A FORTUNATE DISCOVERY
A screening saved J.T. Wright from a potentially fatal aneurysm.

COUNTRY AT HEART
Cardiac CT calcium score lowers patient’s heart attack risk.

Among the NATION’S 15 TOP HEALTH SYSTEMS — AGAIN
Learn more about Tanner’s recent ranking

SUPPORT AND SONG
Babbie Mason receives the Spirit of Giving Award.

LIVING WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS
Tanner’s program helps patient face chronic disease.
Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in our region. That fact is troubling, but it’s also frustrating. Unlike some other health problems, there are steps we can take throughout life to reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. We can receive routine medical screenings to test for the disease so that we can catch it early, and we can take steps to manage the disease.

So often, though, we make the wrong choice — the chips over the apple, watching the game on television instead of shooting a few baskets in the driveway or going for a hike — and over time, those decisions add up. We gain weight, we increase our risk of developing chronic diseases like diabetes and we ignore our ever-rising blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

At Tanner, we’re continuing our work to impact cardiovascular disease in west Georgia and east Alabama. We’ve expanded our angioplasty and stenting program to serve both Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica, and we’re working toward accreditation as a chest pain center. We also have invested in new technology and created new programs to help us detect cardiovascular disease even earlier.

We present a unique approach to community health through Tanner’s Get Healthy, Live Well initiative, which offers a variety of programs to help people live healthier lives and reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease.

This issue of Healthy Living describes how simple heart and vascular screenings have impacted patients’ lives. I hope it will inspire you to have a heart-to-heart talk with your primary care provider about your cardiovascular health, the screenings he or she recommends and the things you can do now to keep your heart strong for years to come.

Sincerely,

Loy M. Howard
President and CEO, Tanner Health System
Cardiac MRI System
Now Online

A new piece of technology at Tanner Health System will help cardiac and vascular specialists get a better picture of patients’ cardiovascular health.

The MAGNETOM Aera 1.5T magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) system from Siemens Healthcare is now online at Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton.

The new system places Tanner on the leading edge of healthcare providers throughout the country offering noncontrast magnetic resonance angiography, or MRA, as well as heart MRI imaging. The system uses the MRI’s powerful magnet to manipulate the water molecules in a patient’s blood, read how they respond and capture extremely detailed images — all without radiation — making cardiovascular imaging safer for patients who have advanced diabetes, kidney issues and other health problems.

Timothy Albert, MD, a board-certified cardiologist and cardiovascular imaging specialist with Tanner Heart & Vascular Specialists, is working alongside researchers from Siemens to place this advanced capability in a community care setting.

“The beauty of it is, we’re able to perform cardiovascular imaging that’s safer for everyone, particularly our more vulnerable patients,” says Dr. Albert. “Patients who have advanced diabetes or kidney issues have had no access to imaging because the injected contrast could be harmful to them.”

The technology places Tanner ahead of other regional providers — and even many larger healthcare providers and research facilities — in offering an innovative alternative to traditional cardiac and vascular imaging.

Noncontrast MRA is used to help diagnose a number of blood vessel conditions, including problems with the aorta and the blood vessels that supply all major organs and extremities. Similarly, cardiac MRI provides dynamic imaging, allowing physicians to see heart function and structure as the heart moves — making diagnoses while watching the heart move with high-definition, almost real-time imaging.

While periodic exposure to low doses of radiation — such as the X-rays used for traditional angiography and cardiac CT imaging — has not been shown to have long-term consequences, providers have been concerned about the safety of patients who have required repeated imaging, as well as patients who have demonstrated a sensitivity to contrast material. Since the MRI uses magnets rather than X-rays, there’s no radiation exposure for the patient.

“We want to do no harm now, and we want to do no harm in the future,” says Dr. Albert. “This allows us to be reassured on both of those things.”

The system also features a much larger gantry to better accommodate patients who are uncomfortable in more enclosed spaces.

Tanner looks to demonstrate the value of cardiac and advanced noncontrast imaging in a community care setting, as well as work alongside Siemens on research and development projects — putting Tanner at the innovation forefront for this type of imaging.

“This is a truly unique program, especially for a community healthcare provider like Tanner,” says Dr. Albert. “It’s going to help us do a lot of good here, in our region, and it’s also going to provide data that demonstrates how this technology could help others in regions much like our own.”

“With its delivery of the MAGNETOM Aera 1.5T MRI system, Siemens Healthcare is proud to work closely with Tanner Medical Center to realize its goal of improving clinical workflow and providing cutting-edge cardiovascular magnetic resonance imaging in a community hospital setting,” says Murat Gungor, vice president of magnetic resonance at Siemens Healthcare North America.

More information on the cardiac services available through Tanner is available at www.TannerHeartCare.org.
HEALTH NEWS YOU CAN USE

TANNER WELCOMES NEW PHYSICIANS

Timothy Albert, MD
Dr. Albert, a board-certified cardiologist and cardiovascular imaging specialist, has joined Tanner Heart & Vascular Specialists, a Tanner Medical Group practice. He earned his medical degree from the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine, and completed his internship and residency at the University of Washington Department of Medicine in Seattle. He also completed a fellowship in cardiology at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C. To learn more, call 770.812.9326 or visit www.HeartAndVascularSpecialists.org.

Kia Carter, MD
Dr. Carter has joined the staff at Willowbrooke at Tanner. She earned her medical degree in allopathic medicine from the University of Louisville School of Medicine in Louisville, Ky., and completed her internship and residency in general psychiatry at the University of Louisville. She also completed a fellowship in child and adolescent psychiatry at McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University in Chicago. More information on Willowbrooke at Tanner is available at www.WillowbrookeAtTanner.org.

Justin DeWillers, MD
Dr. DeWillers, who is board-certified in emergency medicine, has joined Carrollton Emergency Physicians. He earned his medical degree from Albany Medical College in Albany, N.Y., and completed his internship and residency in emergency medicine at the University of Rochester Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, N.Y. He serves in Tanner’s 24-hour emergency departments. A listing of Tanner’s emergency departments is available at www.Tanner.org.

Agnes Nambiro-Kasolo, MD
 earned her medical degree with recognition in research from Stony Brook University School of Medicine in Stony Brook, N.Y., and completed her residency at New York Hospital Medical Center in New York.

Samir Patel, MD
 earned his medical degree from the Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica, West Indies, and completed his residency at Mount Carmel Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio.

Shital Patel, MD
 earned his medical degree from Sardar Patel University’s Pandhukrshami Medical College in Gujarat, India, and completed his internship and residency at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. He is board-certified in internal medicine and previously worked for Buffalo General Medical Center in Buffalo, N.Y.

Yogesh Patel, MD
 earned his medical degree from the Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica, West Indies, and completed his internship and residency with the Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pa.

ADVANCING HEALTH …
with exceptional inpatient care.

Patients at a Tanner Health System hospital expect the best inpatient care, and that’s what Tanner Intensive Medical Services delivers. That’s why four internal medicine specialists joined Tanner’s exclusive provider of hospitalist services.

Agnes Nambiro-Kasolo, MD, earned her medical degree with recognition in research from Stony Brook University School of Medicine in Stony Brook, N.Y., and completed her residency at New York Hospital Medical Center in New York.

Samir Patel, MD, earned his medical degree from the Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica, West Indies, and completed his residency at Mount Carmel Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio.

Shital Patel, MD, earned his medical degree from Sardar Patel University’s Pandhukrshami Medical College in Gujarat, India, and completed his internship and residency at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. He is board-certified in internal medicine and previously worked for Buffalo General Medical Center in Buffalo, N.Y.

Yogesh Patel, MD, earned his medical degree from the Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica, West Indies, and completed his internship and residency with the Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pa.

With hospitalist services at Tanner’s facilities, physicians are available around the clock, working alongside specialists and admitting physicians to respond faster to changes in a patient’s condition, be more involved in a patient’s care and help patients return home faster than other hospitals. Hospitalists focus on quality care and patient comfort – delivering medicine beyond measure.

Looking for Dr. Right?
You can find a full, up-to-date listing of Tanner’s entire medical staff online using the “Find a Doctor” feature on www.Tanner.org. Or call 770.214.CARE (2273) at any time to find a doctor who’s right for you.
Dr. Goss has joined West Georgia Obstetrics and Gynecology, a Tanner Medical Group practice. She earned her medical degree from the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta and completed her internship and residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. While earning her bachelor’s in chemistry at the University of West Georgia, she worked as a patient advocate in the emergency department at Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton. Learn more by calling 770.834.0170 or visiting www.WestGaOBGYN.org.

Dr. King has joined West Georgia Anesthesia Associates, a Tanner Medical Group practice. He is board-certified in anesthesiology. Dr. King earned his medical degree from Michigan State University College of Human Medicine in East Lansing, Mich., and completed his residency in anesthesia at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Ill. Before joining Tanner, Dr. King served as anesthesia chief and medical director of perioperative services at Kaiser-Permanente Mid-Atlantic Medical Group in Washington, D.C. More information about Tanner’s surgical services is available at www.Tanner.org.

Dr. Prasad has joined Tanner Medical Group practice. She earned her medical degree from the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta. Dr. Scotland completed her residency at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, S.C., where she also served as a research resident in the Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine. More information about Tanner’s surgical services is available at www.Tanner.org.

Dr. Powell has joined the patient care team at West Georgia Urology. He earned his medical degree from the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, completed his residency in urology at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City and is a member of the American Urological Association. Learn more at www.WGUrology.com or call 770.834.6988.

Dr. Scotland has joined Tanner as a fellowship in rheumatology at the Emory University Hospital. Seeing the need for specialized rheumatology services at Kaiser-Permanente Mid-Atlantic Medical Center in Kansas City and is a member of the American Urological Association. Learn more at www.WGUrology.com or call 770.834.6988.

Quality Care, Close to Home
For more information on how Tanner compares to other hospitals in the region on national benchmarks for care, visit www.TannerQuality.org.
“My follow-up visits with Dr. Khawaja and Dr. Park are good visits; it’s almost like a family-type time,” says J.T. Wright, who underwent surgery at Tanner to treat his AAA. Wright’s patient care team discovered the potentially deadly problem through a screening.
Sitting on his back porch on a warm autumn evening, J.T. Wright was living a charmed life. His wife of 55 years, Annette, was beside him and had just cooked dinner. Every man’s dream car, a Corvette, was in the garage. And it was raining to the north, east and south of him. Probably to the west, too.

But it wasn’t raining on Wright. At least, not on this night. “I’ve got it pretty good,” he says. “I had a fulfilling career, got to do a fair amount of traveling and have three sons and seven grandchildren. God’s been good to me.”

Wright, 79, is pretty quick to add that Tanner Health System has been good to him, too.

A couple of years ago, while working on a farm that was once his father’s, Wright started experiencing some chest pain, or as he put it, “I noticed some things going on in my chest and thought I probably should have it checked out.”

He had blockages and needed three stents put in. At the time, Tanner wasn’t doing those procedures, and Wright had to go to an Atlanta hospital for the procedure.

But the real lifesaving procedure occurred later at Tanner. And it was a Tanner cardiologist who suggested he have a sonar test on his abdomen, “just to rule out an abdominal aortic aneurysm.”

Shazib Khawaja, MD, a board-certified interventional cardiologist and vascular medicine specialist with Tanner Heart & Vascular Specialists, didn’t expect to find one. Wright had no clue — because he’d had no symptoms in his stomach, he didn’t expect to find anything, either.

Dr. Khawaja referred Wright to Heather Park, MD, a board-certified surgeon and vascular specialist with Tanner Vascular Surgery.

“To all of our surprise, she discovered an aneurism,” Wright says.

Dr. Park ordered a CT scan on March 12, 2014, and surgically repaired the abdominal aortic aneurysm, also known as an AAA, on March 27, 2014.

“She did a wonderful job and was very good at explaining what was going on,” Wright says. “She showed me the stent they were putting in. When I found out how serious it could be, I was so glad that Dr. Khawaja sent me there and so thankful for Dr. Park. Those two probably saved my life.”

Dr. Park reassured Wright that with surgery he’d be OK and that the surgery was a must. After the surgery, Wright did a little investigating on his own and found out that if the aneurysm had ruptured, “I wouldn’t have stood much of a chance of surviving unless I just happened to be five minutes or so from the hospital. I consider myself fortunate to have it discovered and repaired.”

Dr. Park, for her part, didn’t hide the severity of an untreated aneurysm. But she didn’t scare him either.

“I would have told the truth as sternly and directly as I needed to for him to really understand the need to have this surgery,” Dr. Park says. “I told him he had the aneurysm and that we needed to take care of it. And he said, ‘OK, let’s do it.’”

(continued on next page)
AAA: WHAT’S YOUR RISK?

“Triple A,” or just AAA, is medical shorthand for abdominal aortic aneurysm. That’s probably not something you hear every day. But knowing what AAA is — and whether or not you are at risk — can be a matter of life and death.

The aorta is the body’s largest blood vessel. Over time, the aorta’s wall may develop a weak spot that stretches. The ballooned area is called an aneurysm. And like a balloon, an aneurysm can burst.

Most AAAs have no symptoms until after they rupture. This rupture can cause life-threatening bleeding. In fact, only about 10 to 20 percent of sufferers survive. That’s why prevention and screening are your best defenses against AAA.

And that evening on the back porch? That’s duplicated almost every morning and late afternoon until the weather gets cold. Then the chats move inside by the fireplace.

Wright also is restoring the farm’s 1968 Chevrolet pickup truck and 1956 Ferguson tractor.

Everything coming together all means the trips to California, Colorado, Wyoming and Virginia to visit their children and grandchildren aren’t limited. “Like I said, I’ve got it good,” Wright says.

Annette expressed her appreciation to the physicians and staff at Tanner as well. “It’s scary anytime someone you love is in the hospital, particularly when they are talking about things like heart stents and aneurysms,” she says. “But J.T. was such at ease with Dr. Khawaja, and then with Dr. Park, it put me at ease. “And once I saw the compassion and level of professionalism from everyone throughout the hospital, I understood why my husband felt so strongly that Tanner was the right place to be,” she says. “He was exactly where he was supposed to be.”

Wright then chose his next words carefully as the sun went down on that particular autumn evening. “I can’t say anything bad about the care I got in Atlanta, but without a doubt I can say that the care I got at Tanner exceeded what I got there,” he says. “It’s the best I’ve seen.”

And that is saying a lot. Because while Wright is right at home on his family farm or kicking back in Carrollton, he was quite the city slicker for a long time. As an executive with Reynolds Aluminum, Wright lived in Atlanta; Los Angeles; Miami; Birmingham, Ala.; and Richmond, Va.

“Some of the best folks in the United States are here in Carrollton taking care of me,” he says. “That is very comforting and reassuring. And living all over, I have something to judge them by.”

It’s so comforting and reassuring that Wright now actually enjoys going to see his doctors.

Worried About Your Risk?
Visit the Health Library at www.Tanner.org to learn more about AAA, or find a doctor to screen and treat the condition by calling 770.214. CARE (2273).

Shazib Khawaja, MD, is board-certified in interventional cardiology, cardiovascular medicine, endovascular and vascular medicine with Tanner Heart & Vascular Specialists.

Heather Park, MD, is a board-certified surgeon with Tanner Vascular Surgery.

Wright’s recovery was very easy. “I was in the hospital overnight and home the next day,” he says. “I had restrictions to cease doing sit-ups and push-ups for a while, but nothing after that. I continue to do everything I was doing beforehand. I work on the farm and in my yard and like to play golf. Everything came together well, and I have great blood flow now. Any adjustments that need to be made later will be minor, she told me.”

Everything coming together well meant that he and Annette could continue golfing together. They could continue harvesting fruit on the farm, cooking preserves and checking out the north Georgia mountain scenery through the windshield of the Corvette.

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Worried About Your Risk?
Visit the Health Library at www.Tanner.org to learn more about AAA, or find a doctor to screen and treat the condition by calling 770.214. CARE (2273).
J.T. Wright works the same farm his father worked before him. Physicians at Tanner discovered Wright had an abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA), which, untreated, might have ruptured. As few as 10 percent of people who experience an AAA rupture survive. The condition was corrected surgically at Tanner.

“My follow-up visits with Dr. Khawaja and Dr. Park are good visits; it’s almost like a family-type time,” Wright says. “We catch each other up on what’s going on in our lives.”

For Dr. Khawaja, that experience is not only one that he believes is good for the patient, but it’s one that makes his job fulfilling.

“Having patients to follow on a long-term basis is one of the things I like the most about being here,” Dr. Khawaja says. “It’s a very personal level of care, a patient-tailored approach, but we still use evidence-based medicine that meets the standards of anywhere in the country.

“Dr. Park likes her time with Wright, too. “I don’t think he’s met too many strangers,” she says. “I like to get to know my patients. It makes me better at what I do and I think it makes them feel better about what lies ahead for them.”

Like Dr. Khawaja, getting to focus on patient care is one of the things she values about practicing at Tanner.

“It is what is so nice about Tanner,” she says. “I’m sure there are plenty of places where you never see the same patient more than once or twice. That’s not my preference for sure.”

With all the big city living, was Wright surprised by the level of expertise he experienced at Tanner? He said he’d be lying if he said otherwise.

“Yeah, I guess the extent and breadth of Tanner’s excellence did surprise me a little bit,” he says. “I’d lived around here a long time ago, and Carrollton wasn’t known for this kind of quality care. We’re blessed, and it really is amazing to have these kinds of doctors in Carrollton.”

Wright and his wife know that very likely, the time will come again when one or both of them will need the kind of medical care only offered at a hospital. Whether it’s a cardiologist, vascular surgery or something totally unrelated to the medical disciplines for which they’ve come to appreciate at Tanner, they know they are in capable and caring hands.

Learn more
Learn more about the wide range of heart and vascular services available at Tanner at TannerHeartCare.org.
very good ol’ country boy knows the saying:
If mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy.

Allen Lane, 69, is a self-confessed old country fellow who lives off his land. For years, he didn’t go to the doctor if he could help it and ate whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted.

His wife, Pam, heard about cardiac CT scans offered by Tanner Health System. These scans show whether there’s a calcium buildup around the heart — indicating narrowed arteries and the presence of coronary artery disease (CAD). It’s a simple procedure and can be a valuable test in indicating a patient’s risk factors for heart disease.

Pam went, and her calcium score was zero: a perfect score. Allen, who’s active, not overweight and had no symptoms, saw no reason to go for testing, but Pam had a different opinion. And remember, if mama ain’t happy…

"People who are married will know what I’m talking about," Allen says. "To have a little peace around the house, I said, ‘Yes, honey,’ and went and had mine done."

Allen’s score was 700. And that wasn’t good.

"We hope for a score of zero, but many, if not most, people who live long enough will eventually have some buildup of calcium, so we’re not surprised when a patient has a score under 100," says Timothy Albert, MD, a board-certified cardiologist with Tanner Heart & Vascular Specialists. "Scores over 100 are a bit more concerning. Anything over 400 means you’re in a high-risk category for coronary disease or a heart attack.

"I never gave a second thought to what I was eating because my cholesterol was always good, and I’d never been overweight," Allen Lane says.

"With Mr. Lane, we put him on Lipitor and are monitoring him," he says. "His history tells me he eats a lot of fresh vegetables and gets plenty of exercise now, but maybe that wasn’t always the case."

Guilty as charged, Allen says.

"I’ve always gotten plenty of exercise without even trying," Allen says. "For 40 years, I was repairing commercial heating and air units, doing a lot of the heavy lifting and hard work. And now, I stay active on some property I have and by doing a lot of yard work at my house.

"I don’t eat a lot of fatty meats now, and we grow and eat corn, peas, butter beans, okra, squash, tomatoes, collards, lettuce, kale — just about everything," he says.

But for years, he was on the road, eating fast food or country cooking that included things like fried chicken or gravy and biscuits.

(continued on page 12)
Allen Lane is lowering his risk for a heart attack or stroke, getting more exercise and eating better, following his physicians’ advice. “I don’t eat a lot of fatty meats now, and we grow and eat corn, peas, butter beans, okra, squash, tomatoes, collards, lettuce, kale – just about everything,” says Lane.
WHAT’S YOUR SCORE?

Knowing your risk for cardiovascular disease is instrumental in helping you and your physician devise a plan that can reduce the odds of experiencing a life-threatening heart attack.

Tanner offers a simple, fast, noninvasive and low-cost screening test called a coronary CT calcium score, which can determine if calcified plaque has accumulated in your arteries.

Plaque is the fatty substance that can collect along artery walls. As plaque ages it becomes calcified, eventually leading to a narrowing of the heart arteries—a condition called atherosclerosis—blocking critical blood flow to the heart.

A cardiac CT calcium score scan enables medical providers to detect calcified plaque in coronary arteries and determine an individual’s risk for a heart attack. The results of the test are called a “calcium score.”

The entire scan is fast—typically taking no more than 10 minutes—and painless, with no need for contrast material to be injected and no immediate side effects.

KNOW YOUR RISK

Risk factors for coronary artery disease (CAD) include:

- Men 45 years of age or older and women 55 years of age or older
- High blood cholesterol (especially low-density lipoprotein, or LDL, cholesterol)
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes or prediabetes
- A history of tobacco use
- A family history of heart attacks (male relative younger than 55, female relative younger than 65)
- Being overweight or obese
- A sedentary lifestyle
- Being postmenopausal

If you meet any of these risk factors, a cardiac CT calcium score can help provide a better picture of your heart health.

“I never gave a second thought to what I was eating because my cholesterol was always good, and I’d never been overweight,” Allen says.

Genetics probably played a role in Allen’s heart condition, but so did decades of eating whatever he wanted. Waistlines, or belly fat, can be a good indicator of heart risks, but they don’t tell the full story. They didn’t for Allen, for sure.

“I guess some people can live a certain way and live to be 100 and some can’t,” Allen says. “I’m glad I had the test and am on top of it now. We’re encouraging all our friends to go get theirs done, too.”

The Lanes like to hike, mountain bike and fish. Allen likes to hunt — Pam, not so much. And Allen tends to his 2-acre yard, and the couple share duties in the quarter-acre garden.

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The Lanes do a lot of the right things to have healthy hearts,” Dr. Albert says. “Their current lifestyle is one to emulate, particularly in retirement. But Mr. Lane’s story is also proof that everybody over the age of 40 or so probably should have this test.”

Computed tomography, or CT, scans take about 30 minutes and check for calcium buildups on the coronary arteries. These arteries supply blood to the heart. The scan takes pictures of the heart in thin sections. The pictures are recorded in a computer and can be saved for more study or printed out as photographs.

“It’s a simple procedure,” Allen says. “And it could be a lifesaver.”

Pam echoes that. She was thankful to the staff at Tanner as well. But she says she owes even more thanks to a higher power.

“I firmly believe that God played a part in Allen getting this test done,” she says. “He knows I don’t want to be without him, and I suggest anyone that loves someone to recommend this test to them; it very well may save their life.”

Get Your Score

Do you have the risk factors for coronary artery disease? You can schedule a cardiac CT calcium scoring screening by calling Tanner Central Scheduling at 770.812.9721. The screenings are offered at Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica, so you may choose the facility that’s most convenient for you.

Timothy Albert, MD, is board-certified in cardiovascular disease with Tanner Heart & Vascular Specialists, where he specializes in cardiac imaging.
Allen Lane learned he had an increased risk for a heart attack or stroke through a cardiac CT for calcium scoring screening at Tanner Health System. The screenings are available at Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica.
At 53 years young, Kim Littleton was tired of feeling older than her age. Littleton started suffering from migraines 27 years ago and has been on arthritis medicine since her mid-30s. In 2006, she was diagnosed with pancreatitis caused by extremely high triglyceride counts, which led to an exploratory surgery. She has struggled with cholesterol and triglyceride problems ever since.

But the story doesn’t end there. She started taking blood pressure medicine about five years ago.

“I’ve got a lot of different things going on," says Littleton, who lives in Carrollton.

With her history of chronic illness, she is no stranger to the wellness programs provided by Tanner Health System’s Get Healthy, Live Well. She previously participated in the Diabetes Prevention Program, which she enjoyed, and ended up learning a lot about how to fight the key risk factors for diabetes. She found out about the chronic disease class after seeing an email from Tanner.

“I just was aching all over, just hurting a lot and I thought, ‘Well, this is going to be helpful,'” Littleton says of the class.

But her main motivation for signing up was becoming a grandmother.

“That was the main reason I wanted to do something about it,” Littleton says. “I just wanted not to feel old anymore. That’s pretty much it. I wanted to feel my age. I wanted to feel 53 instead of 65 or 70.”

When Littleton walked into her first Living Well with Chronic Disease class, she admitted to being skeptical at first.

“I wondered how could a class that was geared toward the generic term ‘chronic illness’ work,” Littleton says. “Wouldn’t it be better to have a separate group for those with arthritis, one for diabetes, one for lung issues and one for high blood pressure? What could

Kim Littleton joined Tanner Health System’s Living Well with Chronic Disease class to learn new ways to be proactive in managing her multiple chronic conditions and live a fuller life.
Chronic Illness Helps Kim Littleton Face Burden of Chronic Disease

“Tanner Program Helps Kim Littleton Face Burden of Chronic Disease”

LIVING WELL WITH CHRONIC DISEASE

“IT was then that I realized that I have more than one chronic illness,” Littleton says. “Mine include migraines, high cholesterol and triglycerides, arthritis and high blood pressure. Everyone single person in the room had more than one and I saw how interrelated chronic illnesses really are.”

The U.S. National Center for Health Statistics defines a chronic disease as one lasting three months or longer. Chronic diseases include arthritis or joint pain, cancer, depression, diabetes, epilepsy, glaucoma, heart disease, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, respiratory problems and stroke.

Get Healthy, Live Well launched the six-week Living Well with Chronic Disease program in 2015 to help people with chronic diseases and their caretakers find the best ways to manage their diseases while also gaining support from each other. The evidence-based program, which was created at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., has been shown to reduce hospital stays and result in fewer outpatient visits for people living with chronic disease.

The program focuses on teaching people how to be more proactive in managing their disease and how to live a fuller life. The classes also strive to provide participants with a perspective that a disease does not define them or rule their life. Classes help make the disease less overwhelming.

Group support is important in helping people deal with the challenges of chronic disease, from fatigue and fear to the potential strain on a family.

“After being diagnosed with a chronic disease, it’s important to educate yourself about your illness and find people who support you,” says Jamie Brandenburg, chronic disease outreach coordinator for Get Healthy, Live Well. “This program gives participants the tools they need to manage their disease and live a healthier, active life.”

Brandenburg and Valerie Duke were the instructors for Littleton’s class. Littleton says she learned a lot while in the program, finding the group and partner brainstorming sessions very beneficial. Another thing she found beneficial was weekly goal setting and the accountability that came with sharing how they met their goals.

The class also taught Littleton the importance of exercising and tracking what she eats. Littleton not only started doing different kinds of exercises like weight-bearing workouts; she also began tracking her food intake.

One of the most valuable lessons Littleton learned was using “I” instead of “you” when expressing her feelings.

“It helped my communication with my family and my doctors even,” Littleton says. “Instead of saying to your husband, ‘You never pay attention to me when I’m hurting,’ you should say, ‘When I hurt, I feel like you’re not listening and then it makes me feel like I’m not important.’”

Littleton was also given tools to help with making decisions.

“Through this process, I realized that I needed to talk to my provider to get a different cholesterol medicine that did not have as many side effects,” Littleton says. “I’m not sure I would have done that on my own. The new medicine has fewer side effects and I’m not in constant achy pain anymore.”

Brandenburg stressed that patients are the most important member of their healthcare team.

“It’s your responsibility and your right to fully participate in the decision-making process when it comes to health care,” she says. “Ms. Littleton is the perfect example of someone who took control of her chronic disease symptoms and successfully found a way to reduce them.”

Littleton would recommend the Living Well with Chronic Disease program to anyone suffering with a chronic illness.

“I was happy with practically everything that we did in the class and it was worth the investment of my time,” Littleton says. “I feel like this class gave me a practical toolkit of things to try to help me manage my chronic illness. But most importantly, it made me realize that I was not alone.”

To register for Living Well with Chronic Disease, call 770.812.9871 or visit www.GetHealthyLiveWell.org.

To register for Living Well with Chronic Disease, call 770.812.9871 or visit www.GetHealthyLiveWell.org.
Support and Song

Babbie Mason receives Tanner Medical Foundation’s Spirit of Giving Award

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. Psalm 28:7

A hush comes over the theater as she takes her place behind the piano. She leans in slightly, and her fingers grace the ivory. Her songs praise her Lord, but tonight, they also lift up her neighbors.

Grammy-nominated gospel singer Babbie Mason has been at the center of Tanner Medical Foundation’s annual Choirs for Cancer program each year since the program’s inception in 2010. The Bowdon resident has performed alongside choirs from area churches and a wide variety of other musical acts.

Beyond that, she’s been a tireless advocate for people in our community who are facing cancer.

“She has shared the stage with presidents and dignitaries, written noteworthy books, taught classes, and hosted television and radio programs,” says Mary Saravia Busby, director of development for Tanner Medical Foundation. “Success in any one of these fields would be remarkable, but she has combined music, a commitment to serve and creative excellence to earn esteem in all three.”

Mason was honored with Tanner Medical Foundation’s seventh annual Spirit of Giving award.

The award honors individuals from the community who exemplify the spirit of
Tanner Medical Foundation is a nonprofit organization that supports the services of Tanner Health System through the philanthropic efforts of the community. Tanner Health System serves the healthcare needs of west Georgia and east Alabama. To learn more about Tanner Health System or Tanner Medical Foundation, visit www.Tanner.org.

A LEGACY OF GIVING

Tanner Health System is built on the kindness and generosity of the communities it serves. You, too, can be a part of the legacy of kindness and neighbors caring for neighbors that has helped our region cultivate its own, locally operated and nationally recognized health system. Tanner Medical Foundation supports many funds that enable Tanner to provide care to every member of our community. Learn more about how you can help at www.TannerMedicalFoundation.org or by calling 770.812.GIFT (4438).
CANCER INITIATIVES

CANCER PATIENT ASSISTANCE FUND

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Thank You for Your Support!

Your generosity makes it possible for us to continue to deliver quality care to our community. The following pages list the donors of gifts received between April 1, 2015 and Dec. 31, 2015.

CANCER INITIATIVES

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MOBILE MAMMOGRAPHY UNIT

Georgia West Imaging, P.C.

Project Cuddle Up, a project launched by Bremen City School students, Micaela and Cole Quezada and Haley Cook (center), brought holiday joy to young patients in the Emergency Room and Pediatric Unit of Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton. The students work collaboratively as a team to support their community.
Krista Arthur (left) and Jacob Skelton (right) present a check to Carla Maner Duncan, Tanner Medical Foundation’s donor relations coordinator, from funds raised from 302 South Street’s Tunes for Ta-Ta’s. The event raised $3,000 to provide mammograms for those who could not otherwise afford one in our community.
The Carrollton Dawbreakers Rotary donated more than 20 boxes of books to Tanner’s ReadER program this year. The Dawbreakers have donated more than any other organization to the ReadER program, providing more than 4,000 age-appropriate books to every child who visits one of Tanner Health System’s 24-hour emergency departments.

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COOKING MATTERS – AT THE STORE GRANT: Share Our Strength

DIABETES CARE MANAGEMENT GRANT: Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Georgia, Inc.

GET HEALTHY, LIVE WELL GRANT: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

GET HEALTHY, LIVE WELL - KIDS N FITNESS PROGRAM GRANT: Publix

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Mark and Donna McCain

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MS PATIENTS ASSISTANCE FUND

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TANNER EMPLOYEE ACTIVITIES FUND

Coca-Cola Refreshments

On March 5, three Woodland High School graduates held “Bingo for Boobies,” a fundraiser that’s the first of its kind in Randolph County, Ala. The event featured a silent auction, live auction and bingo games for prizes donated by local businesses and craftsmen. Funds raised will provide free mammograms to women throughout the community who could not otherwise afford one through Tanner Medical Foundation’s Mammogram Assistance Fund.

Whether on two legs or four, clusters of pink walkers came to Ranburne High School on October 17 to take part in the fourth annual Steps to Help. Some walked a 5K and others 1 mile to help raise funds for Tanner Medical Foundation’s Mammogram Assistance Fund and Steel Magnolias Breast Cancer Support Group.

Local quilter, Norma West (second from right), was inspired to make a turtle quilt after seeing Tanny the Turtle at an event. Her beautiful quilt now hangs in a treatment room of the Pediatric Unit at Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton. Thank you to Norma and Marilyn Hubbard (left) of the Southeastern Quilt and Textile Museum for their support of Tanner.
AWARDS & ACCOLADES

- **Top Performer on Key Quality Measures** from The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton, Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica and Higgins General Hospital, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015
- Georgia Hospital Association Community Leadership Award, Tanner Health System, 2010, 2014
- iVantage Health Analytics’ HEALTHSTRONG Hospitals, Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica, 2014
- **Hospital of the Year** from the Georgia Alliance of Community Hospitals, Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton, 2014
- Truven Health Analytics’ **100 Top Hospitals**, Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica, 2014, 2015
- **Everest Award** from Truven Health Analytics, Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica, 2014
- **Top 20 Best Practice in Financial Stability** from the National Rural Health Association, Higgins General Hospital, 2014, 2015
- Becker’s Hospital Review **100 Great Community Hospitals**, Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica, 2014, 2015
- **Press Ganey Guardian of Excellence Award** for patient satisfaction, Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Higgins General Hospital, 2015
- **Press Ganey Pinnacle of Excellence Award** for maintaining high levels of patient satisfaction, Higgins General Hospital, 2015

Tanner Three-peats Among Nation’s 15 Top Health Systems for Third Consecutive Year

For the third consecutive year — and the fourth time in five years — Tanner Health System placed among the nation’s 15 Top Health Systems, according to a report by research firm Truven Health Analytics.

The health system previously earned the honor in 2012, 2014 and 2015. No other health system in Georgia or Alabama placed among the 15 Top Health Systems.

Among the key findings in this year’s study the 15 Top Health Systems achieved:

- Higher survival rates
- Fewer errors
- Lower overall treatment costs
- Lower overall mortality rates
- Lower complication rates
- Shorter emergency department wait times
- Average patient discharge a half-day sooner than non-winners
- Average Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores that were 7 percentage points higher than non-winning peers

Truven Health Analytics, an IBM Company, is a provider of healthcare data and analytics solutions and is popular for its annual 100 Top Hospitals list. All U.S. health systems with two or more short-term, general, nonfederal hospitals; cardiac, orthopedic and women’s hospitals; and critical-access hospitals were assessed in Truven’s study, which evaluated 338 health systems and 2,912 member hospitals to identify the 15 U.S. health systems with the highest overall achievement on a balanced scorecard based on public data from Medicare Provider Analysis and Review (MedPAR) data, CMS Hospital Compare datasets and 2014 Medicare cost reports.

The Truven list is divided into three categories based on the winning organizations’ total operating expenses. Tanner placed in the Small Health Systems category, making it one of the top 5 small health systems in the nation.

Learn More
More information about the Truven announcement is available online at [http://100tophospitals.com](http://100tophospitals.com). To view Truven’s complete report and findings, visit: [http://100tophospitals.com/portals/2/assets/15-Top-Health-Systems-Study.pdf](http://100tophospitals.com/portals/2/assets/15-Top-Health-Systems-Study.pdf) (please note that this is a .pdf file).
Classes & Support Groups

A complete list of health education opportunities, special events and support groups is available at www.Tanner.org. Our classes, meetings and events are updated frequently, so check back often!

BLOOD DRIVES
SAVE A LIFE. GIVE BLOOD.
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton, Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica and Higgins General Hospital

CANCER
BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
Location: Tanner Breast Health in Carrollton
Cost: Free

LOOK GOOD ...
FEEL BETTER
Location: Tanner Breast Health in Carrollton
Cost: Free

MIND OVER CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
Location: Roy Richards, Sr. Cancer Center in Carrollton
Cost: Free

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
Location: Tanner Breast Health in Carrollton
Cost: Free

I SURVIVED CANCER, WHAT NOW? SUPPORT GROUP
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton
Cost: Free

CARDIOVASCULAR
BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS)
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton
Cost: $50

DIABETES
DIABETES PREVENTION
Location: Various locations
Cost: Free

DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton
Cost: Free

LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES
Location: Various Locations
Cost: Free

MATERNITY
MATERNITY CENTER TOURS
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica
Cost: Free

PRENATAL, NEWBORN, BREASTFEEDING AND SIBLING CLASSES
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica
Cost: Free

MUSIC THERAPY
HARMONY FOR HEALING
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton
Cost: Free

SAFETY
SAFE SITTER
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton and Tanner Medical Center/Villa Rica
Cost: $30

TOBACCO CESSATION
FRESH START
Location: Various locations
Cost: Free

WELLNESS & PREVENTION
STRETCH AND TONE
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton
Cost: Free

LIVING WELL WITH CHRONIC DISEASE
Location: Various locations
Cost: Free

KIDS N FITNESS
Location: Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton
Cost: Free

A complete list of health education opportunities, special events and support groups is available at www.Tanner.org. Our classes, meetings and events are updated frequently, so check back often!

Register Today!
Are you interested in any of the classes or support groups you see here? For details, view the Classes & Events calendar and register online at www.Tanner.org. To register by phone, call 770.214.CARE (2273).
Advancing Health

WITH HEART EXPERTS BEYOND MEASURE.

When it comes to your heart, you expect the most expert care. What you might not expect is to find it so close to home. The team of board-certified cardiologists and vascular specialists at Tanner are at the top of their fields, nationally recognized for advancing patient care at one of Truven Health Analytics’ 15 Top Health Systems for 2015. And they practice throughout west Georgia and east Alabama. So whether you’re near Carrollton, Villa Rica, Bremen or Wedowee, you’ll find a highly skilled specialist nearby to help you reduce your risk for a heart attack or stroke so you can live a longer more active life. Exceptional care, close to home — that’s how Tanner delivers heart care beyond measure.

To find a heart specialist, call 770.214.CARE or learn more at TannerHeartCare.org.