



Pedaling with a Purpose

At age 63, most people are settling into retirement. But not Richard “Richie” Boucher. He refuses to let his age or health limit what’s possible. In fact, they inspire him.

This summer, he embarked on a grueling 4,000-mile bicycle ride across America to raise funds for the cardiology department at St. Joseph Hospital — the hospital he worked at for almost 20 years and the one that saved his life.

Just three years ago, doctors discovered a life-threatening leaky valve in Richie’s heart. After open-heart surgery, he was told he may never ride long distances again.

To Richie, that was unacceptable. He tackled rehabilitation with the same tenacity that has defined his life. Within months, he was not just riding but training rigorously for the adventure of a lifetime.

Richie’s cross-country journey began in Portland, Oregon in June. He started pedaling back to New Hampshire on a



trip expected to take about 2.5 months. His ride, which he fittingly calls the “Last Hurrah,” sees him climbing mountainous terrain, enduring brutal summer heat and overcoming every obstacle Mother Nature throws his way.

It’s more than just a personal achievement for Richie. It’s all about saving and changing the lives of more cardiology patients. The physicians, nurses and staff have been by Richie’s side through spine, knee and arm surgeries and, of course, his heart surgery. He sees his Last Hurrah as a way to share his gratitude for their world-class care and pay it forward in a big way.

Though he’s used to riding long distances throughout the country, Richie knows this journey will not be easy. He expects to spend most nights camping outdoors, relying on strangers’ generosity for lodging at fire stations and churches when luck permits. There will be rain, brutal headwinds and emotional depths where he may question why he’s taking this on at his age.

But Richie’s perseverance is unbreakable: “I will finish this ride, even if it takes until September or October because my body is hurting. That’s just the way I am.”

No amount of sweat or sacrifice seems too great when Richie considers his ride’s impact on St. Joseph Hospital’s life-saving mission. He hopes each mile makes hope, strength and adventures like his possible for more patients.

Support Richie’s Ride with a donation at justgiving.com/campaign/richiesride.

“I will finish this ride, even if it takes until September or October because my body is hurting. That’s just the way I am.”

— Richie Boucher





Exciting Things Are Happening at the St. Joseph School of Nursing!

Programs like the Tuition Deferment Program are helping students, including Juliana Rodriguez, RN '24, to afford their nursing education. Juliana, 40, was inspired to pursue a career in nursing by a compassionate nurse who cared for her as a child. Her story shows how hard work and the right opportunities can make dreams a reality.

Your generosity is also significantly transforming the St. Joseph School of Nursing. Donations are helping to fund renovations to modernize the school's facilities. New simulation labs and auditoriums will provide a state-of-the-art learning environment for training top nurses. Supporters like Senator Jeanne Shaheen and the Keegan family have made this possible.

With \$2.9 million in federal funding and over \$100,000 from other donors for the renovation, the nursing school will continue to prepare the next generation of caring, dedicated healthcare professionals to serve the community.

“I had debt from medical assistant school. I have two children, and we're saving for their college. When I heard about tuition deferment, I thought, ‘This is my chance. It's now or never.’”

– Juliana Rodriguez, RN '24

“I am where I am today because of my instructors. I'm very happy to see the St. Joseph School of Nursing being renovated to better accommodate the community of administrators, instructors and students who deserve it.”

– Olivia Bianchi, RN '19

Bags of Hope and Healing

When someone receives a cancer diagnosis, the journey ahead can feel overwhelming and uncertain. But thanks to the generosity of our donors, St. Joseph Hospital cancer patients receive tangible reminders that they don't have to walk it alone.



The Chemo Bag Project donates tote bags filled with comforting items free of charge to cancer patients as they begin treatment. The impact is immense, says Practice Operations Manager Laura Webb Heney, who coordinates donations.

“Every donation, big or small, makes a difference for the patients, families and staff,” Laura says. “The bags contain everything from toiletries and candy to puzzle books, blankets, water bottles, hand sanitizer and lotion, at least one handwritten letter and more.”

Laura agrees that the simple gesture can brighten someone's day and lift their spirits. “For every bag given out, the impact can be different for both the patient and staff,” she says. “These bags are important, but sometimes it's the person

handing it out that makes the biggest difference.”

St. Joseph Hospital nurses deliver the bags discreetly and early, when patients are still trying to make sense of their diagnosis. They're often an appreciated icebreaker and a thoughtful distraction. One patient said, “Nurses are the true everyday heroes. You come to work every day and do your best to help people, knowing it doesn't always work out.”

The Chemo Bag Project supports St. Joseph Hospital patients in other ways. For example, when patients needed CRYO gloves and socks for treatment side effects, their response was immediate. Within 48 hours, they had 10 pairs ready to donate.

“It's not an expensive item, but it's something patients sometimes don't feel comfortable spending money on with all the other treatment costs,” says Laura.

Every donation overflows with hope and strength for courageous cancer patients. These simple items, coupled with the nurturing presence of St. Joseph Hospital's nurses, ensure patients receive the precious gifts of comfort and care.

“Every donation, big or small, makes a difference for the patients, families and staff.” — Practice Operations Manager Laura Webb Heney



Honoring the Healers

When Kristine Howard, BSN, RN, CCM, attended a close friend's funeral last December, she witnessed something incredibly moving — a national Nurse Honor Guard paying tribute to her late friend's decades of service as a nurse. The touching ceremony inspired Kristine to bring this tradition of honoring nurses to her home state of New Hampshire.

“When they did the whole tribute, there wasn't a dry eye in the house,” Kristine recalls. “I had never seen anything like it before, and I knew right then that I wanted to start a nursing honor guard in our area.”

Kristine, the manager of outpatient care coordination at St. Joseph Hospital, quickly discovered that New Hampshire was one of the only states without its own chapter. She eagerly took on the challenge of establishing the first one.

The Nurse Honor Guard performs a special ceremony during funeral or memorial services. Members of the guard pay respects and honor their late colleagues' life's work in nursing while providing comfort and compassion to their family and friends. It's similar to a military tribute, where they beautifully “release” the nurse from their earthly nursing duties.

Dressed in white clinical wear, the guards perform a tribute through readings, candle lighting and a ceremonial “final call” recognizing the nurse being honored.

“You wear the cap, a white dress, white hose, white shoes and a cape,” says Kristine. “You proceed into the memorial service carrying a white rose, which is the symbol of Florence Nightingale, and a Nightingale lamp with a flame or LED light.”

Just a few months after its founding, the New Hampshire Nurse Honor Guard already had over a dozen volunteers ready to perform tributes. Kristine created a website for the group, allowing nurses to join and request tributes for their friends and colleagues.



Kristine has contacted hospices, nursing homes, funeral homes and caregiver groups to raise awareness about the guard's services. She even met with Governor Chris Sununu, who issued a proclamation recognizing the New Hampshire Nurse Honor Guard during National Nurses Week in May.

"He didn't realize we were the only state without one and was so happy we had formed it," says Kristine. "Having that recognition from the governor's office was really meaningful."

While the New Hampshire Nursing Honor Guard is just beginning, Kristine has big plans for its future impact. Eventually, she wants to establish a formal nonprofit with a board of directors, consistent membership and regional representatives across the state.

"I'd love to see us get to the point where we could start giving out nursing scholarships from donations," she says. "These nurses are such selfless caregivers. Having this type of tribute to honor their life's work is so important."

The guard's first official tribute is right around the corner. When that day comes, it will mark an incredible milestone — thanks to one nurse's vision, New Hampshire's selfless guardians of health will finally receive the honor and recognition they so deserve for a lifetime of service.

All nurses, nursing students or retired nurses are invited to volunteer for a future tribute, request a tribute or donate to support the New Hampshire Nurse Honor Guard's efforts.

For more information on getting involved, visit www.nhnursehonorguard.org.



Faith in Every Footstep

Jim Baker is an unstoppable force of energy and inspiration. At 83 years young, the Milford resident will lace up his walking shoes for the second year in a row at the annual *Ribbon Run 5K* (formerly *Commit to Get Fit*), which benefits the St. Joseph Hospital Cancer Center.

Jim has had a strong connection to St. Joseph Hospital since moving from Cape Cod, Massachusetts four years ago. The retired pastor receives his primary care from Dr. Jonathan Sixon, “the absolute best doctor” he’s ever had, Jim says. “I consider him as much a friend, maybe even more, than a doctor.”

Dr. Sixon initially inspired Jim to participate in last year’s *Ribbon Run* after learning that he walked regularly to stay active after hip surgery. “Dr. Sixon’s son has won the race multiple years, and his whole family participates, so he recommended I join in by walking it,” Jim says.

“I’ve always been in relatively good shape and enjoyed sports like baseball, basketball, tennis and swimming. But these days, walking is the most enjoyable for me because I can get outdoors, improve my physical and mental health and feel closer to God.”

Jim walked his first 5K at the *Ribbon Run* last year and had such a great experience that he’s returned with an ambitious goal: “I want to do better than last year, even though I’m a year older now!” To “train,” he walks three to four 5K distances weekly around his neighborhood and surrounding trails.

4th ANNUAL!
Sunday, September 15
Mine Falls Park
Downtown Nashua

 **ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL**
A Member of Covenant Health



Ribbon
RUN | WALK 5K

Step Up for Cancer Care!



Join Jim at the *Ribbon Run*.
Scan the QR code or visit
stjosephhospital.com/ribbon-run.

WALK | RUN | CHEER! or VOLUNTEER

Beyond the physical benefits, Jim finds profound meaning in the *Ribbon Run's* mission to support cancer research and care. "Leukemia is close to my heart," he says. "My son's mother-in-law recently passed away from it. There are so many people desperately in need of funds for cancer treatment and research to make progress against diseases like this."

Motivated by his mantra "age is no excuse" for staying active, Jim feels blessed to have a body capable of walking and exercising. "God has given me a body that heals very well, and I have the ability to pass that message on with every breath and step — we are blessed to have bodies that can exercise, but it's so much more meaningful if it helps others too."

Indeed, Jim sees the *Ribbon Run* as an opportunity to inspire others to give back and get moving, no matter their age or circumstances. "The more we get involved with giving and have conversations about giving, the more I can say it's not only for my benefit but for the incredible benefit of others."

Jim is fueled by faith and a fierce determination to continue making a positive impact. He proves that gratitude, compassion and action can profoundly change lives.

St. Joseph's is grateful to the City of Nashua as well as our business sponsors, community partners and volunteers for collaborating with us to present Ribbon Run 2024.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



- AETNA
- HOME HEALTH & HOSPICE
- BROAD STREET PLANNING
- FIDUCIENT ADVISORS
- PLUS COMPANY
- NASHUA RADIOLOGY, P.A.
- MANCHESTER UROLOGY
- TULLEY AUTOMOTIVE GROUP
- HORIZON HEALTH
- ENSEMBLE
- STANLEY ELEVATOR COMPANY

- TRANSAMERICA
- ENTERPRISE BANK
- BAKER NEWMAN NOYES
- EDWARD JONES
- BREWSTER AMBULANCE SERVICE
- BIGGRAPHICS
- WILLIS TOWERS WATSON NORTHEAST, INC

- THE SNOWMAN GROUP | BOB'S DISCOUNT FURNITURE
- BERNSTIENSHUR | EATON & BERUBE (DAVIS & TOWLE)
- PEAR INK DESIGN

Address Service Requested

CORNERSTONE

— St. Joseph Hospital Foundation Newsletter —

 **Ribbon**
RUN | WALK 5K
Step Up for Cancer Care!

4th ANNUAL!
Sunday, September 15
Mine Falls Park
Downtown Nashua



WALK | RUN | CHEER! or **VOLUNTEER**

Contact Us

bwinslow@covh.org
603.884.4343

By Mail

172 Kinsley St.
Nashua, NH 03060

In Person

Foundation Office
172 Kinsley Street,
Nashua, NH 03061