators virtually in November, welcoming new Corporators, remembering Corporators who have died, and updating current Corporators and friends on the hospital’s and Hartford HealthCare’s progress during fiscal 2021.

In her first annual meeting as chair of Hartford HealthCare’s Hartford Region Board of Directors, Alexia Cruz extended the board’s appreciation to the hospital staff and administration for their heroic work during the pandemic. “We look back with pride as Hartford Hospital and Hartford HealthCare continue to help lead our COVID care and prevention statewide,” she said.

Cruz welcomed 11 new Corporators and led the meeting in a moment of silence in remembrance of Corporators who passed away in 2021: Robert A. Goldschmidt, John Hincks, Alfred R. Rogers, James B. Slimmon, and Cary Wheaton.

Lynn Rossini, Vice President of Philanthropy, Hartford Hospital, thanked Corporators, donors, the Hartford Hospital Auxiliary, and the Young Leaders Advisory Council for embracing their role as Hartford Hospital ambassadors. “Together with our team, your philanthropy helped us raise more than $10 million this year to support the vital needs of our hospital and community.”

Hartford Hospital President Bimal Patel spoke to the hospital’s accomplishments despite the challenges of the pandemic, including:

- recognition of Hartford Hospital programs as best in class by organizations including U.S. News and World Report, Healthgrades, The Leapfrog Group, and the Joint Commission
- the hospital’s 500th heart transplant
- increased ICU capacity with the opening of the Bliss expansion

“There is so much to be proud of, so much to be grateful for,” Hartford HealthCare President and CEO Jeffrey A. Flaks said. “This was a year that tested us, but Hartford Hospital continued to move forward, to advance our programs to unparalleled levels of excellence.”

Among the system-wide accomplishments Flaks noted:

- delivery of more than 500,000 COVID-19 vaccines, including the country’s second vaccination in February 2021 and the nation’s first vaccines to children
- 1.6 million COVID-19 tests
- 1.7 million people cared for over the past year
- close to 500,000 virtual health visits

“When we talk about numbers of tests or numbers of vaccines or numbers of heart transplants,” Flaks said, “we’re talking about people we’ve helped in their greatest moments of need and vulnerability. That’s why we need to be strong and sustainable.”

New Director of Philanthropy Joins the Hartford Hospital Team

The Hartford Hospital Department of Philanthropy in November welcomed Gregory Latz as the new director of philanthropy.

Latz joins Hartford Hospital with more than 20 years of experience in fundraising and philanthropic advising, most recently at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center (CCMC) as associate vice president of development. In that role, Latz was instrumental in growing CCMC’s endowment by creating several endowed chairs for division chiefs, securing major gifts for new patient facilities, and furthering community awareness of CCMC’s capabilities. Latz has also held fundraising positions at The Village for Families & Children, the American Diabetes Association, and the Boy Scouts of America.

“In my first few weeks at Hartford Hospital, it has been fantastic meeting so many volunteers, Corporators, nurses, and physicians so focused on delivering the highest level of patient care and safety,” Latz said. “I look forward to continuing to help to fulfill the wishes of donors who want to give back to the hospital for the care they have received.”

You can join the philanthropy team in welcoming Latz by contacting him at Gregory.Latz@hhchealth.org or at 860.972.4352.
Beverly Buckner Baker Research & Innovation Center Takes Bone & Joint Institute to Next Level

In extending his gratitude for the support, John Grady-Benson, MD, physician-in-chief of the Bone & Joint Institute, said, “This is a turning point in the seven-year history of the Bone & Joint Institute. We have worked hard to get data-driven culture in health-care. Beverly’s generous gift provides funding for the infrastructure support and data analytics platforms that are essential for providing the best patient experience for every patient.”

Orthopedic research at Hartford Hospital received a significant endorsement last fall with a multimillion-dollar gift establishing the Beverly Buckner Baker Research and Innovation Center at the Hartford HealthCare Bone & Joint Institute.

“We are so grateful to Beverly Buckner Baker for this gift,” said Bimal Patel, president of Hartford Hospital and senior vice president, Hartford HealthCare. “Her donation to the Bone & Joint Institute at Hartford Hospital will propel our research program, fueling innovation and development that will change the lives of patients in our community.”

The generous gift establishing the research center was dedicated to Buckner Baker’s late husband, Shepard “Shep” Baker, at a ceremony in October. The donation was also inspired by the outstanding care the couple received over the years at Hartford Hospital.

Buckner Baker explained that she intends the gift to help increase access to the Bone & Joint Institute’s expertise.

The research center is a realization of the founding aspirations for the Bone & Joint Institute, according to Jeffrey A. Flaks, president and CEO of Hartford HealthCare.

“When Dr. Gordon Zimmermann and I said we’re going to build this, we had a shared vision to create a world-class environment that would bring people from around the world to Hartford,” Flaks said.

“We knew we had the DNA because Orthopedic Associates of Hartford, since their founding, always had world-class physicians. We knew we could build this physical environment to attract people from around the world to review and emulate. But the third piece of that vision was to add research and innovation to our DNA. Beverly’s gift allows us to realize the next level of our aspirations, to truly be world-class. And the beneficiaries will be all the citizens of Connecticut. Regardless of means, regardless of background, they will get world-class care here.”

New Courtyard, Fountain Offer Quiet Respite in Memory of Two Treasured Institutions

In the 1920s, at the center of Heubelien Courtyard at the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, stood a sculpture of a fountain. Was it a heron? An egret? A crane? Whatever the species, nurses called him Hepatitis, affectionately named for how the water discolored when the fountain was due for a cleaning.

Over the years, the courtyard gave way to the hospital’s expansion. But memories of Hepatitis and the space it occupied have been resurrected and reimagined with the new John Kelley Springer Memorial Courtyard and the Alumnae Association of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing Fountain.

The courtyard and fountain were unveiled in September during a ribbon-cutting at the Education and Resource Center on Hudson Street. Named in memory of the beloved leader who served as the 18th president of Hartford Hospital, the courtyard provides a peaceful retreat for hospital staff, visitors, and those training at the Center for Education, Simulation and Innovation.

“This is a wonderful celebration of history,” said Hartford Hospital President Bimal Patel. “While I never had a chance to meet him, it is an inspiration to walk the same way John walked on this campus. I am also grateful for the contributions of the nurses and alumni.”

With Springer’s widow Jane and his four daughters in attendance, stories were shared of the man who was instrumental in developing the LIFE STAR, trauma, and transplant programs.

“Our dad would be so proud that this is happening,” said Kelley Springer Braun. “He loved the nurses. He loved education. I am sure he is happy to know that people will come here for solace and hope and learning. We know he is here.”

Cheryl Ficara, senior vice president of operations at Hartford Hospital, said, “John Kelley Springer was a beloved leader who had a passion for lifting Hartford Hospital to its highest potential. Nurses at the hospital held John in high regard. He took the time to remember names and faces and was always interested in their lives, both professionally and personally.”

The courtyard and fountain were made possible through generous donations and support from the School of Nursing Alumnae Association; Evan Fox, MD, and family; Marcia and John Hincks; Dr. and Mrs. Lenworth Jacobs; Eric and Penny Marziali; David and Anne Palmer; and Doris and the late Pete Thomas.

Hartford Hospital School of Nursing was an influential learning institution from 1877 until 1976, shaping and educating generations of nurses. To this day, the School of Nursing Alumnae Association is a vibrant group, giving back to the hospital in many ways. Its members continue to play an active role in the progress and mission of the hospital.

Betty Ann Fusco of the alumnae association said John Springer’s “love of nursing was evident as he strolled the units and engaged with nurses as family members. We are proud and honored to donate this fountain in his memory.”

L-R: Gordon Zimmermann, MD, Michael Miranda, MD; Beverly Buckner Baker; Pietro Memmo, MD, and John Grady-Benson, MD, physician-in-chief, Hartford HealthCare Bone & Joint Institute.


L-R: Bimal Patel, President, Hartford and Northwest Region and Senior Vice President, Hartford HealthCare; Hartford HealthCare President and CEO Jeffrey A. Flaks; Hartford Hospital Vice President of Philanthropy Lynn Rosini; Beverly Buckner Baker; Hartford Hospital Vice President of Philanthropy Erinna Carol Goldfink; Stacey Lombardi, vice president of business operations, Hartford HealthCare Bone & Joint Institute; and John Grady-Benson, MD, physician-in-chief, Hartford HealthCare Bone & Joint Institute.
LIFE STAR Supports Mobile Mammography

In October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the LIFE STAR team sold pink T-shirts to raise funds to support Hartford Health Care’s Mobile Mammography program. A total of $1,333 was raised, covering the cost of 10 mammograms. At a check presentation in November are, from left, Kristen Lapenta, special events coordinator, Hartford Hospital Philanthropy Department; Meghan Bianco, associate director of special events, Hartford Hospital Philanthropy Department; Dorely Roldan, community outreach coordinator, Cancer Outreach Program/Mobile Mammography; Karen Weingrod, administrative director, Hartford HealthCare Breast Program; Wilson Miranda, medical administrative coordinator for ultrasound, Hartford Hospital; Amber-Lee Donohue, EMS communication specialist, LIFE STAR; Lauri Bolton, MD, medical and program director, LIFE STAR; Heather Standish, RN, nurse director, LIFE STAR; Cassandra Crowal, regional director, Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Hartford Hospital; and Patricia Margarido, program director, LIFE STAR.

John Hayes Fund for H.O.P.E.

Two events in October benefited the John Hayes Fund for H.O.P.E. at Hartford Hospital, which assists cancer patients and their families who are struggling financially.

Karen Cote, a breast cancer survivor, walked 100 miles in October, raising $5,745 for the fund. Cote dedicated each mile to a patient undergoing cancer treatment, a loved one who has passed away, a survivor, or someone in remission.

The 5th Annual Driving for H.O.P.E. Golf Tournament took place October 1 at the Tunxis Plantation Country Club in Farmington. The tournament, which is held in memory of John W. Hayes and organized by his family, raised $11,500 for the fund. Pictured from left are Lynn Rossini, vice president of philanthropy, Hartford Hospital; Cassandra Crowal, regional director, Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Hartford Hospital; and Andrew Salner, MD, medical director, Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Hartford Hospital.

Voice of Triumph Apostolic Ministries Breast Cancer Walk

Pastor Dalton R. Hall of Voice of Triumph Apostolic Ministries (VOTAM) in Vernon presents a check to Kristen Lapenta, special events coordinator, Hartford Hospital Philanthropy Department. VOTAM held its 2nd Annual Breast Cancer Walk on the Vernon Rails to Trails on October 16, raising $800 for Hartford Hospital’s Partnership for Breast Care Fund. VOTAM also donated “Bags of Love” containing socks, face masks, hand sanitizers, and other comfort items to distribute to cancer patients receiving treatment.
Hartford Hospital needs additional pet therapy teams to bring comfort and joy to patients, visitors, and staff. Teams are utilized in the main lobby as "Welcome Waggers" and as visitors to patients in the main hospital, at the cancer centers in Hartford, Manchester, and Avon, and various units at the Institute of Living. Volunteer Services staff will discuss preferences and options with each applicant to find the best location for the team. Each team is asked to volunteer once a week (on the same day and time each week) for at least one hour.

Do you think you and your dog would make a great pet therapy team? Do you already have a pet-therapy certified dog? Contact Eileen Pelletier, director of Volunteer Services, at Eileen.Pelletier@hhchealth.org or 860.972.2448 for more information.