



**AT ST. JUDE, WE ARE
DRIVEN BY A SET OF
CORE VALUES.**

These principles help guide us in our behaviors and decisions—ultimately empowering every employee to deliver on our mission.

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James R. Downing, MD
President and Chief Executive Officer

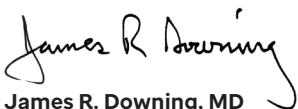
The history of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is written with stories of hope, purpose and the pursuit of excellence. Authored by a diverse and growing community of more than 6,000 employees, we are united by a noble mission and guided by a set of values.

Every day, I see faculty and staff who live our seven core values. The St. Jude Values shape our culture and propel our institution toward a brighter future.

-  Always recognize that advancing treatment for children with catastrophic diseases is at the center of everything we do.
-  Do what is right; take ownership of what you do.
-  Work with purpose and urgency—your efforts matter.
-  Embrace the challenge to create a new tomorrow.
-  Work collaboratively and help others to succeed.
-  Always be respectful of your coworkers, our patients and their families, and visitors to our campus.
-  Make the most of St. Jude resources, and be mindful of those who provided them.

In this recent compilation, we honor and celebrate the remarkable individuals at St. Jude who embody these values, both in grand gestures and everyday actions. In the past year, we have seen several milestones reached, including the implementation of Epic, St. Jude Hub and Workday, among other projects that have been the culmination of years of work.

These inspiring stories illuminate the qualities that make St. Jude a place of discovery, innovation and healing—a living testament to the dream of hospital founder, Danny Thomas.



James R. Downing, MD

President and Chief Executive Officer
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital



VALUE

1

Always recognize that
ADVANCING treatment
for children with
catastrophic diseases
is at the center of
everything we do.



Johnnie Bass, AuD, PhD

REHABILITATION SERVICES

In the quest to save gravely ill children, sometimes there are compromises. Johnnie Bass, AuD, PhD, is laser-focused on minimizing any losses for children with cancer by reaching for the biggest gain—renewed health.

A clinical audiologist and researcher, Bass is taking aim at hearing loss, an unfortunate consequence of chemotherapy, radiation and other cancer therapies. Her pioneering studies focus on the best ways clinicians can monitor hearing and auditory function during a child's treatment. Bass is also developing a first-of-its-kind grading scale that can better pinpoint how a specific treatment affects each patient's ability to hear, which may ultimately help clinicians tailor treatment doses.

Those contributions would be enough, but Bass does not stop there. She serves as a beacon for others by sharing her research at national and international conferences and with the Children's Oncology Group. She is known by students, colleagues and the wider pediatric oncology community as a mentor who freely shares her rich expertise.

Advancing patient care is her reason for it all. She hears the need—and delivers.



NOMINATED BY:
Kristin Szymanek
Rehabilitation Services

Hubert Cole

FOOD SERVICES

Pizza has a way of making everything seem just a little bit better. Hubert Cole has seized that bit of magic to help young patients at St. Jude improve the daily skills they need to learn and play.

As a pizza chef, Cole is an expert in the techniques of his trade—mixing dough, stretching crusts, spreading toppings, and cutting the oh-so-tantalizing pies that emerge from his oven. He shared these abilities with St. Jude kids, compassionately guiding them through the same pizza-making motions to support a key occupational therapy project designed to help them sharpen skills they use in everyday life. For many of the kids, the program was a bright spot during a very difficult time. “That was the most fun thing I’ve ever done at the hospital,” one child said afterward.

All of Cole’s interactions at St. Jude are marked with this same willingness to help. He serves up hope for kids, one slice at a time.



NOMINATED BY:

Hannah Dagen
Rehabilitation Services





Sylvia Miranda, PharmD

INTERPRETER SERVICES

Helping anxious patients and families make sense of complex medical information is not for the faint of heart. Sylvia Miranda, PharmD, not only tackles that challenge with aplomb, she looks for ways to make the foreign familiar for all who seek care at St. Jude.

As a medical interpreter, language is the first barrier Miranda helps Spanish-speaking families transcend when they arrive here. Acclimating to St. Jude is not just about language. Simple tasks like using an elevator, making a room phone call, or ordering food at Kay Kafe can feel impossible when your child is sick and nothing seems to make sense.

Understanding this, Miranda spearheaded efforts to create a cultural navigator role for Spanish-speaking patients and families at St. Jude. She did the same when St. Jude created the humanitarian effort SAFER Ukraine in response to the Russian invasion, providing a comforting welcome mat to families coming to St. Jude from the war-torn country.

Miranda is far more than an interpreter. Like Danny Thomas, she's also a visionary.



NOMINATED BY:

Alejandra Gonzalez Ruiz, MD
Oncology

Lynn Rodriguez

CENTER FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE

Part of the reason we are mesmerized by jugglers is because they make it look easy. Lynn Rodriguez tends to have that same effect on her St. Jude colleagues.

A pediatric nurse practitioner who manages the hospital's surgery advanced practice providers, Rodriguez keeps many balls in the air—and makes it seem effortless. She not only works to coordinate care for surgical patients coming to St. Jude from both the United States and abroad, but she also organizes and oversees other nurse practitioners in a diverse range of surgical subspecialties.

In true juggler fashion, Rodriguez deftly kept everything afloat when she recently filled in during an ophthalmology staffing shortage and reorganized operating room schedules when a busy period threatened smooth collaborations. She only added to her load when she took on overseeing the St. Jude Quality of Life advanced practice provider group, which is dedicated to easing suffering in all forms for patients and their families.

For more than two decades, Rodriguez has never dropped a single ball—making sure St. Jude kids stay on top.



NOMINATED BY:
Andrew Davidoff, MD
Surgery





Tekeima Townsend-Billups

SPIRITUAL CARE SERVICES

Tekeima Townsend-Billups has built her life and career around providing spiritual support for others—and is endlessly creative about how she expresses it.

A chaplain in Spiritual Care Services, Townsend-Billups continually devises innovative and imaginative ways to connect with young patients and families hungry for spiritual reassurance and comfort. She is always asking questions aimed at fine-tuning this support, such as, “How can I enrich patients’ experience?” or “How can I make this better?”

She nurtures her connection with patients by using her St. Jude-issued iPad to send encouraging messages and offers spiritual support and counseling via text. She also invites patients to add to a “vision board” in her office as a way to imagine an optimistic and hopeful future. She supports their journey, whatever it looks like, and affirms the worth of each individual.

Esteemed architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe said, “God is in the details.” If so, Townsend-Billups seizes the details in both spiritual and practical realms to convey grace and hope to St. Jude kids.



NOMINATED BY:

Mark Brown
Spiritual Care Services



VALUE

2

Do what is right;
take **OWNERSHIP**
of what you do.



Michael Copponi

CAMPUS OPERATIONS

“The more things change, the more they stay the same.” This adage certainly applies to the standard of excellence St. Jude employees maintain despite vast changes on campus. A significant chunk of the credit goes to Michael Copponi.

Copponi jumped in head-first to serve as interim building operations coordinator when St. Jude employees relocated to off-campus offices at Peabody Place. He knew it was a precarious time for these staff members, who were suddenly thrust into unfamiliar working quarters.

For nearly a year, Copponi traveled back and forth between the main campus and Peabody Place to make the new location a place where these employees could thrive. He was often onsite at dawn and stayed late in the day, a steadying presence for workers who needed questions answered about their new work home. With a customer service mindset, Copponi found creative solutions to fix facility problems and overcome any obstacles.

Peabody Place employees have expressed time and again how crucial Copponi proved to their remarkable adjustment. For him, it was simple: He took ownership of the path that brought them there.



NOMINATED BY:
Blaire Benavides
Campus Operations

Verna Crutcher

HOUSING AND PATIENT SERVICES

Verna Crutcher does not just want St. Jude kids to be cured—she wants to see them soar.

As a guest services representative in the St. Jude Patient Airport Lounge—a private, spacious area at Memphis International Airport—Crutcher uses her insight from a long career in the airline industry to benefit St. Jude families. Whether it is meeting a new patient family at their arrival gate and escorting them to their transportation to St. Jude or helping a departing family get their bags checked before settling into the lounge to await their flight, Crutcher displays selfless compassion.

Case in point: Crutcher had just ended her shift one day when she noticed a St. Jude patient had become ill before passing through security. Without being asked, she ran to the airline counter to get a sickness bag for the child and stayed with the family before helping them through the checkpoint. Crutcher didn't leave until she had escorted the family to the St. Jude Lounge, where they could rest comfortably until their flight departed.



NOMINATED BY:

Caron Byrd, JD
Housing and Patient Services



St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital

Airport
Lounge



Josh Greer

INFORMATION SERVICES

It's clear Josh Greer has had an "epic" impact at St. Jude.

After more than two years of intensive effort, the hospital's rollout of its new electronic health records system, Epic, went live in late 2022. Greer played a huge part in making it happen, working tirelessly and collaboratively to help the institution-wide push pay off for patients.

The new system streamlines high-quality care by keeping accurate, consistent records about every patient available to clinicians at the touch of a button. Clinical research is also smoothed by the software's ability to track young study participants across St. Jude care settings, while clinicians can more seamlessly communicate about patient treatments and outcomes.

Greer was recognized for his role in setting all of this in motion when he and other members of the Epic implementation team received the 2023 St. Jude Clinical Care Improvement Award.

Baseball's Jackie Robinson once said, "A life is not important except for the impact it has on other lives." By supporting outstanding care for countless St. Jude children, Greer has more than met that ideal.



NOMINATED BY:

Keith Perry
Information Services

Vontarrius Ross

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Ongoing construction at St. Jude might be likened to a constantly moving puzzle. As buildings go up, labs move to new spaces that require a literal clean slate to host the next groundbreaking research. Vontarrius Ross is an expert in filling in the pieces.

As a manager in Environmental Services, Ross supervises a staff of 50 whose mission is integral to St. Jude—maintain pristine conditions in facilities across campus. His everyday duties already keep him on his toes, but he has learned to turn on a dime—always with a contagious smile—as he and colleagues prep the many newly opening labs cropping up week by week. When the unexpected happens, such as a flooded lab or another emergency, he rallies his staff to take care of the problem.

It is said that Ross never meets a stranger at St. Jude. Wherever he goes, someone stops Ross to chat and enjoy his quiet, friendly presence. Relating to others is no puzzle to Ross, even as he adeptly solves many others.



NOMINATED BY:

Curt Vargo
Environmental Services





Tasha Richards

OFFICE OF QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY

Keeping patients safe from infection is essential to helping them get well. To achieve that, Tasha Richards stands ever ready to lend a hand.

Proper hand hygiene is the cornerstone of efforts to protect patients and staff from infections. Joining St. Jude in 2021, Richards quickly tapped her experience as an infection control nurse to devise effective strategies to prevent a virulent intestinal infection known as *Clostridioides difficile* from threatening fragile St. Jude kids, whose vulnerable immune systems leave them susceptible to germs.

Richards drove essential efforts to test automated systems that monitor and improve hand hygiene methods across campus, fueling key decisions that affect everyone here. She also oversaw a year-long project with the CDC to prevent *C. difficile* in patients who've undergone transplants, leading to a 30% decline in these infections compared with the previous year.

Through it all, Richards values the input of others, encouraging ideas and including those who might be reluctant to speak up. Heart to heart, hand in hand, she exemplifies the paramount goal: to protect the children of St. Jude from harm.



NOMINATED BY:

Craig Gilliam
Office of Quality and Patient Safety

Katherine Walker

SURGICAL SERVICES

When your reach exceeds your grasp, you know your efforts are truly worthwhile. This is certainly true for Katherine Walker.

As a radiation therapy attendant, Walker is always on the move. Often, she's doing her core job—transporting patients from their rooms to radiation treatment and back again, always with a smile. She goes the extra mile on a daily basis, cleaning toys for patients or retrieving old-fashioned paperbound radiation charts for doctors to facilitate collaboration with our colleagues who focus on late effects.

Walker also gets her steps in on behalf of her colleagues, who consider her the heart of their department. With 35 years at St. Jude, she is the constant in the group, reminding coworkers of meetings and conference times, relaying messages, and answering phones.

Why does Walker choose to run herself so hard? Because she knows her efforts matter to the care of St. Jude patients. Walker reaches farther because she wants the kids to go farther, too.



NOMINATED BY:

Valerie Groben
Center for Advanced Practice



St. Jude
CHILDRENS RESEARCH HOSPITAL



VALUE

3

Work with
PURPOSE and
urgency—your
efforts matter.



Anne Bremer, PhD

STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY

Proteins and other biomolecules in our cells either work together to keep us healthy or misbehave to make us sick. Anne Bremer, PhD, works on understanding these building blocks and how that understanding may lead to big treatment advances for sick children who desperately need them.

As a structural biologist, Bremer uses biophysical techniques to understand how biomolecules assemble, function and interact. She also keeps an eye on the bigger picture, nimbly juggling multiple research projects while looping in colleagues about the data produced and why it matters.

Inspiring the rest of her team is par for the course as well. Bremer's work has boosted the understanding of how biomolecular condensates—tiny structures that organize material within cells—form. As evidence mounts linking neurodegenerative-causing gene mutations to time-dependent changes of these structures as they age, Bremer's impact has become even stronger. Her research has led to a large dataset that is available to scientists at St. Jude and beyond to fuel additional insights—and potential cures.

The tiny can prove mighty, both in science and in life. Just ask Bremer.



NOMINATED BY:
Tanja Mittag, PhD
Structural Biology

Tanuja Coletta

HUMAN RESOURCES

Hundreds of St. Jude employees flock to the front of the stage, engulfed in the sights and sounds of Judestock that fill the air. As the hustle and bustle swirls around her, Tanuja Coletta can finally take a moment to relax.

Coletta is central to the planning of Judestock and with such uproarious participation from her coworkers, it is no wonder that she takes the lead when it comes time to communicate key employee programs to the institution.

From Judestock to Workday and Milestone anniversary events, Coletta serves as a central hub to the communication plan in ever-evolving projects. From planning to training to implementation, she ensures that employees receive information in a concise and timely manner.

When HR needs an important project communicated, they have a rock star ready to take center stage.



NOMINATED BY:

Jennie Bledsoe
Human Resources





Whitney Foster

GLOBAL PEDIATRIC MEDICINE

“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”

Whitney Foster shows how this quote by *The Little Prince* author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry applies to St. Jude Global Pediatric Medicine.

Efforts to spread the reach of St. Jude to children in far-flung corners of the globe have accelerated dramatically in recent years. Foster is essential to the process. As St. Jude Global creates research infrastructure, builds capacity for patient-centered care, and educates global providers in myriad countries on how to best care for kids with cancer, she and her colleagues have worked together to implement a complex plan.

Foster’s role has her doing everything from organizing Global Alliance meetings to jetting to the Eastern Mediterranean region to scout properties for new regional “hubs” and helping decide how to staff these outposts. Across multiple countries and cultures, she serves as the glue holding many programs and processes together.

Foster’s enthusiasm shows she clearly loves what she’s doing. She knows her actions will ultimately help vulnerable kids today and tomorrow gain access to better care—and offer them a lifetime of possibilities.



NOMINATED BY:

Shari Capers

Strategic Planning & Decision Support

Elizabeth Fox, MD

CLINICAL TRIALS ADMINISTRATION

When Elizabeth Fox, MD, stepped foot on campus in 2020 to oversee clinical trials research administration and strategy, St. Jude was already world-renowned in the field for developing clinical trials for pediatric cancer. Her task? To think even bigger.

It was a monumental challenge, but as the inaugural senior vice president of clinical trials research, Fox took the lead in working collaboratively with scientists and doctors to expand clinical trial operations endeavors to achieve more treatment breakthroughs for kids who need cures.

As she deftly makes her mark, Fox also sets her sights on other ideals. Behind the scenes, she works to ensure St. Jude is an equitable, barrier-free workplace for women to work and lead. She championed the esteemed Women in Leadership and Learning program, mentoring faculty through the six-month course and presenting the program's results to her leadership colleagues.



NOMINATED BY:
James R. Downing, MD
Administration





Brittney Walker

OUTPATIENT CLINICS

The little boy is usually heart-meltingly sweet, but not today. Week after week of dressing changes on his surgical site have worn him down. He's unable to muster patience for another clinician to replace his bandage even once more.

Enter Brittney Walker who might be considered a patient-whisperer.

A pediatric oncology nurse in Outpatient Clinics, Walker changes a lot of dressings. Over the time she's known the little boy, this task has never elicited a single scream. But Walker's colleagues saw a far unhappier version, prompting an SOS call: Could she help?

With a sense of urgency, Walker came to the rescue. She spoke with the patient's family and agreed to do his next dressing change, soothing both the boy and his caregivers. "It was almost like he just needed Brittney to show him it was OK and not so scary," her colleague recalls. Since then, the child has allowed other clinicians at St. Jude to change his dressings without a peep of protest.

For Walker, turning a bad day around is all in a day's work.



NOMINATED BY:
Jenny McWherter
Outpatient Clinics

Fanny Williams

SURGICAL SERVICES

It takes far more than a surgeon's expert skill to provide cutting-edge care to St. Jude children who need surgery. It takes people like Fanny Williams.

As a surgical technician, Williams performs the essential nuts-and-bolts tasks that make surgeries possible. She sterilizes equipment and operating rooms, passes disinfected instruments and supplies to surgeons and handles cells removed during surgery that require lab analysis. It's a role that requires focus and stamina—traits Williams has in rich supply.

However, it's Williams' commitment to St. Jude kids that really shines. Many times over the past year, she has gone above and beyond to display her dedication to be in surgery when emergencies arose. And when a sudden staffing shortage developed, Williams stepped in so everyone on her team could carry on with their life-saving work.

If there's no success without sacrifice, then St. Jude owes much of its success to Williams and others like her.



NOMINATED BY:
Melodie Hoggard
Surgical Services





VALUE

4

Embrace the
challenge to **CREATE**
a new tomorrow.



Kim Allison

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

St. Jude patients are vulnerable to life-threatening infections from bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites, because their compromised immune systems make fighting off these organisms challenging.

Fortunately, the kids here have a dragon slayer in Kim Allison.

As director of clinical trials management in Infectious Diseases, Allison is integral to planning and executing the logistics that drive research aimed at tracking emerging illnesses, understanding antibiotic resistance, and developing unique germ-fighting therapies. Studies are fundamentally better when she's overseeing details about which patients are enrolled, how they're monitored, and who's able to stay in a study until its conclusion.

But this skilled tactician is equally strategic. Allison is always thinking of new ways to improve research processes to foster more accurate, compelling results. She's looking ahead to help create new and better ways to study therapies to combat these organisms that threaten our patients' bright tomorrows.

Allison epitomizes all the dragon slayers who protect St. Jude kids and their futures.



NOMINATED BY:

Diego Hijano, MD
Infectious Diseases

Jared Andrews, PhD

DEVELOPMENTAL NEUROBIOLOGY

When farmers plant seeds, they know what crop will emerge from the soil but may have little idea of the true yield. In the span of a few years, Jared Andrews, PhD, has quickly helped St. Jude reap a cornucopia of benefits in the growing field of data science.

A senior bioinformatics research scientist, Andrews spearheaded BioHackathon events here that draw budding scientists to data science, establish important collaborations, and attract talent to St. Jude. The events challenge students and researchers to build software-based solutions that address real-world needs in just a few days. The KIDS23 BioHackathon, held in May, brought together 84 participants from 20 institutions, five companies and eight countries to work on 13 groundbreaking projects.

Andrews' quiet style belies the burst of energy and dedication he pours into this endeavor, which is set to repeat bigger and better in 2024. By planting the seeds and strategically feeding and watering them, Andrews will certainly net a huge harvest for St. Jude: future treatment pathways for sick kids.



NOMINATED BY:

Gang Wu, PhD
Center for Applied Bioinformatics





Robert Britton

BIOMEDICAL LIBRARY

“You can’t really know where you’re going until you know where you’ve been,” author and activist Maya Angelou told us. At St. Jude, Robert Britton is spurring us toward creating a new tomorrow by encouraging us to look at the past.

Over the past year, Britton has been integral to the St. Jude Historical Archives, a blue-sky project that’s creating a uniform approach to collecting, preserving, and documenting the institution’s past. From offering expertise in library science and metadata to researching other archives in Memphis and afar, Britton’s game-changing efforts have taken the archives from concept to creation.

By connecting St. Jude with archivists at other major cancer centers, Britton’s incisive questions have led to transformative changes in the project’s scope.

More than 60 years ago, Donald Pinkel, MD, took on the challenge to change the lives of thousands of sick children and their families by curing the incurable—acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Britton is making sure those intricate details, among others gathered over the past six decades, leave a lasting legacy for its leaders and pioneers.



NOMINATED BY:
Elizabeth Whittington
Administration

Tiffany Derrick

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Playing “telephone” when we were kids taught us how information can become distorted when passed from one person to many. But that scenario isn’t an option for Tiffany Derrick, who keeps everyone at St. Jude on the same page.

Derrick and her colleagues led efforts to launch the St. Jude Hub, a complex internal network to securely share information and resources that replaced the decade-old intranet. This massive initiative required Derrick to collaborate with groups across campus to pinpoint what each St. Jude staff member might expect and need from such a broad-based tool.

Derrick and her team also developed an exhaustive communications strategy to ensure everyone on campus was aware of the January 2023 launch and could find what they needed on the new Hub. She worked diligently with other departments to migrate data accurately and effectively to the new site, balancing user needs with best practices.

Derrick knew the Hub would only work if employees across St. Jude were kept in the loop and satisfied with the results. By focusing on her colleagues’ success, she embraced the future.



NOMINATED BY:

Jennifer Alessi
Clinical Education & Training





Beth McCarville, MD

DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING

With retirement approaching, Beth McCarville, MD, sidelined her own plans, choosing instead to head Diagnostic Imaging as its interim chair after the unexpected passing of Zoltán Patay, MD, PhD. With 25 years at St. Jude, the radiologist carries bone-deep expertise in CT, MRI and other imaging crucial to diagnosing and treating children's catastrophic diseases. It never escapes her that several hundred St. Jude patients need such testing every day to inform doctors how to best move forward with their care.

Even as she fills a void, McCarville also shepherds her department's capabilities into the future. She led efforts to ensure imaging technology remains leading-edge and continues to pursue excellence in imaging research. McCarville is also exploring new ideas to better support the imaging needs of every department at St. Jude, working long hours to embrace new demands while maintaining her previous responsibilities.

Day by day, McCarville strengthens her colleagues—and supports cures for kids—by putting them first.



NOMINATED BY:
Courtney Sievers, PhD
Diagnostic Imaging

Beth Anne Miller

GLOBAL PEDIATRIC MEDICINE

St. Jude Global is built on the dream of a better tomorrow for all children with cancer and other catastrophic diseases, wherever they may be. Beth Anne Miller's talents are transforming this dream into reality.

As vice president of global operations, Miller helped create an action plan to meet the challenge of extending St. Jude globally. What does it take? A dedicated, organized problem-solver who can both envision the big picture and break it down into meticulous steps. Miller has more than met the moment, working with both team members here and others far and wide to begin establishing new St. Jude regional hubs in Africa, the Middle East and Mexico, with more to follow.

Because of her efforts, the St. Jude Global program is about to reach an important milestone: the launch of a global platform for access to childhood cancer medicines. The children Miller ultimately helps may never know her name or what she's done, but her and her colleagues' work will forever forge their futures.



NOMINATED BY:

Carlos Rodriguez-Galindo, MD
Global Pediatric Medicine





VALUE

5

Work
COLLABORATIVELY
and help others
to succeed.



Hema Devarakonda

OFFICE OF QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY

For some people, harnessing staggering amounts of health care data and displaying results in meaningful ways can be an overwhelming challenge. But Hema Devarakonda approaches this problem at St. Jude with an eye for details and the big picture.

A senior database analyst in the Office of Quality and Patient Safety, Devarakonda intuitively understood that providing and understanding real-time data was never more important than during the pandemic. She used her skills to tell the clinical story with numbers. Devarakonda collaborated with others to track influenza and COVID-19 vaccination rates, helping hospital staff target eligible patients to provide crucial protection for them and others.

Using electronic health records, she also helped design new monitoring reports that enable infection prevention specialists to easily retrieve and present infection risk data, eliminating tedious manual data entry and reducing the risk of errors.

With meticulous effort, Devarakonda never misses an opportunity to make numbers speak by designing systems to prevent infections among St. Jude patients.



NOMINATED BY:

Hana Hakim, MD

Office of Quality and Patient Safety

Kristen Hughes, PharmD

PHARMACY & PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

Medications can't improve a child's health without first passing a fundamental test: Are they safe? For Kristen Hughes, PharmD, this question drives her every effort.

For example: IV infusions—a backbone of drug therapies—have the potential to harm patients when they're linked with debilitating side effects or dangerous dosing errors. Hughes established “guardrails” around this process—literally—by initiating a program of the same name to boost the use of so-called “smart pumps” at St. Jude. Equipped with built-in error reduction software, these pumps represent a linchpin in safer care for St. Jude kids.

With an incredible attention to detail, Hughes accomplished this goal by forming an interdisciplinary group of pharmacists, nurses and informatics experts to gather data to help clinicians understand the need for this software and tracking its use. Her leadership increased the use of these pumps' safety features at St. Jude from 50% to 82%.

Because of Guardrails' success, the group recently set a loftier goal: 85% use. Working collaboratively, Hughes is guarding the mission of St. Jude to save the next child and find the next cure.



NOMINATED BY:

Jennifer Robertson, PharmD
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences





Johns Hopkins
Research Hospital
Living Well

Cornelius “CJ” Johnson

INFORMATION SERVICES

How many virtual meetings did you have on your calendar today? Whether you’re communicating with colleagues across campus or the globe, those virtual encounters tend to go more smoothly because of the very real efforts of Cornelius “CJ” Johnson.

The Information Services collaboration technology specialist has “collaboration” built right into his role—and with good reason. Johnson brings his expertise and broad smile to support technology-enabled meetings, helping staff members not only communicate more effectively but advance the mission of St. Jude.

Setting up and launching meetings and troubleshooting problems in real time are part of what Johnson does every day. While he manages the platforms, participants who forget to mute or unmute, or other technical challenges that could derail a meeting, he empowers attendees to focus on their goals.

His powerful behind-the-scenes position pays off in real dividends for catastrophically ill patients here and around the world.



NOMINATED BY:

Elizabeth Fox, MD
Clinical Trials Administration

Guolian Kang, PhD

BIostatISTICS

Guolian Kang, PhD, intuitively understands that collaboration at St. Jude isn't just about joining people—it also blends different specialties and experiences. For instance, her expertise in statistics and its applications in genetics, genomics and statistical modeling have significantly advanced care for devastating blood disorders such as hemophilia and sickle cell disease.

On top of efforts in clinical trial design and monitoring, Kang has also developed new statistical methods to ultimately identify more effective treatments.

People, of course, are at the heart of it all. Kang demonstrates that through hearty give-and-take sessions with team members and collaborators, encouraging them to share ideas to solve problems and expand innovation. Each collaboration represents an opportunity to both teach and learn. For her, moving forward together paves the highway to success at St. Jude.



NOMINATED BY:

Jeff Gossett
Biostatistics





Janet Towles

ACADEMIC AND BIOMEDICAL OPERATIONS

When opinions are heard, suggestions considered, and ideas valued, everyone feels galvanized to work together for the greater good. Over the past two decades, Janet Towles has perfected those tenets at St. Jude—all for the good of sick kids.

As a business systems manager, Towles leads projects that improve the hospital's efficiency by fueling better data analytics, management and monitoring. But her colleagues also point out that Towles has managed to improve their efficiency and productivity at the same time. This was readily apparent during the recent launch of software designed to produce sweeping benefits, including automating certain administrative tasks, tracking financial data, and reducing costs, all of which can lead to better patient care.

Throughout the detailed process, Towles continually displayed remarkable problem-solving skills, providing valuable insights to her team and leading them toward innovative solutions. Her open-minded approach and receptiveness to others' input has made Towles a consummate collaborator—both approachable and trusted.



NOMINATED BY:

Babu Chandrakesan

Academic and Biomedical Operations

Dana Wallace

CANCER CENTER ADMINISTRATION

Dana Wallace has worn a lot of hats in her three-decade career at St. Jude. But the feather in all of them remains her desire to see others succeed.

Her role as vice president of Cancer Center Administration enables Wallace—who has a wealth of experience collaborating with clinicians and scientists on clinical trial design, analysis and operations—to find creative solutions to challenges by working with a broad range of departments. Her strategic thinking and institution-wide relationships have also been critical to the launch of major initiatives, including the St. Jude Research Collaboratives Program, the Office of Large Grant Development and the Cancer Center-led recruitment of 13 new lab-based faculty.

While Wallace's fingerprints are all over the success of these programs, she would never take all the credit. With trademark kindness and humility, she tips her hat to others, positioning her colleagues for the win so St. Jude kids can win, too.



NOMINATED BY:

Bilqis Rock
Cancer Center Administration





VALUE

6

Always be
RESPECTFUL
of your coworkers,
our patients and their
families, and visitors
to our campus.



John Bailey, JD

OFFICE OF LEGAL SERVICES

Trust. It's a fundamental tenet of providing top-notch care at St. Jude—and a principle John Bailey, JD, upholds every day.

As global privacy officer, Bailey's role centers on protecting patients and families at St. Jude who need to trust that providers are keeping their personal details confidential. This involves both keeping abreast of the many rules and regulations governing the privacy of patient data and advising staff on the best methods to keep patient data safe. His job only gets bigger as St. Jude continues to expand its global presence, swelling the number of privacy laws Bailey needs to understand and guide others to follow.

Trust isn't just good for its own sake, but ripples forward in better outcomes for St. Jude kids. When a patient-provider relationship has trust at its core, patients and their families are more likely to follow their treatment plan and take an active role in care. Bailey's vigilant efforts broadcast that he has the best interests of St. Jude kids at heart.



NOMINATED BY:

Tess Cobb, JD
Office of Legal Services

Anna DeVine

ONCOLOGY

When Maya Angelou said, “Nothing will work unless you do,” she drove home that ideas alone aren’t enough to transform reality. Anna DeVine shows us how that advice can create a powerful sense of belonging for everyone at St. Jude.

Already known for stellar work that led to Nurse of the Year honors and as a founding member of St. Jude PRIDE (People Respecting Individuality, Diversity and Equity), DeVine accepted a new challenge—co-chairing the employee resource group in early 2023. With keen intelligence and trademark compassion, she took on leading group meetings, lent her voice to campus initiatives, and helped spearhead plans big and small for Pride Month celebrations in June.

DeVine’s level head and encouraging spirit helped turn many of the group’s thoughtful ideas into practical reality. Her leadership ensured that educational and celebratory gatherings alike were successful and open to any employee interested in learning, supporting or celebrating during LGBTQ+ events.

As a champion of big ideas, DeVine spotlights diversity and inclusion principles at the core of the St. Jude mission.



NOMINATED BY:

Rebecca Rogers
Pathology





Victor Kea

SECURITY

When Victor Kea says “good morning” to his colleagues at Peabody Place, they know these routine pleasantries are just the beginning of what he has to offer.

The security officer has already become indispensable at the off-campus offices. His familiarity with the Peabody Place building is beyond compare, with an earlier job stationing him there before he joined St. Jude this year. This insight has proven invaluable at many key moments, enabling him to help colleagues as they navigated the intricacies of moving their offices to the new location. During a special project that involved a video shoot, Kea pointed coworkers to the perfect spot—one with great lighting and far from foot traffic—that indelibly improved the end result.

Kea both understands the importance of his job and goes above and beyond to do more and be more to his colleagues. “Good mornings” always lead to good days with him around.



NOMINATED BY:

Teresa Tyler
Human Resources

Tiffany Nason, PharmD

PHARMACY & PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

As a pharmacist, Tiffany Nason, PharmD, knows the importance of the right medications to help sick children get well. But she also understands the power of resilience to help colleagues—vulnerable to stress from undertaking this crucial task—to heal.

Nason has long backed this intuition with action. She's a member of the St. Jude RISE (Resilience in Stress Events) steering committee and among the original group of RISE responders, who offer timely psychological first aid to peers experiencing traumatic patient-related events, such as caring for children who are rapidly declining or have died.

She added to those efforts this year by founding and chairing the Community Culture Committee within Pharmaceutical Sciences, aimed at promoting a positive culture within the department with a specific focus on resilience. The group has created a model approach to achieving this while caring for children with catastrophic diseases, devising plans to support colleagues and implement resilience-focused initiatives.

There's no arguing that the life-giving work of St. Jude can sometimes tax the soul. But Nason's respect for that fact is proving life-altering for her comrades in arms.



NOMINATED BY:

Ellis Neufeld, MD, PhD
Administration





Mona Pollion

FOOD SERVICES

When Mona Pollion delivers meals to St. Jude patients each day, heaping sides of love always share space with the main course.

Pollion makes a point to learn each child's name, becoming a cheerful presence for young patients during trying hospital stays. This care extends to encounters with them in hallways or Kay Kafe, where she chats up "her babies" and displays her willingness to do anything to help them.

Serving up trays of food isn't all that's on Pollion's plate. On one occasion, she was scanning a patient's ID bracelet—standard procedure when delivering meals—only to learn that the tray wasn't meant for that child, and she should not leave it. She could have just apologized and left, but Pollion instead quickly tracked down the problem so the patient could eat.

Pollion's efforts have garnered well-earned admiration, with patients praising her by name. To her, kindness and respect are always on the menu.



NOMINATED BY:
Steven Scranton
Food Services

Kimberly Russell

RESILIENCE CENTER

Kimberly Russell has a knack for showing up when colleagues can really use a shoulder to lean on. But the staff chaplain knows her best weapon to bust stress and boost morale walks on four legs beside her.

Russell, who came to St. Jude in 2013, is the primary handler for Rosalie, a facility dog who's dedicated to supporting St. Jude employees. As part of their work, the duo is constantly walking around campus, leaving a wake of relief and gratitude.

Whether you're having a difficult day on the job or personal problems at home, Russell and Rosalie use their individual and combined talents to forge a meaningful connection. Russell is often seen handing out tiny hourglasses, gently guiding recipients toward calming deep breaths and meditation as sand falls from one end to the other. Rosalie's sweet demeanor is the sugar on top, cheering folks with her wagging tail and wet nose.

Take a breath. Pet a pup. Russell and Rosalie have your back.



NOMINATED BY:

Sarah La Grange

Cellular Imaging Shared Resources





VALUE

7

Make the most of
St. Jude resources, and
be **MINDFUL** of those
who provided them.



Christina Bradley

FINANCIAL PLANNING

“The only way change comes is when you lead by example,” said American entrepreneur Anne Wojcicki. This philosophy is second nature to Christina Bradley.

As vice president of financial planning, Bradley proved ready to dig into the weeds of a recent major software launch. The software—which among other benefits offers real-time visibility into budget and financial data, improving collaboration, and reducing costs—required many team members to implement across many departments.

Transferring key financial information to the new system and ensuring its accuracy might have been a hair-splitting process, but Bradley led it with vigor and good humor. Immersing herself in every aspect of the software’s implementation, she made sure each team member had access to tools and expertise needed to make the transition successful. This saved everyone headaches and armed them for the future.

Bradley’s open, inclusive approach epitomizes leading by example—one that will surely produce affirming ripple effects throughout St. Jude.



NOMINATED BY:

Karen Stokes
Information Services

Carrie Ann Crunk

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Bringing some of the best researchers in the world to St. Jude is like tending a fire that should never burn out. To accomplish that, Carrie Ann Crunk keeps the logs handy.

As a postdoctoral operations administrator, Crunk's efforts are essential for building and maintaining the postdoctoral workforce. Meeting with about 100 prospective postdocs each year, she provides an overview of compensation and benefits, prepares offer letters, and collaborates with faculty, administrators and postdoc candidates to collect required documents.

The process can be extremely detailed, but Crunk fans the flames by performing independent reviews of each hire to consider salary level, funding source, visa needs and start date. Her professionalism was also pivotal during the recent rollout of a new postdoctoral compensation structure that added a category for data science postdocs.

When it's time to renew contracts, Crunk throws yet another log on. Her timely attention to this and all her tasks ensures that talented postdocs can keep their focus where it's needed—on producing transformative research that helps find the next cure.



NOMINATED BY:
Sally McIver, PhD
Academic Programs





Michael Erskine

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Remember that scene in “The Wizard of Oz” where Dorothy pulled the curtain back to reveal who really made everything happen? As manager of digital technology, Michael Erskine is not unlike a wizard when it comes to creating websites that position St. Jude as a global leader.

While it takes only a few keystrokes to access information about our treatments, research and outreach, Erskine’s exhaustive efforts facilitate that ease. Displaying thoughtfulness and tenacity, he maintains relationships across St. Jude that fuel appealing and comprehensive websites providing information to patients, families, clinicians, researchers and everyone else interested in St. Jude.

Erskine’s recent efforts to implement designs and develop the Have More in Memphis project—a website showcasing the city to aid in St. Jude recruitment—paid off in stunning fashion, coming in significantly under budget and drawing almost 70,000 page views to date. Erskine is motivated by the knowledge that his work provides a crucial bridge to promote St. Jude as a leader in health care and research as well as a great place to work. Even Oz’s own wizard couldn’t improve on that.



NOMINATED BY:

Anna Acerra

Strategic Communication, Education and Outreach

Ashley Flory

HEMATOLOGY

As a cellular and molecular biologist, Ashley Flory knows successful research requires paying attention to smaller details. But she's managed to stretch this ability far beyond the cellular level to benefit St. Jude lab colleagues as their lab faces growing pains.

Her arrival earlier this year in the Tsai Lab—which aims to advance genome editing techniques to treat genetic diseases—coincided with a challenging moment: The lab was doubling its workforce and relocating to a new space, requiring a point person to help manage key details. Flory jumped in willingly, ordering materials, coordinating equipment maintenance, and managing the lab as a whole with a resourcefulness and persistence that has awed coworkers.

Despite her extra duties, Flory's own research efforts haven't suffered. She continues to tackle diverse study topics that take aim at devastating blood disorders that can derail young lives, generating valuable data for upcoming publications. With Flory on the team, "one for all and all for one" is a timeless motto she and her colleagues proudly espouse.



NOMINATED BY:

Kiera O'Keefe
St. Jude Graduate School





Kirt Woodruff

HUMAN RESOURCES

Finding cures and saving children can't happen unless St. Jude connects with the best scientists in the field. Kirt Woodruff has made it his personal quest to be the glue that makes that happen.

Woodruff has led efforts to pair great talent with amazing opportunities for growth and success available at St. Jude. Much of his work focuses on identifying promising data science and bioinformatics experts who collect and analyze data to draw solutions that benefit patient care. He's part matchmaker and dealmaker, forming strong relationships with St. Jude teams looking for new hires and job candidates who fit the bill. With a nod to the future, Woodruff also cultivates alliances to bring additional talent to the hospital in the coming months and years.

Woodruff's efforts demonstrate not only his drive but his ability to safeguard St. Jude resources. Because of him, the hospital was able to hire 26 new scientists over the first six months of 2023, saving just over \$1 million. With glue like Woodruff, St. Jude can more easily stick to its mission.



NOMINATED BY:
Laura Hamel, PhD
Human Resources

