

INSPIRING GENEROSITY



For complex care, look no further than St. Elizabeth. Learn how Dr. Mario Castillo-Sang is making an international impact with innovative cardiac care performed locally. What's possible is closer than you imagined.

THE MISSION OF ST. ELIZABETH FOUNDATION

... is to inspire and connect our generous community with St. Elizabeth programs and projects dedicated to improving the health of our families, friends and neighbors. We will elevate St. Elizabeth to lead the communities we serve to be among the healthiest in America.

In this issue, you'll get a glimpse at the future of heart care happening right here and now at St. Elizabeth Healthcare. St. Elizabeth is pioneering new, minimally invasive heart procedures to treat complex cardiac conditions designed to return patients to their daily lives faster. Leading this work is Dr. Mario Castillo-Sang, a nationally recognized expert who has performed more than 750 minimally invasive mitral valve repairs and replacements. His depth of experience places him among a very small group of surgeons in the nation with this level of expertise. What makes this program truly exceptional is its rarity. Only three hospitals in the United States currently perform this level of minimally invasive, complex cardiac surgery. St. Elizabeth stands among them—bringing world-class care to our region and positioning the organization as a national leader. I encourage you to read about the breakthroughs and innovations happening now, and consider investing in the future of heart care, right here.

For more than 165 years, St. Elizabeth Healthcare has been a trusted name in compassionate care and clinical excellence. Today, the Florence Wormald Heart & Vascular Institute stands as the region's comprehensive center for heart and vascular health – bringing together the region's top cardiovascular specialists and services. Now St. Elizabeth is leading the way with new innovations in cardiac care, bringing some of the most sophisticated approaches to modern heart care right here at home. That includes Totally Endoscopic Cardiac Surgery, which allows surgeons to treat complex cardiac conditions through minimally invasive, state-of-the-art techniques and equipment. In this issue, you'll learn how St. Elizabeth is investing in the next generation of cardiac care and how it's already transforming lives. It's another step toward St. Elizabeth's vision to lead the communities it serves to be among the healthiest in the nation.



Carri Chandler
Vice President,
St. Elizabeth Foundation



Bob Hoffer
Chair, St. Elizabeth Foundation
Partner, DBL Law

A FAMILY COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY HEALTH: The McLane's Journey



For Ryan and Meghan McLane, supporting the St. Elizabeth Foundation is deeply personal, rooted in professional passion, community ties, and firsthand experience with the life-changing care the St. Elizabeth Foundation makes possible.

Their involvement began early in Ryan's career through the Foundation's Young Patrons Guild (YPG), now known as the Junior Board. As young professionals eager to give back, the McLanes quickly immersed themselves in hands-on fundraising and community building. One of their earliest projects was helping raise funds to create a pediatric room for St. Elizabeth Hospice. Through a variety of initiatives, including a kickball tournament, the group not only achieved its goal but also forged meaningful friendships along the way.

"The health of our families, friends, and neighbors is very important to us, so we believe in supporting the health care system in our community. The Foundation provides us a great opportunity to do that," explains Ryan.

When Ryan turned 40, he "retired" from YPG, but stepping back wasn't an option. His family's dedication to the Foundation's mission only grew stronger. That's when he was introduced to the Samaritan Society by his mentor and law partner, Bob Hoffer, who is also the Chair of the St. Elizabeth Foundation. Ryan and Meghan then focused on a new initiative, raising funds to build the Yung Family Cancer Center in Edgewood.

Their passion for the Foundation's work stems from the central role health care plays in their daily lives. Meghan, a nurse anesthetist, has devoted her career to caring directly for patients in moments of vulnerability. Ryan, through his legal practice at

DBL Law, has spent years defending health care providers in medical liability cases. Together, they see the health of their families, friends, and neighbors as inseparable from the strength of the local health care system.

"We often take our health for granted until we or our loved ones experience illness. But when those moments happen, it can turn our world upside down. During those times, we rely on our healthcare providers—especially those right here at St. Elizabeth—to heal us and bring our world back to normalcy. The work of the Foundation has significantly advanced St. Elizabeth's ability to deliver that gift of health to those in need in our community," says Ryan.

Giving back, both financially and through volunteering, is a value they strive to model for their family. Family remains at the heart of everything they do. Born and raised in Northern Kentucky, the McLanes make their home in Edgewood with their son Luke and daughter Natalie. As a family, they love being outdoors, hiking, traveling, and cheering one another on.

Most recently, Meghan found a new way to extend her passion for patient care—this time through storytelling. Drawing on her experience in anesthesia, she authored a children's book, *Annie Anesthesia, Her Sleepy, Dreamy Day*. Designed to ease the natural anxieties children may feel before surgery, the book reflects the same compassion that has guided Meghan's career.

Through every stage of their journey, the McLanes' message is clear: supporting the St. Elizabeth Foundation is not just philanthropy—it's an investment in the health, hope, and future of the community they are proud to call home.

TURNING SURGERY INTO A LESSON FOR THE WORLD



After surviving a heart attack and discovering silent mitral valve damage months later, John Erickson became an unexpected part of medical history. By choosing a cutting edge, minimally invasive heart surgery, he transformed a personal health crisis into a powerful teaching moment.

Just one week before his 79th birthday, John, a retired professor and Indiana farmer, suffered a heart attack. He received four stents to open blocked arteries and restore blood flow to his heart. The treatment saved his life, but the two hour gap between the cardiac event and the procedure caused unexpected damage to his mitral valve, damage that produced zero symptoms and would go undetected for months.

During a follow up visit at St. Elizabeth, he learned his heart troubles were far from over. Concerned about the possibility of valve damage, his doctor ordered additional testing. The images revealed severe mitral valve regurgitation. Without surgical repair, the condition would steadily worsen.

John was referred to Dr. Mario Castillo-Sang, a cardiac surgeon and global leader in minimally invasive mitral valve surgery.

Decades earlier, as a graduate student, John assisted with cardiac research and observed several open heart surgeries. He was familiar with traditional methods, but when Dr. Castillo-Sang described his preferred technique – Totally Endoscopic Cardiac Surgery (TECS) – John was intrigued by its sophistication.

“I figured there had been a few changes to the procedure. But I didn’t realize how amazing those changes were. When Dr. Castillo-Sang said that he would be repairing my valve through a small hole on the right side of my chest – that was difficult for me to grasp,” says John.

Dr. Castillo-Sang explained that TECS is a highly specialized form of minimally invasive heart surgery. He uses this approach to treat an array of complex heart conditions with just a 2-2.5cm incision, a state-of-the-art 3D 4K camera and customized tools – no bone cutting and no rib spreading. This would mean less pain, a smaller scar and a faster return to normal activities.

For John, this wasn’t just impressive – it was an opportunity.

In September 2025, St. Elizabeth Healthcare hosted the Endoscopic Cardiac Surgeons Club (ECS) Annual Meeting – marking the first time this prestigious global event was held in the U.S. More than 200 surgeons and medical professionals from 42 countries gathered to share knowledge, techniques and view live video feeds of endoscopic cases from around the world. This would include an operation being performed at St. Elizabeth Edgewood hospital by Dr. Castillo-Sang.

When Dr. Castillo-Sang asked John if he would consider being the patient for a live broadcast case, the educator in him didn't hesitate.

"I taught anatomy and physiology for 38 years," John says. "The idea of me being used to help teach cardiac surgeons how to do this technique was an incredible opportunity – how could I say no?"

On the day of surgery, cameras were rolling and the operation went as planned.

"What stands out most about John isn't just his resilience – it's his willingness to turn his own vulnerability into a source of learning for others," said Dr. Castillo-Sang. *"John's instinct to teach, even in a moment of uncertainty was incredibly generous and touching."*

Within a few weeks John was able to resume his work on the farm. *"My recovery was really fast,"* John explains. *"The day after my surgery, I walked a half mile around the hospital. My operation was on Friday, and I went home on Monday."*

"I wasn't a fragile person," he says. *"I was a wounded person – someone who had the unique privilege of educating the next generation of heart surgeons."*

To sustain and expand this momentum, St. Elizabeth is investing in the next generation of cardiac care: four dedicated operating rooms and a state-of-the-art training and education center. These spaces will not only support advanced procedures like TECS, but also serve as a hub for education, innovation, and global collaboration.

If you would like to support the next generation of innovative heart procedures at St. Elizabeth Healthcare, please visit www.stelizabeth.com/donate or contact Carri Chandler, Vice President St. Elizabeth Foundation, at carri.chandler@stelizabeth.com or (859) 301-3920.

MEET THE DOCTOR: Dr. Mario Castillo-Sang, Cardiothoracic Surgeon



Dr. Castillo-Sang grew up in Panama City, Panama and received his medical training in Mexico and the U.S.

During his general surgery residency in Toledo, Ohio, he met his wife, a native Cincinnati, who is a Urologist in Greater Cincinnati.

Dr. Castillo-Sang is an internationally recognized cardiac surgeon and a leader in Totally Endoscopic Cardiac Surgery (TECS), one of the most technically demanding forms of heart repair.

A founding member of the Endoscopic Cardiac Surgery Club, Dr. Castillo-Sang lectures around the world to advance and standardize these techniques.

Why is it so important to you to share your knowledge and surgery techniques with others?

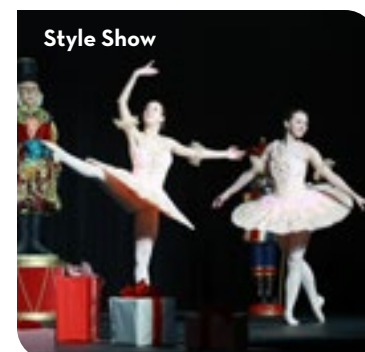
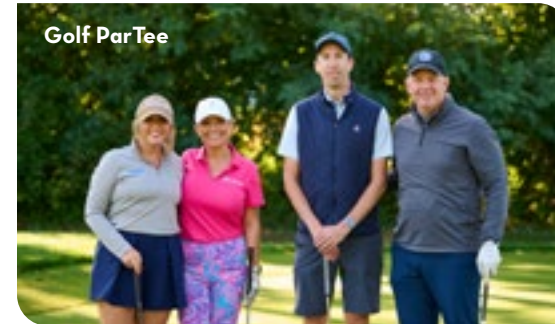
"Looking back and knowing that one is making a positive difference in the lives of other human beings is important to me. Training other surgeons in doing things that positively impact their patients brings a great positive effect to this world. I can only treat one patient at a time as a surgeon, but by training others I get to impact the lives of many more."

What inspired you to become a cardiac surgeon?

"I had never seen open heart surgery until 2002 in Houston, Texas. I had the blessing to rotate as a medical student at Baylor College of Medicine in the cardiac surgery service of Dr. Rafael Espada, then Vice-Chair of Surgery for Baylor College of Medicine. He was, in surgical genealogy, a direct descendant of Dr. Michael E. Deakey, likely the most famous cardiac surgeon ever to live because of his prowess as a technical surgeon and pioneer. Dr. Espada inspired me to pursue this specialty."

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

CONNECT WITH
OUR GENEROUS
COMMUNITY BY
JOINING OUR
2026 EVENTS!



2025: OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

GENEROSITY BUILDS COMMUNITY

The Foundation raised over \$7.2 million in 2025.

- Nearly \$545,000 raised by events.

GRANTS



35 grants obtained



\$3.2M in grant funds secured

GENEROSITY HEALS

Expanding Services and Programs

The Gift of Health members awarded grants for AED/CPR Training mannequins for community-based training, funded patient transportation needs, equipment to support Virtual Health Department and implemented an exercise room in the 7D Unit on Edgewood's campus to support recovery for patients and reduce staff burnout.

With the generous support of our community, St. Elizabeth Foundation helps ensure a continuum of outstanding, compassionate health care for our families, friends and neighbors.

Together, we'll continue to make a lasting impact *right here at home.*

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Grant sponsored programs support projects which include:

- Transportation assistance for patients
- Programming for individuals with Substance Use Disorder
- Support of cancer related research
- Resources for the Hospice STARS Equine Therapy Camp

SAMARITAN SOCIETY & HERITAGE CIRCLE

Visionary leaders supporting our region through leadership gifts.

712 TOTAL SAMARITANS

239 CADUCEUS SAMARITANS

150 HERITAGE CIRCLE MEMBERS

ESTABLISHED DOROTHY COLVIN SOCIETY

7 DOROTHY COLVIN SOCIETY MEMBERS

24
NEW OR UPGRADED SAMARITANS

LIFT UP PROJECT CREATES NEW MODEL FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER RECOVERY



Launched during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lift Up Project addressed a critical gap facing individuals in recovery: the need for stability, purpose, and access to employment. Beginning in early 2021, Lift Up was supported by a five-year, \$2.4 million Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant.

The Lift Up Project created a coordinated, one stop approach for participants that brought treatment, recovery support, workforce preparation, and employment services together.

St. Elizabeth Healthcare leadership helped convene the right partners and shape the structure of the initiative. This included bringing in the Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board and the Kentucky Career Center as core workforce partners, with Journey Recovery Center serving as the clinical anchor and Life Learning Center to address employability of participants. *“In essence, the one-stop model worked because it aligned both sides of the equation - supporting individuals in their recovery and readiness while also transforming the employer landscape. This created a pathway where participants could move forward with real opportunity, not just preparation, resulting in more durable and meaningful outcomes,”* says Dr. Bonnie Hedrick, PhD, Lift Up Project Director.

Over five years, Lift Up served more than 1,700 people providing a pathway to overcome barriers to employment such as housing instability, past incarcerations, transportation, and limited education or job skills. Instead of approaching these barriers individually, Lift Up took a collective, no wrong door approach to address the whole person.

“Lift Up changed that trajectory by addressing these challenges holistically rather than expecting individuals to overcome them on their own. Participants received treatment alongside job readiness training, life skills development, and practical supports that made employment attainable,” explains Dr. Hedrick.

By addressing the full scope of barriers and aligning recovery with employment opportunity, the program helped individuals move from instability to self-sufficiency and building a future.

Today, these partnerships continue to enhance care by combining recovery services with workforce development and long-term support. Employment services are now part of standard care, referral networks remain active, employer relationships are well-established, and training and education pathways continue to be accessible.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE:

EMPLOYMENT RATES ROSE FROM 20% TO 73% WITHIN SIX MONTHS

AVERAGE 350 PEOPLE SERVED A YEAR

159 ENROLLED IN EDUCATION OR TRADE PROGRAMS

Data collected from Jan. 2021-Jan. 2026

FINDING COMPASSIONATE CARE AND COMMUNITY AT DEARBORN CANCER CENTER



What began as a routine surgery quickly changed Deborah Rast's life, but finding care at St. Elizabeth Dearborn Cancer Center changed her journey.

After an unexpected diagnosis of gallbladder cancer, Deborah was surrounded by a compassionate team that moved quickly, listened closely and supported her every step of the way.

"In mid-October, what started as a routine gallbladder removal turned into a life-altering diagnosis when my biopsy results came back positive for cancer. The speed of the response was incredible; an appointment was set up at the Dearborn Cancer Center for the very next day," says Deborah.

That immediate action helped Deborah feel grounded during an otherwise overwhelming moment. Having recently moved from New York to Indiana, she was still getting her bearings in a new community. What stood out most was how seamlessly her care was coordinated from the very beginning.

From nurse navigators and oncologists to social workers, nutrition specialists, counselors and infusion nurses, Deborah learned she was not facing cancer alone.

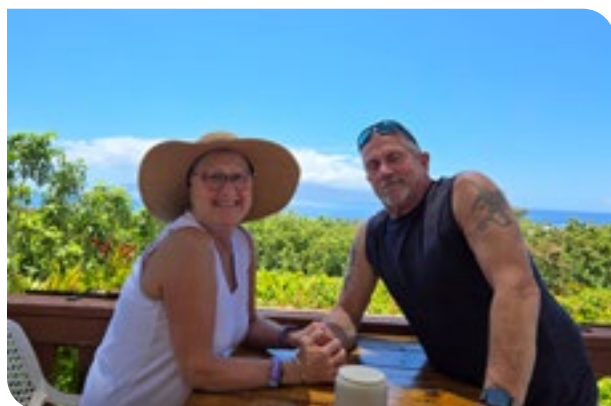
"That initial visit was a whirlwind of information and felt incredibly overwhelming, but meeting my team — Julie (Nurse Navigator), Diane (Social Worker) and Dr. Matthew Kotlove (Oncologist) — provided immediate comfort. I realized right then that I wasn't doing this alone; I had an entire support system for my journey," explains Deborah.

More than expert treatment, she found something just as powerful, right here in southeast Indiana.

"I am deeply grateful for the compassionate, well-rounded care I've received. The Dearborn Cancer Center has provided me with much more than just medical treatment - they have given me a community," shares Deborah.

At the Dearborn Cancer Center, patients receive care from a multidisciplinary team who work together to support the whole person. For Deborah, that comprehensive approach helped her feel supported every step of the way.

Your generous support of the Dearborn Cancer Center ensures that Deborah—and every patient who follows—has access to precision medicine, leading edge technology, and a care team that feels like family. The impact of the generosity is felt every time a patient rings the bell, walks into an appointment, or discovers they can receive world class cancer care right here at home. If you'd like to learn more about the St. Elizabeth Dearborn Cancer Center, visit www.stelizabeth.com.



ASSOCIATE SPOTLIGHT: Azelin Gutierrez

Meet
Foundation
Grants
Coordinator
Azelin
Gutierrez!



This year, Azelin celebrates five years with St. Elizabeth. Her career with St. Elizabeth began while she was still a student at Northern Kentucky University earning her Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Technology.

Azelin is a Grants Coordinator for the St. Elizabeth Foundation, overseeing the Foundation's FOCUS project, which offers HIV and Hepatitis C screenings at Edgewood and Covington's Emergency Departments. Through this program, St. Elizabeth has been able to identify patients who were unaware of their diagnosis and connect them with the care and resources they need.

"Early detection and linkage to treatment not only improves individual health outcomes but also strengthens the overall health of our community. It's incredibly meaningful to be part of a program that saves lives through prevention, education, and access to care," explains Azelin.

Through her role as a Grants Coordinator, she sees firsthand how grant-funded initiatives and programs impact our community.

"Being part of an organization that prioritizes access to care and invests in the health and well-being of our community is incredibly rewarding. Knowing that the work we do helps improve lives is what motivates me each day," says Azelin.

Azelin was born and raised in Northern Kentucky and enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling to explore new places, and attending concerts with friends.

TRANSFORMING GRATITUDE INTO GENERATIONAL IMPACT

The St. Elizabeth Foundation Dorothy Colvin Society, created in memory of the mother of Garren Colvin, St. Elizabeth Healthcare President and Chief Executive Officer, invites leaders, providers and community supporters to leave a legacy that lifts and ensures the future of care across the region. The society opens a door for substantial gifts that help St. Elizabeth meet the most urgent needs of patients and families.

Do you hope to shape care for the next generation? The Dorothy Colvin Society offers a direct route to that goal. A seven-figure commitment (\$1 million or more) or a bequeathment of at least 3% of retirement assets establishes membership. Donors may direct support to a specific priority or allow St. Elizabeth Foundation to apply the gift where it drives the greatest good. Every gift remains fully revocable if circumstances shift.

For many, the society offers a strong way to advance the mission. Palliative Care Physician Charles Bernstein, MD, saw that potential right away. *"I wanted to make a commitment that speaks to the future. The Dorothy Colvin Society gave me a clear avenue to do that,"* Dr. Bernstein says. *"I trust the vision at St. Elizabeth. Leaders and teams adapt fast, and they act with the community's best interest at heart. That trust made this decision easy."*

Many choose this path for their giving because it aligns personal purpose with the mission of St. Elizabeth. They see daily proof of how expert care changes lives, so a legacy gift reflects both gratitude and resolve. Each gift ensures that patients across our community continue to receive exceptional care far into the future.

"A society gift also signals belief in the next era of healthcare," said Carri Chandler, Vice President, St. Elizabeth Foundation. *"It fuels innovation, advances clinical excellence, and supports the teams who serve our region with skill and compassion. Each contribution becomes a cornerstone for long-term progress."*

A gift to the Dorothy Colvin Society establishes you as a partner in a bold, future-focused mission.

If you're ready to explore a legacy at St. Elizabeth, contact Carri Chandler at carri.chandler@stelizabeth.com or (859) 301-3920.



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SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars for the following *St. Elizabeth Foundation* events:

SAMARITAN CELEBRATION

Saturday, August 8

Drees Pavilion

GOLF PARTEE

Tuesday, September 15

*Lassing Pointe Golf Course,
Summit Hills Country Club, and
Triple Crown Country Club*

STYLE SHOW & LUNCHEON

Monday, November 23

Turfway Park Racing & Gaming

**TOGETHER, WE'LL MAKE A LASTING
IMPACT – RIGHT HERE AT HOME.**