

STRIVE

FOR YOUR BEST HEALTH

Miracles & Memories

"ALS Can't Stop Pop Pop"

PEACE AND GRATITUDE

A heart patient reflects on his faith and life





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Healthier summertime treats

Summertime staples such as lemonade, ice pops, and grilled burgers are often high in sugar, preservatives, fat, and other ingredients that can be harmful to your health. Try these healthier alternatives.

Think outside the hamburger bun

Planning to barbecue? “The American Heart Association recommends eating more poultry, seafood, and vegetarian protein sources and decreasing intake of processed and higher-fat red meats,” says Alicia Buterbaugh, a registered dietitian at Kettering Health. “Ground chicken and turkey burgers can be lower in fat than hamburger, and if you make your own patties, you can cut down on the salt content as well.”

Drink up! Try fruit-infused water

Staying hydrated in the summer heat is a must. “Water is the gold standard for hydration,” says Alicia. “Fruit-infused water is a flavorful refreshment that doesn’t contain the added sugars found in lemonade.”

Give sugar the cold shoulder

Some ice pops are not only loaded with sugars but can also contain artificial dyes. Fruit and vegetable juice bars are a natural alternative. “Choose a brand that lists fruits or vegetables toward the beginning of the ingredient list and sugar toward the end,” Alicia says.



For a fun activity and delicious treat, buy ice pop molds and make your own fruit and vegetable juice bars.



Are diet drinks deceiving?

Many sodas, teas, juices, and other drinks offer a “diet” option. While the term suggests they contain fewer calories, are diet drinks better for your health?

“Diet drinks are typically made with artificial sweeteners instead of sugar,” says Heather Brown, a registered dietitian nutritionist at Kettering Health. “This ingredient swap can cut down on the sugar and calories you’re drinking, which can be helpful for people who are trying to lower blood glucose levels.”

However, one study found that consuming artificial sweeteners signals our brains that sugar should be entering our digestive system. When that sugar doesn’t arrive, our craving for sugar increases, which can lead to overeating.

“While that research hasn’t been validated, there is reason to be careful with how much artificial sweetener we consume,” says Heather.

Better beverage options

“Long-term, dietitians and other health professionals emphasize consuming more whole foods and drinks instead of processed foods and beverages,” says Heather. “Water, unsweetened tea, and black coffee are great drink choices. There are sparkling waters and waters flavored with fruit juice instead of artificial flavors. Overall, hydration is the most important factor of beverage choices.”

In small amounts, diet drinks won’t significantly impact hydration, but water is best for staying hydrated and helping your body function at its best.

For optimal health, drink at least 64 ounces of fluid a day, mostly from water.



Resilient and confident

Making the most of every single moment and feeling able to conquer anything

“She has an immensely optimistic outlook on life, and you feel more positive just being around her.”

That’s how friends, family, and colleagues describe Julie Manuel, MEd, licensed professional clinical counselor and clinical program manager of Kettering Health Behavioral Medical Center.

After exploring a possible career in forensic psychology, Julie realized her true passion was helping patients. “I had a wonderful support system in my own life,” she explains. “I had an epiphany of sorts and decided I wanted to provide the same kind of support that helped me get to where I am.”

Julie says her positive mindset stems from her faith and the values her father, a minister, instilled in her: “I’ve been an athlete all of my life, and my dad always encouraged me to keep going. As long as you try, you’re not losing.”

That attitude saved Julie’s life on more than one occasion. She was diagnosed with a serious heart condition in 2009 and now lives with a pacemaker.

“I had a near-death experience that really changed my life, because it made me realize just how fragile life is,” Julie recalls. “Each moment is a blessing, and you have to make the most of every single moment you get.”

One step at a time

Julie was reminded of that lesson just four years later when she was injured in a traumatic skiing accident. She needed multiple surgeries and was worried she’d never walk again, but her father’s words pushed her to keep going.

“Every time I get knocked down, something inside keeps saying, ‘You’re not done,’” Julie explains. “To me, that’s what resilience is all about. I always tell my patients, ‘Just keep putting one foot in front of the other. One step is better than no steps.’”

Julie’s steps forward eventually led her to a new sport. She gave up competitive softball, basketball, and running due to her heart condition and knee injury but found new life on a pickleball court. She is now a nationally ranked champion in the sport.

She says after experiencing a setback, the reward for getting back up is inner confidence: “You feel proud of yourself. It makes you feel like you can conquer anything.”



Julie Manuel,
MEd

NEED HELP HANDLING LIFE'S CHALLENGES?

Find out how Kettering Health's behavioral health services can help. Visit ketteringhealth.org/mentalhealth



FAST FIVE

How to re-center when you're stressed

You've likely heard how going for a walk, talking to a friend, or listening to music provide stress relief. These actions help reduce stress, but they require you to put space between you and the source of your stress. What happens when you can't step away from the stressor?

"As we have learned from the pandemic, the unknown is always just around the corner, and sometimes it lasts longer than we anticipate," says Glenn Armstrong, APRN-CNP, administrative director and lead advanced practice provider at Kettering Physician Network Behavioral Health. "It's important to put coping strategies for stress in place when you think you don't need them so you have them when you do."

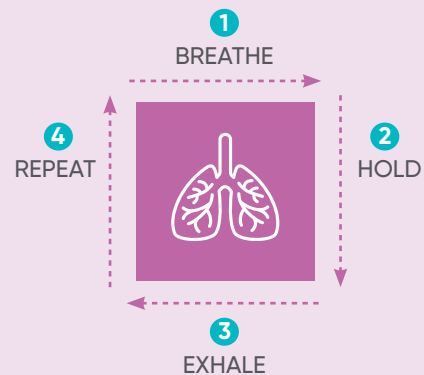
Five ways to feel more calm

- 1 Box breathing:** Used by Navy SEALs, box breathing can reset your fight-or-flight response. Learn more at right.
- 2 Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is the practice of being present in the moment, experiencing what is happening without judgment, and identifying how you're feeling.
- 3 Self-affirmations:** Self-affirmations, such as "I am strong and capable of making it through this situation," can reduce stress and improve mood.
- 4 Prayer:** Believing in a higher power, identifying its presence, and expressing your gratitude can offer a sense of calm.
- 5 Progressive muscle relaxation:** You can use this to recognize where you carry stress. Tense and then relax groups of muscles in your body, starting with your toes and working your way up.

Try the box breathing technique

When you're stressed, your autonomic nervous system signals your body to release hormones that increase your heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration. Box breathing can reset these unconscious processes, allowing your body to return to a state of calm.

- 1** Breathe in through your nose while slowly counting to four.
- 2** Hold your breath for a count of four.
- 3** Slowly exhale for a count of four.
- 4** Repeat steps 1–3 at least four times, or until a feeling of calm returns.



STRESS IS AMERICA'S LEADING HEALTH PROBLEM. Turn the page to learn about the physical effects of stress—and find strategies to help you stress less.



WHAT STRESS CAN DO TO THE BODY

Stress is more than a mental struggle.

It triggers a fight-or-flight reaction that can significantly affect your physical health.

"Stress can cause the system to go haywire," says Deanna Allgeyer, MD, a family medicine physician with Kettering Health.

Stress stimulates the adrenal glands, which produce the hormones that regulate important functions, including blood pressure.

"When your heart rate is elevated, anything downstream of that will be affected," explains Dr. Allgeyer.

Common symptoms

Stress causes many physical effects, including

- Restless sleep
- Headaches
- Muscle tension
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Irritability

Patients may develop ulcers from increased acid in the stomach. Uncontrolled high blood pressure could also lead to a stroke.

Increased stress can also cause symptoms like chest pain and shortness of breath.

"It's rare, but I've seen patients present with stress cardiomyopathy, otherwise called 'broken heart syndrome,'" says Dr. Allgeyer. "The symptoms are suggestive of a heart attack. The condition is temporary, but it can occur in very stressful situations or when you're feeling extreme emotions."

Stress can dampen sex drive and disrupt reproductive systems, too. Since stress affects hormones, it can alter the timing of a woman's menstrual cycle. Men may experience decreased testosterone production and even erectile dysfunction caused by chronic stress.

Patients with underlying conditions such as diabetes and hypertension need to pay especially close attention to their anxiety levels,

Strategies to stress less

Avoid unnecessary stress, like situations that make you tense, and say no to more than you can handle.

Recharge and relax. Give yourself time for hobbies or habits that are joyful and calming, like listening to peaceful music or playing with a pet. Also try to get seven to nine hours of sleep each night.

Manage your time. Make a list of things that must get done, starting with what's most important. Break big projects into small, doable steps. And do your best not to procrastinate.

Get moving. Exercise can boost the body's feel-good chemicals and take your mind off your worries.

Don't self-medicate. Alcohol, tobacco, or drug use is an unhealthy coping strategy. Meet a friend or phone a loved one to talk about your stress instead.

as stress raises blood sugar and blood pressure. "Stress exacerbates other medical conditions," says Dr. Allgeyer. "For example, a patient may have their diabetes under control, but emotional distress can still throw their systems out of whack."

Don't discount stress

When a patient experiences a physical symptom, medical experts will investigate all options. "If a patient comes in with abdominal pain, we'll do the necessary exams to figure out what's triggering the issue and rule out potential causes," says Dr. Allgeyer.

However, if everything looks fine when the results come back, the next logical step is to analyze how stress factors into the equation. Dr. Allgeyer says some patients don't believe her when she concludes that stress could be the source of their physical ailments. "They're amazed to learn what stress and anxiety can do to the body."

Reduce the effects

Patients can take steps to minimize the effects of stress. Focus first on leading a healthy lifestyle.

"Generally speaking, if you're healthy and don't have underlying issues, then nothing is getting

majorly exacerbated due to stress," Dr. Allgeyer says. "Plus, exercising regularly increases endorphins, and that can make a big difference in your day-to-day life."

As for the mental aspect, Dr. Allgeyer emphasizes that it's possible to train yourself to become less overwhelmed in stressful situations. "I always tell patients that they have 'tools in the toolbox' that will help them calm down and control the fight-or-flight response, like taking big, deep breaths."

"Your mind is a very powerful thing," she adds. "I always talk about the importance of self-care and how focusing on your mental state can really improve things." Dr. Allgeyer says talking to a mental health specialist can also be beneficial.

STRESS RELIEF

If you're experiencing frequent stress or its physical symptoms are affecting your quality of life, talk with your primary care provider. Don't have a provider? Visit ketteringhealth.org/primarycare or call 1-888-981-3524.



BELIEVING IN THE MIRACLES



ALS spurs an incredible and inspiring journey

Cheers erupt from Arrowhead Stadium, home of the Kansas City Chiefs. Inside, 76,000 fans surround the Cincinnati Bengals and the Chiefs, who stand locked in overtime: 24–24.

Sarah Miracle and her father, Paul Miracle, who traveled together from Dayton, watch Bengals kicker Evan McPherson take the field.

Sarah glances at Paul, gripped by nostalgia, amazed that they—and the Bengals—have made it this far.

McPherson kicks the football, sending it 31 yards between the goal posts, and accomplishes what seemed impossible weeks earlier: After more than three decades, the Bengals would be playing in the Super Bowl.

Sarah and Paul watch as waves of Bengals fans cascade toward the field. They want to join. But Sarah has no safe way to help Paul reach the swirl of orange and black below.

Unable to move from his torso down, Paul is limited by his motorized chair—a necessary device in his life with ALS.

Sundays with Sarah

Paul Miracle is a lifetime fan of the Bengals. He began cheering for them as a teenager in 1968, when Coach Paul Brown moved from Cleveland to start the Cincinnati Bengals and coach the

Making memories: Paul Miracle with his wife, Barbara, his daughter, Sarah, and grandson, Zayde

Paul Miracle used Sundays with Sarah to tap into the power of the storied game of football—its traditions, its emotions, its clashes between heroes and rivals—to instill life lessons and create lasting memories.



team. "I've been a Bengals fan ever since," he says.

But Paul is more than a superfan. As a linebacker for Miamisburg High School, he received recruitment letters from Dartmouth and University of Cincinnati before an injury on the field during his senior year ended his football career.

Instead, Paul exchanged his helmet for a chef's hat. As the owner of a successful catering business in the Cincinnati–Dayton area, he worked Monday through Saturday. So on Sundays, Paul spent quality time with Sarah, watching the Bengals together.

"She loved it," says Paul. "She'd wear a little headband that had springs with helmets on them."



Paul used Sundays to tap into the power of the storied game of football—its traditions, its emotions, its clashes between heroes and rivals—to instill life lessons and create lasting memories.

"But not during the game," clarifies Sarah. Watching the games on TV with Sarah on his lap, Paul waited until the commercials to explain plays and penalties. There were also moments when the former player couldn't help but strongly object to a bad call from a referee. "I remember getting almost thrown off his knee because he was yelling at the TV," Sarah recalls.

Years of these Sundays strengthened their father-daughter relationship, infusing it with equal parts stubborn optimism and a love for life—the qualities of a Bengals fan.

An unforeseen journey

When Paul approached his mid-60s, he retired from catering.

"It was getting too hard to bend over, kneel down, and build displays at big events," he explains. Not long into his retirement, he needed a knee replacement—which started Paul on a journey he never anticipated.

Despite exercising as part of his recovery, Paul noticed his leg strength dissipating.

He consulted multiple doctors, some of whom recommended surgery to relieve pinched nerves in his neck. But Peter Bouz, MD, a neurosurgeon with Kettering Health, suspected the cause of Paul's waning strength ran deeper—all the way to the cells in his spine. He referred Paul to a specialist.

On Dec. 23, 2019, at 4 p.m., that specialist called Paul, asking him to come to the office. There, Paul learned that he has amyotrophic

lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

"I was devastated," says Paul. "But I wasn't going to be angry at God or feel cheated. I was going to live every minute to its fullest."

At her apartment in Centerville, Sarah was between shifts at Kettering Health Main Campus, where she works as a nurse in a post-anesthesia care unit. Her phone rang; when she answered, Paul shared the news.

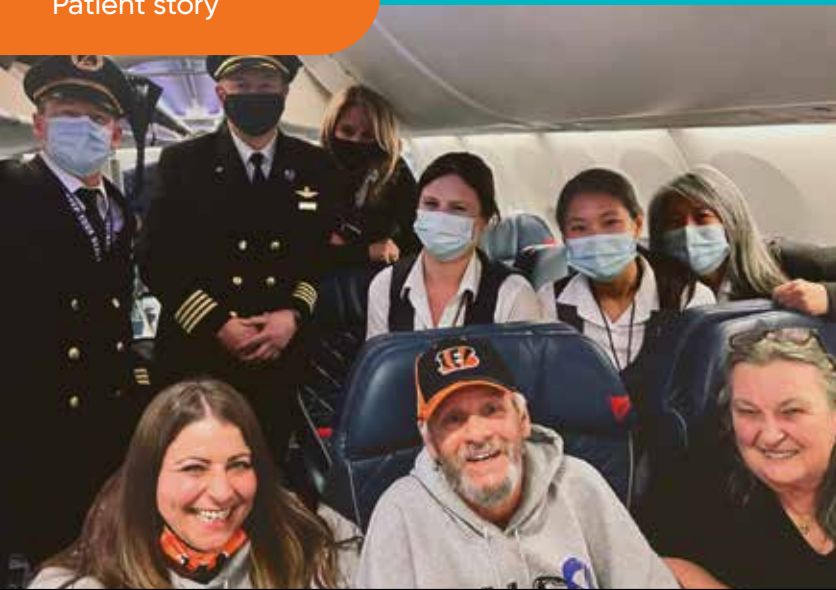
"My world just stopped," says Sarah.

The father who once held her on his knee to watch Bengals football was losing control of his legs. And over time, his other muscles would inevitably follow. The life expectancy for someone diagnosed with ALS is roughly two to five years.

But Sarah shares Paul's tenacity for life. Instead of succumbing to fear of the unknown, she focused her mind with the precision of a nurse, telling herself, "As long as he's fighting, I've got to be fighting, too."

Sarah knew what needed to be at the center of that fight: Bengals

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Generous donors helped the Miracle family join the loudest crowd on the planet to watch the Bengals play in the Super Bowl.

Super
Bowl LVI

updates of their playoff journey on social media.

"I barely looked up to see what state we were passing through," says Sarah. Donors came through again, contributing more than \$5,000.

Sarah's social-media savviness had not only provided others the opportunity to give, but had also made Paul's name more than a local news story. As she and Paul got out of the van at Arrowhead Stadium, "two Kansas City fans knew exactly who we were," says Sarah.

Later, watching the orange-and-black celebrations below after the Bengals defeated the Chiefs and secured their Super Bowl invitation, Sarah had one thought: *I have to make this happen*. If the Bengals were going to Los Angeles, they were, too.

But the price of Super Bowl tickets alone is out of reach for most people. With the additional costs of a flight, handicap-accessible hotel room and van, a lift device, and shuttle service, the Miracles would need more money than what they had previously raised combined.

They needed a miracle.

ALS can't stop Pop Pop

Paul, Barbara, and Sarah returned to Ohio. Sarah's two-year-old son, Zayde, was especially happy to see his mother and Paul, whom he calls "Pop Pop."

Sarah created another GoFundMe, "ALS Can't Stop Pop Pop," knowing

—Continued from page 9

football. Neither knew, though, how long Paul's physical fortitude would last. So when the next opportunity to purchase season tickets arrived, they bought them for the first time.

Their tickets were for the 2021–2022 season.

Sundays at the stadium

Sarah and Paul cheered for the Bengals each Sunday, collecting memories like a child collecting football cards. Paul's strength declined. But the season's momentum quickened with the energy of the unexpected.

At the last home game of the regular season, Sarah and Paul watched the clock reach "0:00" as the Bengals beat the Kansas City Chiefs, 34–31. They couldn't believe it: The Bengals were playoff bound.

"I saw him get teary-eyed," says Sarah. Plans raced through her mind. She had to get Paul to the playoff game. *This would be the best adventure*, she thought. But how? Thankfully, others were willing to help them reach one more game, to make one more memory.

Paul's sister, Barbie, paid for their tickets to the first playoff game, at home against the Las Vegas Raiders. The Bengals won, 26–17. Afterward, Sarah sent photos of herself and Paul at the game to a local news station, which led to an interview with a reporter who suggested Sarah create a GoFundMe campaign to help them reach the next playoff game in Tennessee.

A week later, Sarah and Paul arrived in Nashville to watch the Bengals beat the Titans, 19–16. The winning score wasn't the only number that shocked them: Before they arrived in Nashville, almost \$5,000 in donations had been raised through Sarah's campaign.

The final playoff game would be in Kansas City. This trip, however, would require more money to ensure Paul had the necessary accommodations at the hotel and stadium. But just as the Bengals continued to accomplish the extraordinary, Sarah believed the same would happen for her and Paul.

One more game day

Paul's wife, Barbara, drove the family van for the nine hours to Kansas City. In the backseat, Sarah promoted their GoFundMe page, posting

it was a Hail Mary pass. Shortly after posting the campaign, her phone clamored for attention. Checking it, she saw an anonymous \$9,000 donation.

She called Paul.

In all, donors gave more than \$30,000 to "ALS Can't Stop Pop Pop," including Delta Air Lines' donation of first-class tickets to L.A.

Super Bowl bound

At SoFi Stadium in L.A., Paul was as famous as any starting quarterback. Requests for photos came from every stripe of fan. Charming them with his humor, Paul turned anyone wearing Los Angeles Rams gear into friends—and Miracle fans.

As kickoff approached, Sarah and Paul found the wheelchair-accessible seating, joining the loudest crowd on the planet that day. And together, they watched their Bengals play—for the first time in 33 years—in the Super Bowl.

Later, when the Bengals' loss appeared inevitable, Sarah turned to Paul, taking in as much of the moment as she could. "He had a little bit of disappointment in his eyes. But I looked at him and said, 'We are here.'"

For Sarah and Paul, these games were more than wins and losses. They were a respite, granting them brief yet precious moments to return to a life before ALS.

"It's like he forgets about everything because he loves the Bengals," says Sarah. "It takes him away from his nightmare."

And anyone looking at Sarah and Paul that evening, surrounded by the spectacle of the stadium, wouldn't have seen the weeks of local news stories, the miles traveled, and the wildly successful GoFundMe pages.

They would have seen a father with

Teaming up to bring you the best

It's official: Kettering Health is now the healthcare provider of the Cincinnati Bengals.

This 10-year partnership, which combines the two organizations' commitment to building stronger communities, will help fans and neighbors throughout Cincinnati and Dayton enjoy healthier lives.

"Kettering Health is dedicated to supporting the needs of our community, ultimately helping people be their best," says Fred Manchur, CEO of Kettering Health. "This partnership builds on that common purpose and the strengths of both organizations, and we are excited to work together to build a healthier community."

Cooperatively, Kettering Health and the Cincinnati Bengals will offer programs and healthcare services, such as

"Crucial Catch: Intercept Cancer" campaign: As part of the NFL's Crucial Catch mission to fight cancer, we'll partner with the Bengals to raise awareness for

cancer screenings, culminating in a special Bengals' home game in October where we'll honor cancer survivors and the work our team is doing.

Care for fans: Kettering Health will have five easy-to-find first-aid clinics throughout Paul Brown Stadium.

Youth flag football program: The Bengals' official flag football program reaches dozens of schools in the greater Cincinnati area. As the presenting sponsor of this program, Kettering Health will partner with the Bengals to safely introduce the game of football to elementary-aged children.

"The Bengals are aligned with Kettering Health on the importance of excellence, teamwork, community, and innovation," says Katie Blackburn, executive vice president of the Bengals.

Kettering Health is eager to continue improving the lives of people in the communities we serve, now with the support of the Cincinnati Bengals.

his daughter, covered in Bengals gear, making a memory, watching football.

Treasuring Sundays

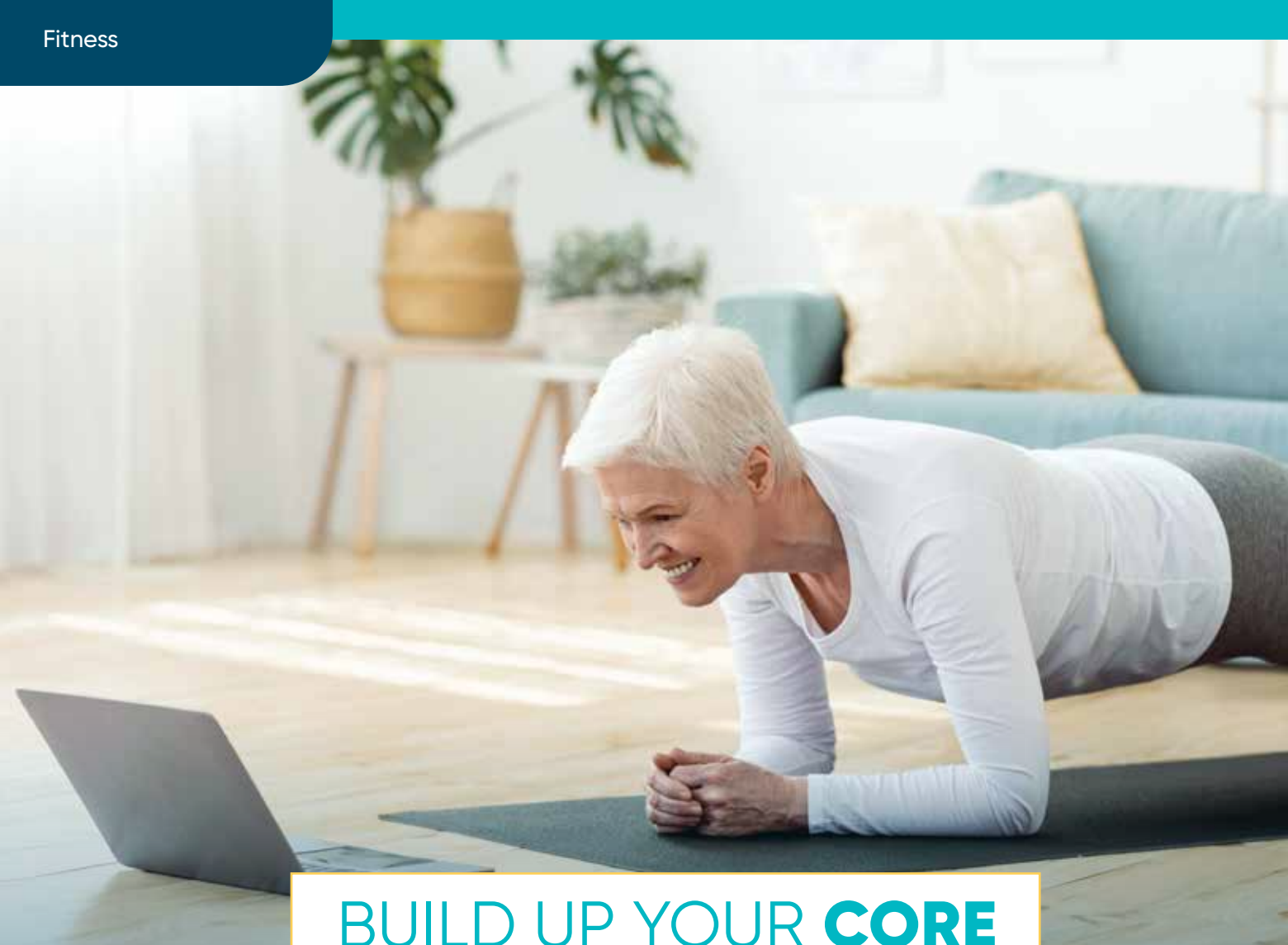
Once home, Sarah and Paul donated the remaining \$10,000 from their fundraising to the ALS Association of Central and Southern Ohio.

They also help with Chef Paul Miracle's Food Truck Rally, an annual fundraising event friends created in Paul's honor to benefit ALS research. The Miracles' playoff journey was made possible by others' generosity,

and they want to do the same for other families facing ALS—to help them have more Sundays.

"Money is what it takes to pay people to research and develop treatment," says Sarah. "I just wish we had more time."

Meanwhile, the Miracles treasure every Sunday—and every day—they have together. Despite their being on a journey none of them wanted, they know what it means to make the most of this short miracle called life.



BUILD UP YOUR **CORE**

STRENGTH

When was the last time you worked out your core muscles? If it's been several weeks, months, or even longer, you're not alone.

"Core strength is one of those things we tend to overlook when we think about becoming fit," notes Elizabeth Dulaney-Cripe, MD, an orthopedic surgeon with Kettering Health. But we involve our core muscles in nearly every aspect of our day.

"Strong core muscles improve your posture, increase your ability to walk

with an even gait, and help you get up from a chair without using your arms," says Dr. Dulaney-Cripe. Core strength is also a crucial aspect of preventing falls, making us steadier and better balanced.

Do I have a strong core?

Dr. Dulaney-Cripe suggests a simple test to measure your core strength.

To perform the test:

- 1 Start by sitting in a chair with a straight back.
- 2 Stand from the chair, using your arms for support as little as you safely can.
- 3 Walk a few feet away from the chair, then turn around.
- 4 Return to the chair and sit back down.



Boost your fitness before and after surgery

Kettering Health has partnered with the West Carrollton YMCA to offer two Pathway fitness programs designed to help you build strength and well-being:

- **Pathway A** is a six-month, small-group program designed to help you prepare for and recover from orthopedic surgery. Participants learn about optimizing nutrition, lowering stress, sleeping better, and transitioning from physical therapy to an active lifestyle.
- **Pathway B** is an 11-week, small-group program for patients who have joint disease and will need a joint replacement—whether it's months or years down the road. A trainer helps you increase your overall health, improve your numbers, and move more. This group environment allows you to connect with a community of people working toward improved health.



START HERE

To connect with a provider and learn more about the Pathway program, call **1-855-646-0365**.

If you struggle with any portion of this test, it could be a sign to start building your core muscles.

How do strong core muscles affect surgery?

"Whether you're having hip surgery, knee surgery, shoulder surgery, or even foot surgery, you typically have limited mobility after an operation," explains Dr. Dulaney-Cripe.

During recovery, strong core muscles allow you to move more easily. For example, after shoulder surgery, you can't put as much weight on your arms to get up from a chair. Your other muscles will compensate to help you move around. This whole process is much easier if you have a strong core.

What can I do to build core strength?

If you've never worked your core before, a simple place to start is examining your posture. Do you keep your stomach muscles engaged when you sit? Are you letting your back curve instead of keeping it straight when you stand?

People who can get up and down from the floor with ease may practice plank exercises. In a plank,

you hold your body at the top of a push-up position with your forearms on the ground for 20–30 seconds. You can start on your knees and eventually work your way up to balancing on your toes.

If you already exercise, add more core movement into your routine. "You don't need to incorporate an extra gym day to work on your core," Dr. Dulaney-Cripe says. "Start where you are and build strength gradually."

ON TOP OF YOUR GAME

Visit ketteringhealth.org/sportsmed to learn more about our fitness programs designed to help you reach your best health.



The Mediterranean LIFESTYLE

Adopting its culinary customs may help you experience better health

Approximately 45 million Americans go on a diet each year. Yet America's prevalence of obesity is one of the highest in the world. Why does this disparity exist? The most likely culprit is America's relationship with the word *diet*.

Americans tend to think of a diet as limiting what they eat and restricting how much they eat to lose weight. However, a diet is also the food or drink regularly consumed. It's what you eat every day to live. Instead of focusing on temporary food restrictions to lose weight, a shift needs to occur to focus on creating and sustaining healthy eating habits that nourish the body.

A new way of living

What makes the Mediterranean diet different?

"The Mediterranean diet is a culinary tradition that reflects the foods the people who live in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea consume, based on their native terrain and what they can grow and cultivate," explains Karen Feldmeyer, MSA, RDN, an oncology dietitian at Kettering Health.

Sixteen countries border the Mediterranean Sea. Foods vary from country to country and culture to culture, but common to all of them are staples of the Mediterranean diet—whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, nuts, and legumes, with olive oil as the primary fat. In the United States, poultry has been added to this diet, along with a limited consumption of beef and sweets.

"The Mediterranean diet is a shift to selecting foods that nourish your

body daily," says Karen. "Eating a variety of foods provides you with more of the nutrients you need. The Mediterranean diet doesn't mean you can never have hot wings or birthday cake. It just means, overall, you choose to feed your body with fresh produce, whole grains, lean sources of protein, and minimal amounts of processed foods and red meat."

Preventing cancer and other chronic conditions

If you adopt the Mediterranean diet, you are likely to have more success sustaining a healthy weight. But the best benefits of the Mediterranean diet are overall improved health and reduced risk of disease.

The Mediterranean diet has been shown to have a beneficial effect on limiting cardiovascular diseases and certain cancers; decreasing the risk of diabetes and metabolic-related conditions; and lowering the risk of mental disorders, including depression and cognitive decline.

"Richly colored fruits and vegetables have naturally occurring chemicals in them called phytochemicals, which act as antioxidants," says Karen. "These antioxidants can attack free radicals that can come from the environment and be a trigger for cancer cells to form. The protective properties the Mediterranean diet offers can be a game-changer in your weight, your health, and your life."

GET COOKING

To find healthy recipes using ingredients of the Mediterranean diet, visit ketteringhealth.org/recipes





Making the move to Mediterranean

Implement these habits to eat and live healthier with the Mediterranean diet.

- **Change up cooking methods.** When preparing foods, try to bake, broil, or roast, rather than fry.
- **Plan meals.** Determine your meals for the week ahead and have ingredients on hand. Search for websites and platforms with Mediterranean recipes that can be prepared in 30 minutes or less.
- **Alter your approach to meals.** Instead of viewing meals through a lens of convenience, shift your perspective to see a meal as an experience. Cooking different recipes and trying new foods gives you control over what you're eating and is something you can enjoy, whether dining alone or with friends or family.
- **Look at labels.** Check ingredients and try to purchase foods with *whole grain*, *whole wheat*, or *whole cracked grain* listed, rather than *enriched* grains.

SUCCESSING AT BREASTFEEDING

Tips for getting a good start if you choose this method

Breastfeeding is ideal for most moms and babies.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends infants be exclusively breastfed for their first six months, with continued breastfeeding (alongside appropriate foods) for one year or longer. Yet only 25% of infants in the United States are exclusively breastfed at age 6 months.



We asked Katy Boyd, BSN, RN, international board-certified lactation consultant at Kettering Health's First Steps Breastfeeding Center of Excellence, about the benefits of breastfeeding and her tips for success.



Katy Boyd, BSN, RN

Q: What are some benefits of breastfeeding?

A: "Colostrum (the first milk your body produces after your baby is born) is often referred to as 'liquid gold' and babies' first vaccine," says Katy. "Colostrum has antibodies from mom that protect her newborn from illness and help her baby develop a strong immune system. Throughout the entire breastfeeding journey, a mother's body continues to produce antibodies in her breast milk that protect her baby."

"In the long term, breastfeeding lowers risks of disease and illness for mother and baby," Katy continues. "Babies who breastfeed have a lower risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), childhood obesity, diabetes, leukemia, asthma, and allergies. Breastfeeding also reduces the mother's risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, osteoporosis, depression, and diabetes."

Q: What suggestions can you offer for breastfeeding success?

A: "Understanding the importance of skin-to-skin contact, nursing the first hour, and the cycle of breast milk production can make a world of difference," says Katy. "Breastfeeding classes for expecting parents, discussing your feeding goals with your primary care provider, and appointments with a certified lactation consultant can all improve your breastfeeding experience."

"Have a support system," Katy adds. "Attend a breastfeeding support group or contact your provider or a lactation consultant with the simplest questions. The reassurance you receive—whether over the phone, through an email, meeting one-on-one, or stopping in to use a scale to check your baby's weight—will help reaffirm what you're doing and encourage you to continue."

Q: The pressure to exclusively breastfeed can overwhelm new mothers and sometimes impacts mental health. What is best for the overall health of both baby and mother?

A: "Breastfeeding is such a sensitive and personal choice," says Katy. "We want to provide education and support mothers' decisions regarding how to feed their baby. To support good mental health for clients, education regarding breastfeeding in prenatal classes, follow-up appointments with a lactation consultant, and involvement in a breastfeeding support group are all resources women can lean on."

"This support includes guidance for moms who do not wish to breastfeed directly but still give their baby expressed breast milk," says Katy. "For those who choose to give their baby formula, we teach proper formula preparation and storage in conjunction with their pediatrician's recommendations on the amount of formula to give their baby."

"The goal of the lactation consultant is never to make life harder for new mothers, but to collaborate with their healthcare team and support parents in their nutrition goals for their baby," says Katy.

Q: Do mothers need a physician referral or to have delivered at a Kettering Health maternity center to access Kettering Health's First Steps Breastfeeding Center?

A: "Any mother can schedule an appointment at First Steps Breastfeeding Center of Excellence," says Katy. "Anyone can come to use our scales, schedule a one-on-one lactation consult, attend the Konnect breastfeeding support group, and shop for nursing supplies. We are here to help every mom, whether they're expecting, just beginning to breastfeed and struggling, or one year into their breastfeeding journey and looking to extend that."

MOTHERHOOD ISN'T EASY

Prenatal classes, appointments with a lactation consultant, and breastfeeding support groups are all resources women can lean on. To talk to a lactation consultant at First Steps Breastfeeding Support Center, call 1-844-715-7508.

Be not afraid



How faith helped Michael overcome the odds

Michael McKay had thought a lot about his last words.

"Looking back on it, I don't know why I've done this over the years," Michael says. "I think maybe I've watched a lot of movies where the main character has a final opportunity to say something important."

Anyone who meets Michael, though, understands that his intentionality comes from a place far more profound than Hollywood—it comes from his deep faith in God.

An assistant professor of theology at Cedarville University, Michael holds his faith as close as his family. And his beliefs have given him powerful answers to life's big questions: *Why am I here? Where do I go when I die?* Michael devoted his career to asking those questions and sharing answers with his students—a vocation evident even in what he believed would be his final words.

"How did we get here?"

Michael and his wife, Lee-Ann, awoke to an unremarkable Saturday.

With little on their to-do lists, they looked forward to a lazy day around the house. But then Michael felt a sharp pain in his neck.

"I wondered if I had maybe tweaked a muscle in my back," Michael says.

He tried to walk it off, but soon his left leg went completely numb. Lee-Ann found Michael scooting down the stairs, unable to trust his legs. Both of them thought Michael was having a stroke.

With strength she didn't know she had, Lee-Ann managed to get Michael into the car and drive him to the Emergency Department of Kettering Health Greene Memorial, where two CT scans revealed a dissected aorta (a tear in the inner layer of the body's main artery). To make matters worse, his leg was numb because his left femoral artery was occluded—no blood was reaching his leg. He needed emergency open-heart surgery.

In the minutes Michael waited to be transported by ambulance to Kettering Health Main Campus for the procedure, he called to mind

the words he'd rehearsed in his head over the years—words he could hardly believe it was time to share with Lee-Ann.

"One of the first things that I told her was, 'I don't want you to be angry at the Lord for what's going on here. I don't want you to be bitter,'" Michael says. "I know a lot of people blame God for the things that happen in their life that they might consider evil or bad. But I didn't want my wife and kids to wrestle with that. I wanted them to know their dad and husband was dying very grateful for the life that he had been given."

Despite her tears, Lee-Ann took what Michael said to heart.

"I remember thinking, *How am I here at this point right now, with my husband sharing these last words with me?*" Lee-Ann says. "My heart felt like it was breaking at one minute, but the next minute I felt this overwhelming sense of love and thankfulness to the Lord because I left that conversation knowing that first and foremost, my husband loved the Lord. And second, that he loved the kids and me."

"I wanted them to know their dad and husband was dying very grateful for the life that he had been given."

—Michael McKay



When Michael met his surgeon, Peter Pavlina, MD, he asked the doctor what his chances were. "He said there's about a 20% chance people who have this surgery survive," Michael says.

"I went into surgery thinking, *I might be with the Lord Jesus today,*" he continues. "That was a very sobering thought. But it also gave me hope that even though I might be leaving all of these things that I enjoy and love, this would not be the end of my life."

A moment with God

"The last thing I really consciously remember doing is praying," says Michael, "and asking the Lord if he would spare my life."

Michael wanted more time with his wife and kids. He still had memories to make with his children, and he didn't want Lee-Ann to be alone. But as he experienced his potentially final moments, he believed death would not be the end. Michael's faith tells him that one day he will be resurrected, as Jesus was.

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“We just never stop feeling such gratitude for the Lord and for the health professionals who brought Michael to this point.”

—Lee-Ann McKay



—Continued from page 19

A long vigil

Meanwhile, Lee-Ann settled into the waiting room, with family and friends to support her. She had no idea the surgery would take more than 10 hours.

Despite her worry, she experienced moments of grace during the long wait.

“One of the EMTs from the ambulance found me and said, ‘Your husband wanted me to tell you that he loves you very much,’” Lee-Ann recalls. “It was so sweet. I thought, ‘Lord, what a sweet blessing to have.’”

The anesthesiologist also found Lee-Ann afterward, to share things Michael had said about her while going under.

The gift of time

When Michael awoke, “The nurses and doctors told me that it was a miracle,” he says. He not only survived the heart surgery, but Dr. Pavlina was also able to save his leg.

Thus began what Michael calls his “bonus round”—the extra time he didn’t expect to have.

“It gives you a little bit of, *OK, God’s given him longer with me, let’s make the most of this time,*” Lee-Ann says. “We just never stop feeling such gratitude for the Lord and for the health professionals who brought Michael to this point.”

Moving forward

Michael has not completely recovered, but he continues to work toward regaining his physical strength. Spiritually, he continues to grow from his encounter with mortality.

“It has provided greater nuance and experience for me to be able to articulate my desire to be obedient to the Lord Jesus—to love my wife and children and those around me, to be productive with the life that he has given me,” Michael says. “And now, with that sense of gratitude and thankfulness, I really do feel and think that I’ve been given a bonus round.”

Michael is back in the classroom, doing what he loves most—but now with even greater insight. He sometimes ties his own story into the lessons he shares with his students, his message serving as his own reminder of how precious life is.

“When we think about our own mortality, we often like to push that off as much as possible. And yet we all know it’s going to happen,” Michael says. “I think it’s healthy for us to think about it before it happens, because it causes us to ask the big questions in life.”

EMBARRASSED TO ASK?

Exploring spirituality



**Elliot Smith, MSW, is lead chaplain
at Kettering Health Main Campus**

"I've never considered myself a spiritual person, but I'm feeling like that's something missing in my life. Where do I begin?"

It is commonly understood that we each have emotional needs that are key for our happiness. They include feeling secure, feeling accepted, and feeling loved and appreciated.

How we meet these emotional needs changes as we age, but these core needs do not. Some say as we get older, we simply get more sophisticated in how we meet them.

The pandemic challenged our ability to meet our emotional needs. Widely reported impacts of isolation and disruption on our lives included increases in sleep disturbances, loneliness, anxiety, and depression.

One way to meet emotional needs is through faith and religious practices. Research has shown that engaging in religious activities reduces anxiety, improves hope for the future, and improves social relationships. However, exploring faith and religions can be intimidating and overwhelming. The following approaches might make this easier for you.

Attend virtual services

Most religions have individual practices and "corporate" (group) rituals. Examples in Christianity include reading the Bible (individual) and participating in worship services (corporate). During the pandemic, many faith communities made it easier to participate in a corporate experience by livestreaming worship services and events. You can try out several religious or faith groups in this manner.

Talk with friends

Another way to explore faith is through asking friends how they meet some of their emotional needs. You might find that while some may be uncomfortable discussing religion, more are comfortable talking about their spiritual practices. These would be the "individual" elements of religions, which could include prayer, meditation, music, or readings.

Focus on hope, joy, and love

Another idea to consider: Perhaps God is pursuing you? Theologian Thomas Merton wrote about this in *New Seeds of Contemplation*:

"Every moment and every event of our life on earth plants something in our soul. For just as the wind carries thousands of winged seeds, so each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest in the mind and will. Most of the unnumbered seeds perish and are lost, because we are not prepared to receive them: for such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of freedom, spontaneity, and love."

Focus on pursuing opportunities to grow in your awareness of hope, love, and joy. Perhaps this is how we catch the seeds.

SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

To learn more about our spiritual services, visit ketteringhealth.org/spiritualservices or call any Kettering Health medical center and ask to speak with the chaplain. Spiritual services are available for anyone in the journey of healing, whether they are an inpatient, an outpatient, or a past patient.

AT OUR BEST

Kettering Health is committed to providing the best care to our community.



CRITICAL CARE TRAINING CENTER OPENS

In partnership with the United States Air Force (USAF) School of Aerospace Medicine, Kettering Health opened the Peerless Technologies Corporation Critical Care Training Center in April. This program, the only one of its type in the world, helps prepare airmen to deliver lifesaving care while serving on the front lines as critical care technicians.

The training center is located in Soin Medical Center, near Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and includes two classrooms and advanced simulation labs to provide training for real-life scenarios. Kettering Health physicians and nurses work alongside USAF clinical staff, sharing best practices and innovations in critical care and advancing skill sets.

KETTERING HEALTH SPRINGFIELD NOW OPEN

In April, Kettering Health opened a brand-new medical center in Springfield. The 42,000-square-foot facility houses primary and specialty care offices, and a 24/7 Emergency Department with state-of-the-art labs and imaging.

"Our mission compels us to provide high-quality healthcare—as close to home as possible," says Fred Manchur, CEO of Kettering Health. "Having quick access to healthcare is vital to the overall well-being of a community. That's why Kettering Health is dedicated to making sure high-quality, compassionate care is easily available in the communities we serve, including Springfield and Clark County."

Kettering Health Springfield is located at 2300 N. Limestone St.



FIRST SPECIALIZED BREAST RECONSTRUCTION SURGERY IN THE REGION

In February, Kettering Health became the first health system in the Dayton region to perform the profunda artery perforator (PAP) flap for breast reconstruction. In PAP flap surgery, tissue from a patient's inner thigh, instead of the abdomen, is used to reconstruct breasts after a mastectomy. The result is a more natural appearance with less noticeable scars.

Kettering Health is currently the only Dayton healthcare system to offer this life-changing surgery, expanding breast reconstruction options to women throughout the region.





KETTERING COLLEGE EXPANDS NURSING PROGRAM

Kettering College recently expanded options for earning a nursing degree to provide nursing training programs for people in many stages of life.

Students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) can choose from four different tracks:

- An LPN-to-BSN track for licensed practical nurses (LPNs)
- A prelicensure BSN (BSN-P) track for recent high school graduates
- A full-time accelerated BSN track (A-BSN) for college graduates who have fulfilled specific prerequisite courses and want to earn their nursing degree in four semesters
- An online RN-to-BSN track for nurses with an associate's degree or equivalent who are already working in the field

In addition to expanding these program offerings, the college is focusing on affordability, with recently lowered tuition for online coursework and discounts for eligible students working at a Kettering Health facility.

"The pandemic has highlighted the need for well-trained, compassionate bedside nurses," says Paula Reams, RN, PhD, dean of Nursing at Kettering College. "By expanding our nursing program, we hope to bring more people into the profession as soon as possible."

To learn more about the Kettering College nursing program, view admission requirements, or submit an application, visit kc.edu/nursing.



GREATER ACCESS TO ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

This year, Kettering Health Hamilton added a da Vinci Xi[®] Surgical System and a new 3D mammogram machine. The robotic-assisted da Vinci Xi[®] Surgical System helps reduce postoperative pain and scarring, lessen blood loss, lower the risk of infection, and promote quicker recovery. The GE Pristina 3D mammography system captures high-quality images while reducing radiation exposure and increasing comfort.

"By adding these cutting-edge technologies, we're ensuring people have access to high-quality surgical and breast care where they live," says Marcus Romanello, MD, chief medical officer at Kettering Health Hamilton.



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Find tips on pages 5-7



IT'S A NEW DEY!

Kettering Health has been selected as the Official Healthcare Provider of the **Cincinnati Bengals**



Learn more about our partnership by visiting ketteringhealth.org/bengals

