

# C NORTH OAKS Community

VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 1 • FIRST ISSUE 2017 • [WWW.NORTHOAKS.ORG](http://WWW.NORTHOAKS.ORG)

## SUTTON STEPS UP TO — LEAD — NORTH OAKS HEALTH SYSTEM



“A shared passion guides us to improve lives, every time, with every touch.” – Michele K. Sutton, President/Chief Executive Officer

# PATIENT HAS HEART ATTACK TO HEAL!



**Audrey Richard**, 75, began experiencing heart murmurs and black-outs when she was a young woman, unaware she had a rare genetic disorder called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), which causes an abnormal thickening of the heart muscle. Although some people have no symptoms with HCM, others, like Richard, experience fainting, high blood pressure, life-threatening abnormal heart rhythms and shortness of breath with activity or rest.

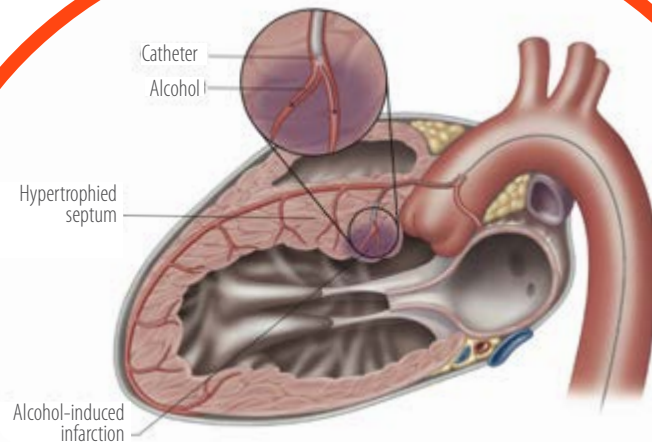
As the years wore on and simple tasks, like walking to the mailbox, became a struggle, Richard sought treatment for her heart issues. She had a cardiac pacemaker and a defibrillator implanted into her chest about three years ago, but still experienced worsening symptoms. After initially suspecting a blockage in her aorta, her doctor discovered her problems were due to thickening of the heart muscle or myocardium.

"I've been fighting this for years, and I've had all sorts of diagnoses, including epilepsy," Richard notes, adding she was relieved to finally know the cause of her troubles.

Once her condition was identified, Richard was referred to **Dr. Nik Abraham** of **North Oaks Cardiology Clinic** for treatment with a relatively new procedure called **Alcohol Septal Ablation (ASA)**.

*ASA is a minimally invasive procedure using a balloon catheter that reduces the amount of tissue blocking blood flow due to thickening of the heart muscles. Pure alcohol is injected into a target area, causing the muscle cells in that area to shrink or die, resulting in a myocardial infarction or heart attack, describes Dr. Abraham.*

"Normally, we try to save people from heart attacks, but with ASA we are inducing a small, controlled heart attack," he adds. "It is a lifesaving procedure that helps the heart work more efficiently."



**Alcohol Septal Ablation  
(ASA)**



**Nik Abraham, MD, FACC, FSCAI**  
North Oaks Cardiology Clinic





**Audrey Richard**, pictured with husband **Lionel** and their dog **Peanut**, is enjoying activities like camping following an Alcohol Septal Ablation (ASA) to correct her heart problem.

The procedure is successful in relieving symptoms in more than 90 percent of patients, according to [circ.ahajournals.org](http://circ.ahajournals.org).

In June, Dr. Abraham performed the first ASA at North Oaks Medical Center on Richard, who had recently moved to Ponchatoula from Magnolia, Mississippi.

"I was told I would have to go out to Texas for the procedure," Richard recalls. "I resisted having it done at first, but I am so happy now and feel like a new person. It saved my life." Richard admits that she was reluctant because she was concerned about having a heart attack induced.

"But after talking with Dr. Abraham, I realized that the controlled heart attack would help keep me alive," she states.

Dr. Abraham points out that Richard was a good candidate for ASA because of her age and her symptoms. And without it, they would have intensified, possibly resulting in sudden cardiac death.

The rare procedure, which even the largest medical facilities only perform a handful of times each year, is considered as a therapeutic alternative to surgery. It is often the best choice for elderly patients and those having advanced medical conditions who cannot tolerate surgery.

Generally, ASA requires a 3-5 day stay at the hospital. Richard had her procedure on a Friday and was back home on a Monday. Her husband Lionel noticed an improvement almost immediately – although the full results aren't usually achieved until six months after the procedure, reports Dr. Abraham.

Lionel is "well satisfied" with the outcome and adds that color has returned to his wife's complexion and she is more energetic. She is able to stay on her feet longer, safely drive a car, do housework and even walk to her mailbox. The Richards are planning a couple of camping trips with their friends, the Cruising Cajuns, and they're considering resuming their dancing hobby.

"We used to jitterbug two or three times a week. That's been a no-no for a while now," Richard admits. "But we're going to try again. I just had some tests and an ultrasound of my heart and it looks good. Dr. Abraham says I'm good to go."

Because HCM is a genetic disorder, Richard is worried that her three children, six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren may inherit the disease. She wants them and others to know that they don't have to suffer like she and her grandmother did.

"I'm relieved to know there's something that can be done. If I can save one life from sharing my experience, it is worth it," Richard remarks. "I feel great now. It made a big difference for me."



**Audrey Richard**, North Oaks Health System's first patient for new procedure, Alcohol Septal Ablation, is pictured with her husband and cardiac team. This minimally invasive procedure, performed by North Oaks Cardiologist, **Nik Abraham, MD**, relieves symptoms associated with Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM).



# SUTTON STEPS UP TO LEAD NORTH OAKS HEALTH SYSTEM

When Michele Kidd Sutton came to North Oaks Health System 28 years ago, she never imagined that one day she would be responsible for overseeing a nationally recognized health care organization with 2,600 employees.

But in January, Sutton assumed the position as North Oaks President/Chief Executive Officer. She replaced James E. Cathey Jr., who transitioned into a CEO Emeritus role with the organization after 30 years of service at the helm.

"I'm honored to be the new CEO of this outstanding organization," Sutton shares, "and excited to be working with our amazing team of employees, volunteers and clinicians to care for our community."

Sutton is a graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University and a Metairie native, but she and her husband Wayne have called Hammond home for years. She also has an extensive resumé of community service and honors, including being an active member of the Rotary Club of Hammond and her beloved SLU FeLions.

"My heart and soul have been in this community for decades. This is where I chose to live as a young professional entering the work force, and I've never regretted that decision," she notes.

After receiving both a bachelor's degree in Marketing and a master's degree in Business Administration from SLU, Sutton joined a local bank as a marketing officer. In 1988, she came to North Oaks (or Seventh Ward General Hospital as it was known then) as a member of Senior Leadership, as Community Resources Officer, a position she held for 18 years. During that time, she also taught Marketing at her alma mater. A little known fact – she also completed her training as an Emergency Medical Technician!

In 2006, Sutton was promoted to Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer. With a zest for professional development and continuing



education, she completed a fellowship program with the American College of Healthcare Executives and became board certified in Healthcare Administration in 2009. An added responsibility was presented to Sutton in 2012 when she was named Administrator/Chief Executive Officer of North Oaks Medical Center, the system's 330-bed acute care hospital.

The rapidly changing environment of health care is challenging, but Cathey touts Sutton's track record of success as evidence she is up to navigating the complexities of the industry.

"Be assured that North Oaks is in the most competent of hands," Cathey notes. "Michele's leadership and insight have been a large factor in the growth of the health system. Her experience and background have given her the foundation to successfully lead this organization into the future."

When she first arrived at North Oaks, 70 physicians were on staff. Today, under Sutton's guidance, the number of doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants exceeds 400. Sutton also played an integral role in development of the strategic plan to initiate the health system's recent \$250 million expansion project, as well as numerous new product and service lines.

In the inaugural days of her new role, Sutton plans to hold internal forums with staff, schedule civic presentations and sponsor town halls for the public. She also will create consumer councils and add community members to North Oaks' quality committees.

**Open  
communication  
and collaboration with  
the community are  
priorities for Sutton.**

"I'm going to be asking for lots of input from the public," she explains. "There is no question that community support is paramount to our continued success."

She's especially enthusiastic about town hall meetings.

"It will be a great chance for people to let us know what's important to them in terms of wellness and health care. And in turn, we will be sharing news about North Oaks," Sutton discloses. "Some might say that we've hidden our light under the bushel basket -- I don't think that everyone is fully aware of the breadth of services and the quality of health care North Oaks offers."



*Michele Sutton works closely with Chief Medical Officer, Rob Peltier to develop a strong relationship with the medical staff.*

Sutton offers up the medical center's recent designation as a trauma center as an example.

"This is a game-changer for those suffering traumatic injuries in our region, because receiving immediate care vastly increases the odds of survival and recovery," she notes. Additionally, the organization has been recognized by leading health care groups for excellence in maternal and child care, inpatient and outpatient medical rehabilitation and fighting infections.

*"Did you know that North Oaks has been ranked in the top 3 percent **in the world** for successfully helping people recover from stroke and traumatic brain injuries? Or that patients rank our clinics and diagnostic services in the top 5 percent in the nation for excellent patient experience? We are very honored by the recognition, but I'm proudest of our incredibly dedicated team," she adds.*

Sutton credits North Oaks' organizational values as the foundation for its success: a focus on caring, compassion, communication and commitment. And, she intends to make sure those values continue to guide the delivery of high quality care and patient experiences.

"Our culture is at the heart of what we do. We are committed to be at our best when you, your family or your friends are at their most vulnerable and need help," Sutton remarks. "With the support of our community and our employees and physicians, North Oaks Health System will realize its vision to be our region's most trusted partner for exceptional quality, safety and experience."





# DO WHAT IT TAKES TO BE HEALTHY IN 2017!



*"Health care should be a team approach between a provider and his or her patient. I believe in helping patients take ownership of their health and become involved in decisions about their care."*

*— Gayle Beyl, MD  
North Oaks Primary Care - Livingston*



**Quit  
Smoking**



**Lose  
Weight**



**Exercise  
More**

**While these are popular resolutions for many people in the new year, they are not the only ways to achieve better health.**

**Having a goal to change a specific behavior is vital, but a choice to get healthy and stay healthy is important for everyone. The key is to understand what healthy means for you.**



Our world today is full of many things that claim to make us healthy. It's easy to become overwhelmed and confused by gluten-free and organic food choices, intensive exercise programs, unrealistic social media photos and restaurants catering to different eating styles.

***Making good decisions for yourself and your loved ones is the first step to living a healthy lifestyle.***

Being healthy isn't a fad or trend. Instead, it's a lifestyle -- and the rules are different for everyone. The root of being healthy is about being well; focusing on taking care of yourself and doing things that keep you feeling your best. It's not just about the physical aspects like eating better and exercising. It's about all aspects of your health: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. This means understanding yourself, your needs and how to respond to them in balance.



## Realize that good health takes more than diet and exercise.

It takes a trusted partnership with a primary care provider. By getting to know you, your habits and your history, a primary care provider can help you develop an individualized plan to live a healthy and well life. He or she can perform regular check-ups, immunizations and preventive screenings, and if you have a specific health concern that requires specialized care, your primary care provider can connect you with a specialist who has the expertise you need. Think of your primary care provider as your partner in wellness.

### **Schedule Your Annual Health Screening Visit**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), fewer than one third of adults, ages 50-64, are up-to-date with important preventive services. These visits not only can give you peace of mind, but also can catch issues in early, more treatable stages, which may mean less invasive therapy and impact on your quality of life.



For a list of North Oaks Physician Group primary care providers, visit [www.northoaks.org/primarycare](http://www.northoaks.org/primarycare).





# FIND YOUR NEW YOU IN THE NEW YEAR!

*If getting healthier in 2017 is one  
of your resolutions, North Oaks  
is here to help you!*

## Ideal You at NORTH OAKS

Ideal You at North Oaks is an independent Ideal Protein™ clinic that offers a medically-developed weight loss program. We work with you to help you acquire smarter eating habits and a healthier lifestyle so you can achieve your weight loss goal – and maintain it. Join us at a free seminar to find out if Ideal You is right for you. To register or to learn more, call Ideal You at North Oaks at (985) 230-1880 or visit [www.northoaks.org/idealyou](http://www.northoaks.org/idealyou).

**Ideal You at North Oaks**  
North Oaks Diagnostic Center  
(North Oaks Medical Center campus)  
15837 Paul Vega, MD, Dr., Suite 200  
Hammond, LA 70403



### **Take the Time to KNOW in 2017**

Avoid the “what I don’t know can’t hurt me” approach when it comes to your health. Break the cycle of postponing your doctor visits and checkups and put your health first this year.



## NORTH OAKS Smoking Cessation Clinic

If you are a Louisiana resident and started smoking before Sept. 1, 1988, the North Oaks Smoking Cessation Clinic is here for you. Our staff can help you kick the habit

by providing the guidance and support you need to stay on track and stop smoking for good! Free medications to help curb the cravings are available to eligible participants. To sign up or learn more, call (985) 230-QUIT (7848) or visit [www.smokingcessationtrust.org](http://www.smokingcessationtrust.org).

### **North Oaks Smoking Cessation Clinic**

North Oaks Clinic Building (located within North Oaks Pulmonology Clinic)  
15813 Paul Vega, MD, Drive, Suite 401A  
Hammond, LA 70403 • (985) 230-QUIT (7848)



# Community SCRAPBOOK

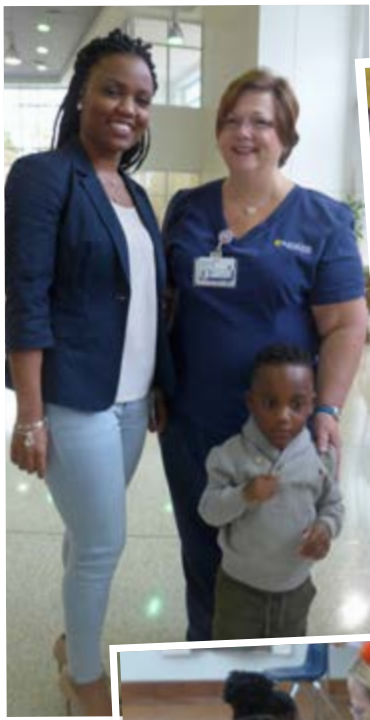
## Flat Screen TV Donation to Pediatrics Unit by MONSTER INK

The playroom in our Pediatrics Unit will now sport a beautiful new flat screen television, courtesy of **MONSTER INK** in Ponchatoula. We thank **Jake Duplantis**, **Ray Mulkey** and daughter **Skyler Mulkey**, for their generous donation. Our new TV is sure to brighten the days for little ones who are hospitalized throughout the year.



## Hospice Memorial Service

A memorial service recently honored 88 North Oaks Hospice patients and their families, including that of **Harriet Cope**, at the E. Brent Dufreche Conference Center on the Medical Center campus. The memorial service is a vital component of the North Oaks Hospice Bereavement Program, which provides support to family members and caregivers for one year following the patient's passing.



## 2016 NICU Reunion

Santa welcomed some very special former patients to North Oaks Saturday, December 3, 2016, at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Annual Reunion. The "graduates" took part in holiday entertainment that included storytelling, face painting, craft-making and refreshments.



**Dong Cho, MD\***  
Physiatry  
North Oaks Physical  
Medicine & Rehabilitation  
(985) 230-1860

*\*Employed by North Oaks  
Health System*

*Physicians are choosing*

**NORTH  
OAKS**

*Providers have a choice in practice locations and we are delighted they have chosen North Oaks Health System. Join us in welcoming them to our region.*



NORTH OAKS

# COMMUNITY EDUCATION

TO REGISTER FOR CLASSES, CALL NORTH OAKS SCHEDULING AT (985) 230-7777 OR (225) 686-4849.

**All classes and meetings are held in the E. Brent Dufreche Conference Center, located within North Oaks Diagnostic Center, unless otherwise noted.**

*Note: If you have bereavement support needs or questions, please call North Oaks Hospice at (985) 230-7620.*

## CLASSES FOR FAMILIES & CHILDREN

### Seat Safety Checks

A certified child passenger safety technician is available by appointment to install and provide instruction on proper use of child passenger safety seats and boosters to ensure the safe transport of children of all ages.

### Prenatal Class: Breastfeeding

This class is for parents who may be considering breastfeeding or who have already decided to breastfeed their baby. Topics include the benefits of breastfeeding, positioning the baby properly, nutrition, as well as pumping and storing breast milk.

### Prenatal Class: Families Under Construction

This class focuses on preparing your home for your newborn, pregnancy anatomy, true and false labor, as well as hospital procedures.

### Prenatal Class: Labor & Delivery

This class focuses on decreasing anxiety, options for pain relief during childbirth, the four stages of labor and delivery, as well as vaginal and cesarean births.

### Prenatal Class: Relaxation Techniques

This class teaches the many techniques available to help you through labor and childbirth, such as imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, massage, various breathing techniques and position changes during labor.

### Prenatal Class: Infant Care and Tour

This class explores topics such as medical testing on newborns, crying and colic, infant massage, illness, postpartum depression and when to call your doctor after delivery. A tour of Women & Children's Services at North Oaks Medical Center concludes the class.

### Prenatal Class: American Heart Association CPR for Family & Friends

This class teaches adult, child and infant CPR and ways to prevent common injuries and choking.

### Something for Siblings

This class is for the new big brother or sister (ages 3-10) to help him or her adjust to the new baby.

## CPR AND FIRST AID CLASSES

### American Heart Association Healthcare Provider CPR—\$50 (for medical professionals)

This American Heart Association class is designed for health care providers. It provides a lecture on cardiovascular health and risk factors; and demonstrations of American Heart Association basic life support techniques for choking victims, rescue breathing and CPR for adults, children and infants. Participants are introduced to and participate in the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Participants must successfully complete manikin check off, AED simulation and a written exam in order to successfully complete this certification.

### American Heart Association First Aid Class—\$50 (for the layperson)

A certified instructor will train individuals to become familiar with how to recognize and care for victims of illnesses and sudden emergencies. Upon proper demonstration of all skills outlined in the course, participants will receive a card signifying successful completion that is valid for 2 years.

### American Heart Association Heartsaver AED CPR Class—\$40 (for the layperson)

This class incorporates demonstrations of the American Heart Association's lifesaving techniques for choking, rescue breathing and CPR for adults, children and infants. Participants are introduced to and participate in the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Participants must successfully complete manikin check off and AED simulation in order to successfully complete this certification. Participants must successfully complete manikin check off, AED simulation and a written exam in order to successfully complete this certification.

\*The American Heart Association (AHA) strongly promotes knowledge and proficiency in Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Pediatric Advanced Life Support and has developed instructional materials for this purpose. Use of these materials in an educational course does not represent course sponsorship by the AHA. Any fees charged for such a course, except for a portion of fees needed for AHA course materials, do not represent income to the association.

## SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

### AWAKE (Alert, Well And Keep Energetic) Support Group

This support group is designed for those with a sleep disorder, along with their families and friends, to explore the link between snoring and heart disease. **Lauren L. Davis, MD**, a Pulmonologist and North Oaks Sleep Disorder Specialist, serves as guest speaker. Meetings of this nationally recognized support group are facilitated by North Oaks Sleep Disorders Center, which is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

### Stroke Support Group of Hammond

This support group offers support, socialization and education for stroke survivors and their caregivers. Meetings take place the last Monday of every month from 12:30-1:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of North Oaks Rehabilitation Hospital, 1900 S. Morrison Blvd. in Hammond. It is co-sponsored by North Oaks Health System and Southeastern Louisiana University. For questions or more information, please contact **Dr. Meghan Savage** at meghan.savage@selu.edu or at (985) 249-2346.

### Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury Support Group

This free support group offers support, socialization and education for survivors of traumatic brain injuries and spinal cord injuries and their caregivers. Meetings take place in the Classroom of North Oaks Rehabilitation Hospital, located at 1900 S. Morrison Blvd. in Hammond. This support group is co-sponsored by North Oaks and Southeastern Louisiana University. For questions or more information, please contact **Dr. Jackie Guendouzi** at jguendouzi@selu.edu or (985) 549-2503.

## DIABETES EDUCATION

### Diabetes Education Meetings

Diabetes Education meetings are offered for those with diabetes, along with their family members and friends, to share experiences, motivate each other, energize their outlook and renew their commitment. The group is facilitated by North Oaks Diabetes Education, which has been recognized by the American Diabetes Association for Quality Self-Management Education. Meetings are held monthly.

SEE MORE AT [WWW.NORTH OAKS.ORG/CALENDAR](http://WWW.NORTH OAKS.ORG/CALENDAR)



*CommUnity* is printed and published by North Oaks Health System with the leadership of the North Oaks Board of Commissioners.

The information in this newsletter is meant to complement the advice of your health care providers, not to replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet or exercise, talk to your health care provider.

***The North Oaks Health System mission is to improve lives, every time and with every touch.***



## Community e-Newsletter Sign-Up

If you would rather receive North Oaks *CommUnity* as an e-newsletter instead of in printed/mailed form, sign up online at [www.northoaks.org/community](http://www.northoaks.org/community).



©2017 North Oaks Health System



# Love what you see in 2017!

Ideal Protein™ is a medically developed weight loss method that can help you achieve your weight loss goals – and maintain them. Our Registered Dietitians are trained to develop personalized plans and will support you throughout all phases of the diet.



**Thursday, Feb. 16, 2017**  
**5:30 p.m.**

North Oaks Diagnostic Center  
E. Brent Dufreche Conference Center, Room A  
15837 Paul Vega, MD, Drive  
Hammond, LA 70403

**ATTEND A FREE SEMINAR TO LEARN MORE!**



# Ideal You at NORTH OAKS

To register for a seminar or schedule a free initial consultation, call **(985) 230-1880** or visit [www.northoaks.org/idealyou](http://www.northoaks.org/idealyou).



**Be sure to arrive 15-30 minutes early to receive your FREE Body Composition Analysis Scan!**