

# Health Matters

the MAGAZINE of PHOEBE PUTNEY HEALTH SYSTEM



## the **POWER** of **PINK**

illuminating  
breast cancer  
awareness

Carlton Breast  
Health Center  
Designated Center  
of Excellence

Phoebe Cancer  
Center Earns  
Accreditation by  
American College  
of Surgeons



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## Health Matters

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 **PHOEBE**

“It’s A Wrap” offers hats and scarves to help chemo patients coping with hair loss. Breast prosthesis, bras and prosthetic swimwear are available for purchase through New Foundations boutique. Call (229) 312-0042.

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# Dear Friends

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Real men wear pink. This twist on clothing color and gender identity isn't a new fashion statement. It's all about raising the awareness of breast cancer and the importance of early detection. According to the National Cancer Institute, 12 percent of women born today will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. Our goal at Phoebe is to provide a continuum of care from prevention and early detection to treatment and improved survival rates for those impacted by breast cancer. Years ago, women had to leave the region to access advanced treatments. So we have responded to a mandate to provide the best possible medical experts and technologies to deliver care right here at home in our region.

Raising awareness about the importance of screenings for all types of cancers is the first step in changing the outcome of this disease. Early detection through screening can improve survival rates for many cancers, including breast cancer, and in the coming year Phoebe will



introduce a new lung screening program targeted to a high risk population.

Of course creating a healthier community doesn't happen in a vacuum. We partner with other providers and agencies to increase access to cancer care, educate and provide prevention strategies and treatments. One of our longtime partnerships is with the Cancer Coalition of South Georgia. The coalition is recognized as a statewide and national model for its innovative and effective programs and research across a 32-county area to improve

access to cancer services. Funds raised by the coalition stay right here to assist in building cancer resources across a regional network.

We take very seriously our responsibility to provide world-class healthcare with hometown commitment. As you read the inspiring and informative stories in this publication, you will learn about the work of our expert team of physicians, nurses and allied health professionals who are focused on providing today's most advanced treatments in a compassionate, high-touch environment. I also hope you will find valuable information to improve the health and well-being of your own family in navigating an increasingly complex healthcare environment.

I hope you enjoy this latest issue of HealthMatters!

All my best,

**Joel Wernick**  
PRESIDENT/CEO



Breast cancer has made a personal impact on these men's lives.  
Baren Colley - Mother.  
Keith Hood - Wife.  
Jack Morrell - Self.

Join them October 25  
in wearing pink to  
spread awareness  
that early detection  
can save lives.

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# *THE POWER OF PINK*

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## *BUILDING BREAST CANCER AWARENESS*

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**K**nowledge is power, and knowledge about breast cancer prevention and early detection can empower women *and* men. Regular screenings lead to early detection and better outcomes for all types of cancer. Like many cancers, breast cancer has a much higher cure rate when detected early. Support cancer survivors in your life, and use the “power of pink” to help spread awareness in our community.

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**C**ontracts. Labor. Clay. There are many things the president of a brick company is concerned about on a daily basis; breast cancer isn't one of them. When Jack Morrell, 71, noticed lumps in his breasts, he knew something wasn't right.



## Among the Minority

Nearly two years later Jack saw a doctor about the recurring lumps and tenderness, and he got a quick diagnosis.

"You know how men are; we procrastinate," says the owner of South Georgia Brick. "The end of April I finally went to see Dr. (A. Cullen) Richardson. As soon as I took my shirt off, he said 'You've got breast cancer.' He's been a surgeon for 33 years and said I was the first male patient with breast cancer he's seen."

Biopsied and diagnosed with stage II breast cancer, Jack underwent mastectomy surgery.

"That was really a piece of cake," said Jack. "I thought it was tough until I got on chemo, then I found out what was *really* tough."

A follow-up PET scan showed no cancer, but Dr. Chirag Jani and Dr. Chuck Mendenhall wanted to make certain the cancer wouldn't return.

"They said I was good to go, but they wanted to hit it hard. They said if it comes back, they might not be able to save me," said Jack, who was prescribed seven weeks of chemotherapy followed by 35 radiation treatments.

Though only one percent of the male population is diagnosed with breast cancer, men need to be aware of symptoms and act quickly for early diagnosis and treatment.

Today, Jack Morrell is happy to have the chemo behind him and is trying to get back to what he loves best – hunting and fishing with family and friends on his Marion County hunting plantation. ■

## Lifesaving Clinical Trials

Though Janice Hood received annual screenings, she discovered a lump in her breast while taking a shower. She initially told herself it was just a cyst that would probably go away. But it didn't.

A sonogram the following month revealed exactly what she feared – breast cancer. Diagnosed as an early stage II with no lymph node involvement, the cancer was removed with a lumpectomy.

Janice's type of cancer made her a viable candidate for a clinical trial through the Phoebe Cancer Center involving five months of chemotherapy. Clinical research trials recruit patient volunteers to help find different ways to improve health and cancer care.

"I finished my master's degree and my chemo in the same week," says the Dougherty County teacher. "During that time I felt the love of God and his people. That's what got me through everything."

At Phoebe Cancer Center, breast cancer clinical trials are a treatment option, not a "last-ditch effort" for women who have a current diagnosis. A patient who meets



**JANICE HOOD**  
TEACHER, MUSICIAN &  
CANCER SURVIVOR

specific requirements must be referred for a trial by an oncologist.

Janice returned for blood work every three months and had to undergo two mammograms a year, but now she is screened annually and visits her doctor several times a year. Janice encourages women to get annual mammograms and conduct all-important monthly breast self-exams. It's the best way for women to take charge of their breast health. ■

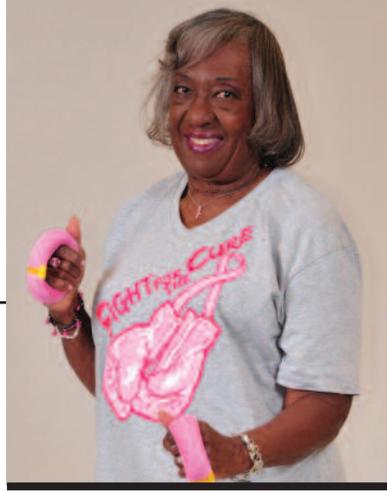
## A Distant Memory

Detecting breast cancer isn't always easy, especially when there are no visible symptoms. Having enjoyed 15 healthy years since her final treatment, Vernida Williams is thankful for Dr. Phil Roberts and the care she received at Phoebe following a breast cancer diagnosis in 1998.

"The lump was in the nipple, so I wasn't even able to feel it when I did my self-exam," says the retired equipment coordinator. "It just showed up during my mammogram at the Carlton Breast Health Center."

For this Albany native and mother of three, surgery and six chemo treatments was her ticket to a clean bill of health. There was no question that Phoebe Cancer Center would be her provider.

"There was nowhere else I'd go. I trust everything there because I know they do a good job and have well-trained people," she says, noting advances in



*"I wasn't even able to feel the lump when I did my self exam. It just showed up during my mammogram..."*

—Vernida Williams, Albany



Jessica Blanchard, Nurse Navigator at Carlton Breast Health Center, helps guide patients through the treatment process.

medicine over the past 15 years have resulted in less nausea for chemo patients and better treatments. Resources such as Phoebe's Nurse Navigator Program are also beneficial, she says. A breast cancer nurse navigator provides patient guidance, from the initial diagnosis throughout treatment and recovery.

Breast cancer awareness and early detection remain of great importance to Vernida, who knows early diagnosis was key to her successful battle against the disease. Today she helps with awareness events at her Leesburg church and serves as a team captain for the annual Relay for Life.

"I tell women to make sure they get their screenings and check their breasts monthly. Also, exercise and eat right," she says, taking pride in her role to help educate women about the prevention and early detection of breast cancer.

The American Cancer Society recommends yearly mammograms for women age 40 and over. Phoebe performs more than 18,000 advanced diagnostic breast health services each year, including digital mammography, breast ultrasound, vacuum-assisted stereotactic and ultrasound core biopsies.

Take the lead. Strike out breast cancer by adopting a healthy lifestyle and practicing early detection techniques. For more information on how you can use the "power of pink" to help spread breast

cancer awareness in your community, call (229) 312-4012. ■





# Partners in Health

**T**here is strength in numbers. To that end, Phoebe Putney Health System has established numerous partnerships over the years with one goal in mind: improving access to quality health care for all who need it. Research, education, fund raising – these collaboration efforts ultimately improve health and access to care across the region.

Several partnerships are fostered within the Phoebe Cancer Center, which gathers research and data to further collaborations with other state and national entities. **Phoebe's Tumor Registry**, a data system designed for the collection, management and analysis of data on patients diagnosed with cancer, provides invaluable data to physicians. Collected data is submitted monthly to the Georgia Center for Cancer Statistics/Georgia Comprehensive Cancer Registry and annually to the National Cancer Data Base.

The tumor registry also organizes the **Cancer Conferences**, two weekly meetings bringing together 25-40 medical professionals from many oncology disciplines to discuss patient cases and treatment. One conference is specific to breast cancer, the other is a general cancer conference. In this format the knowledge and skills of many cancer experts can be brought to bear on the particulars of each patient's case. In a field advancing as

rapidly as cancer medicine, the advantages of meeting so frequently are obvious – new knowledge acquired by each physician is quickly spread to all, allowing new developments or fresh viewpoints to help advance the therapies – and chances for full recovery – of every patient.

Also part of the Phoebe Cancer Center, the **Georgia Cancer Research Program** is under the leadership of Dr. Troy F. Kimsey, a surgical oncologist, and Keisa Mansfield, research program manager. They are currently collaborating with Albany State University and Georgia Regents University to seek funding to study cancer health disparities among minorities.

Phoebe houses **Bio Repository Alliance of Georgia**, the only bio repository in the state, said Keisa. Cancer patients undergoing surgery can consent to donating, for future research, any removed tissue not needed by the pathologist.

Another collaboration is with the **Cancer Coalition of South Georgia**, whose efforts build upon existing health care services in the region. The coalition brings additional funding, expertise and opportunities for South Georgians to receive the highest quality cancer services and participate in cancer research close to home.

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## Patsy Martin, 2013 Lights of Love Tree Lighter

One would be hard pressed to find Patsy Martin without the beaming smile that has become her trademark, even though she had every reason to let her enthusiasm waver when she received life-altering news just over one year ago. But, for her, it simply wasn't an option.

"I was so bathed in the love of people all around me, encouraging me," Martin says of her journey with breast cancer, which began with diagnosis in July 2012 followed by a bi-lateral mastectomy shortly after.

Martin's positive attitude and dedication to the community and hospital that helped her through her difficult time brought her to be named this year's Tree Lighter for the 2013 Lights of Love ceremony at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital. Lights of Love, the beloved holiday fundraiser started more than 30 years ago by the Junior Woman's Club of Albany, has raised more than \$1 million for cancer services at Phoebe.

"I am honored to be a part of something that gives back to those in our community affected by cancer," says the retired president and region executive of Bank of America who in 2002 began a career in real estate with Walden and Kirkland. "We are so blessed to be where we are, here in Albany, Georgia, with this facility and doctors and support... where if you do find yourself with

cancer you are just 10 minutes away from this remarkable cancer center. You can receive first class care and still be able to be at home, near your family."

"For the wisdom of Dr. John Bennett, Dr. Chirag Jani, Dr. Shailaja Sappati, and the tumor board at Phoebe, I will eternally be grateful. Early on, Dr. Jani said to me, 'You are going to get more from breast cancer than breast cancer ever got from you.' And he was right. So right."

Donations to Lights of Love this year will again be used 100 percent to address specific needs of cancer patients at Phoebe Cancer Center, and can be made in honor or memory of someone. A donation of \$25 for each is suggested, but any size gift is welcome. Checks should be made payable to Phoebe Foundation and mailed to Phoebe Foundation/Lights of Love, P.O. Box 3770, Albany, GA 31706.

The public is also invited to the Lights of Love tree lighting ceremony at 7 p.m. Monday, December 9, at the main entrance of Phoebe. This year's ceremony will be held outside and includes special music by candlelight.

For more information, visit Phoebe Foundation at [supportphoebe.org](http://supportphoebe.org) or call (229) 312-4483. ■

To read more, go to [www.phoebelogspot.com](http://www.phoebelogspot.com)



## SAVE THE DATE

■ SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 8am

at PHOEBE HEALTHWORKS

Phoebe Foundation's Jingle Bell Jog raises funds for Children's Miracle Network through this 10K run, 5K run/walk and 1 mile fun walk. Register at [www.jinglebelljog.org](http://www.jinglebelljog.org)

Six years ago, Landon Samples spent his first 10 days of life in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Phoebe. Today he is training for the Jingle Bell Jog.



continued

One such effort is the recent Cancer STOMP fundraiser. One hundred percent of proceeds raised stay in the local community to support services for local residents, said Diane Fletcher, chief executive officer of the Cancer Coalition of South Georgia. In addition, funds support the **Community Cancer Screening Program**, a breast, pelvic and colorectal screening project between Phoebe Digestive Health Center, Carlton Breast Health Center, the Cancer Coalition, the Public Health District and primary care providers.

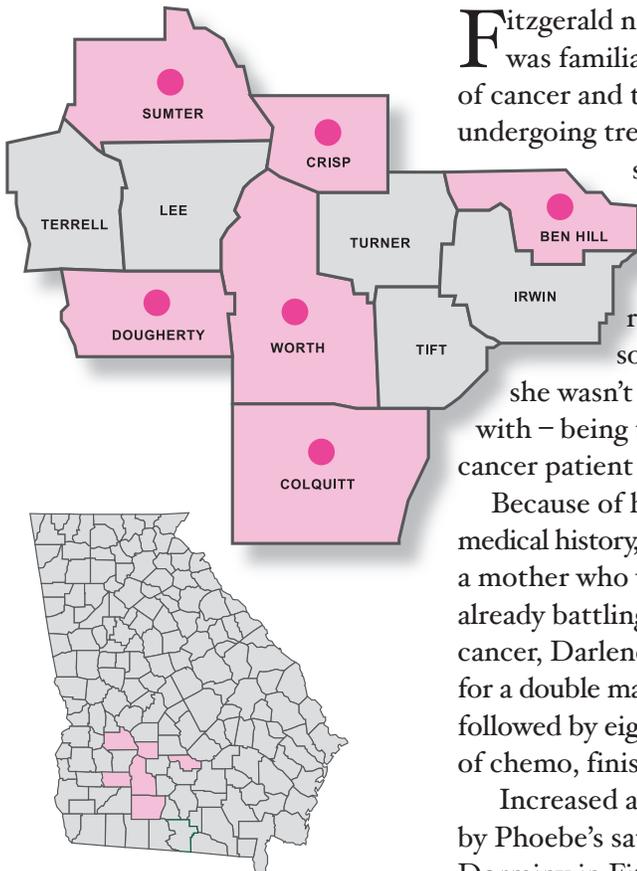
“There was a need identified for women to receive mammograms and pap tests. Many women are not having these done because they don’t have the means

to cover the cost. They are being diagnosed at a late stage and dying. We know that early detection saves lives.”

The program was recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and others as a statewide model. “Only by coming together and combining resources can we provide these screenings,” she adds. ■



## Beyond Hospital Walls



Fitzgerald native Darlene Cook was familiar with the devastation of cancer and the difficulty of undergoing treatments, having lost several family members to the disease. But a mammogram in January 2012 resulted in something she wasn’t familiar with – being the cancer patient herself.

Because of her family medical history, including a mother who was already battling breast cancer, Darlene opted for a double mastectomy, followed by eight rounds of chemo, finishing in August of 2011.

Increased access to care provided by Phoebe’s satellite clinic at Phoebe Dorminy in Fitzgerald meant she was able to see Dr. Shawnta Speer and receive treatment without

leaving town. Additional clinics are located at Phoebe Sumter Medical Center in Americus, Phoebe Worth Medical Center in Sylvester, Colquitt Regional Medical Center in Moultrie and Crisp Regional Hospital in Cordele. Taking medical care beyond the walls of the hospital and into Southwest Georgia communities just makes good sense.



“My mother was still undergoing treatment, too, so being at home for treatment was very convenient and less of a hardship,” says Darlene, who lost her father to lung cancer in 2003.

Today, she continues to follow doctor’s orders, returning to see Dr. Speer every two or three months, right there in Fitzgerald, where she enjoys the prospect of living a long and healthy life. ■



NAPBC

## Accolades of Excellence

A center for hope and healing, Phoebe's Cancer Center has earned a prestigious three-year accreditation with commendation by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons. The assurance of quality also extends to accreditations and special designations that are specific to breast cancer as well.

Phoebe's Carlton Breast Health Center is a designated Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology and the breast cancer program was named a Center of Excellence by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC).

These designations and accreditations are more than just kudos for Phoebe's hard-working team, according to Linda Van der Merwe, vice president of oncology.

"They speak to our programs and processes and they assure every patient and family of our ability to provide the best in cancer care," said Van der Merwe. "More important, they reinforce our commitment to excellence not just today, but for the future."

Van der Merwe said Phoebe's imaging program is recognized for outstanding performance in mammography, stereotactic breast biopsy, breast ultrasound and ultrasound-guided breast biopsy. The NAPBC designation is given only to those centers that meet rigorous standards in the areas of center leadership, clinical management, research, community outreach, professional education and quality improvement. ■



Shailaja Sappati, MD is a radiologist at Carlton Breast Health Center whose diagnostic expertise coupled with the latest technology is a formidable breast cancer opponent.

## BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

■ **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3 | 5-7pm**  
at PHOEBE WORTH FAMILY MEDICINE,  
SYLVESTER

### **Breast Cancer Survivor Reception**

Please join us for fellowship and information to help others be aware of the necessity of screening and early diagnosis.

■ **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 | 8am, walk begins at 9am**

in DOWNTOWN AMERICUS, starting at  
LENNY'S FARMER'S MARKET

### **Phoebe Sumter 10th Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk**

Featuring General Surgeon Kristin Collier, MD & Celebrity Radio Host & Cancer Survivor Ebony Steele from the Ricky Smiley Morning Show. Please call (229) 931-6812 for more information.

■ **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22 | 7pm**

at SGTC BASKETBALL GYM, AMERICUS

### **Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Charity**

**Basketball Game** Phoebe Sumter All Stars vs South Georgia Technical College Lady Jets. For more info, please call (229) 931-6812

■ **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25**

at PHOEBE PUTNEY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

### **Wear Pink Day**

Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital invites everyone to wear pink to spread awareness that early detection is key in the fight against breast cancer!

■ **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 2:30pm**

at TURNER JOB CORPS, BUILDING 1604

### **Turner Job Corps Center's Breast Cancer**

**Survivor Celebration Walk** For more information, call (229) 883-8500, ext. 230.

■ **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 | 8am -1pm**

at PHOEBE HEALTHWORKS,  
311 THIRD AVE., ALBANY

### **Women's Health Conference**

Free to the public: Includes lunch, health screens, physician-led workshops, door prizes and t-shirts (while they last). Focus will be on obesity and cancer prevention.

■ **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For a complete list of community events and activities visit [phoebeputney.com](http://phoebeputney.com)

## BREAST CANCER SYMPTOMS

In addition to a new lump or mass, other signs of breast cancer include:

- Swelling of all or part of a breast (even if no distinct lump is felt)
- Skin irritation or dimpling
- Breast or nipple pain
- Nipple retraction (turning inward)
- Redness, scaliness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk
- Lump in the underarm area

If you have any of these symptoms, contact your physician for a professional exam.

## BREAST BIOPSY OPTIONS

- Surgical removal of part or all of suspicious tissue
- Ultrasound biopsy - easiest to differentiate between cyst and mass
- Stereotactic biopsy - uses computer technology to direct needle biopsy
- MRI biopsy uses magnetic fields instead of X-rays

A clinical team of exceptional skill and knowledge all concentrate on a single goal: the maximum possible recovery for every patient. Phoebe Cancer Center's team of physicians includes ten Hematologists/Oncologists, two Radiation Oncologists and two Surgical Oncologists. Additionally, radiologist Shailaja Sappati, MD, specializes in mammography at Carlton Breast Health Center.



Wearing pink in support of their patients, clockwise from top: Sanjay Munireddy, MD; Charles Mendenhall, MD; William J. McAfee, MD; Sailaja Gadde, MD; Chirag Jani, MD; and Phillip Roberts, MD, FACP.