Richmond University Medical Center

Emerald Anniversary Gala Celebrates Two Decades of Philanthropy and Commitment to Advancing Healthcare



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The Richmond University Medical Center Foundation's 20th Annual Gala was held on Saturday, November 7.
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From the President
John C. Evanko, MD, MBA, FACOG

As Thanksgiving approaches, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to each of you for your continued dedication to Richmond University Medical Center and, most importantly, to the patients, families, and community we are privileged to serve.

This has been a year of change. At times, it has also been a year of uncertainty. I know that change can bring questions about what lies ahead, and I recognize the impact that uncertainty can have on all of us. Yet through it all, one thing has remained constant: the commitment, professionalism, and resilience of the people who make up RUMC.

And despite the challenges, this has also been a year of progress.

Across our institution, we have continued to strengthen programs, advance patient care, invest in our future, and position RUMC for what comes next. That progress does not happen because of one person, one department, or one initiative. It happens because thousands of people come to work each day with a shared commitment to this hospital and to one another.

That spirit is especially meaningful during Thanksgiving.

I am grateful for our nurses, physicians, and clinical teams who provide compassionate care around the clock. I am grateful for our administrative, operational, and support staff whose work keeps our hospital moving forward every day. And I am grateful for the way our RUMC family continues to support one another, particularly during times of change.

As we look toward the year ahead, there will undoubtedly be more work to do and more challenges to navigate. But I remain confident in our future because in the short time in which I have had the privilege to serve as president, I have seen firsthand what this organization and its people are capable of accomplishing together. We are resilient. We continue to move forward. And we are building a stronger foundation for RUMC and for the community that depends on us.

This Thanksgiving season, I hope you are able to spend time with the people who mean the most to you and reflect on the many things for which we can be thankful. For those who will be here caring for our patients throughout the holiday, please know how deeply appreciated your service and sacrifice are.

On behalf of the entire leadership team and our Board of Trustees, thank you for everything you do for RUMC.

I wish you and your families a safe, healthy and very Happy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

Dr. John C. Evanko
President

Excellence in Residency and Fellowship Program Honoree

Each month, one or more residents or fellows are selected for their exemplary service and for embodying RUMC's commitment to fostering a collaborative culture that enhances patient care and professional excellence. Honorees are nominated by their colleagues and selected by the Office of Graduate Medical Education's Wellness Council.



This month's honoree is Aakriti Parajuli, MD.
Dr. Parajuli is a PGY-3 in the Department of Internal Medicine. She earned her medical degree from Chitwan Medical College in Nepal. Her hometown is Makawanpur, Nepal.

Congratulations to our Employee of the Month:



Anesha Wigant, RN
Assistant Nurse Manager
Ambulatory/Post-Anesthesia Care Unit

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Gala honoree Dom Famulari poses with his wife, Barbara, daughter Dr. Stephanie Famulari, son-in-law Jon Fundaro, and granddaughters Addison and Avery Fundaro

The Richmond University Medical Center Foundation marked a major milestone this year with its 20th Annual Gala, celebrating two decades of philanthropy, partnership, and unwavering commitment to advancing healthcare for the Staten Island community. Held on Saturday, November 7, the Emerald Anniversary Gala brought together over 350 community leaders, physicians, supporters, and friends of the hospital to honor the generosity and dedication that have helped strengthen Richmond University Medical Center's mission of delivering exceptional care close to home.

A highlight of the evening was the recognition of two outstanding individuals whose service and leadership have made a lasting impact on the institution. Dr. Svetoslav Bardarov, Chair of Clinical Laboratories at Richmond University Medical Center, was honored for his contributions to patient care, medical innovation, and clinical excellence. Joining him as an honoree was Dom Famulari, a longtime Foundation Board Member and Chair of the RUMC Capital Campaign, whose steadfast support and visionary leadership have played a key role in advancing important initiatives that benefit patients and families throughout the borough.

As the Foundation celebrates 20 years of giving and community partnership, the gala served as both a reflection on past accomplishments and a look toward the future. Funds raised through Foundation initiatives help support vital programs, technology enhancements, and patient-centered services that ensure Richmond University Medical Center can continue meeting the evolving healthcare needs of Staten Island residents. The Emerald Anniversary Gala was a fitting tribute to the individuals, organizations, and supporters whose generosity has helped shape the hospital's success and will continue to drive its mission forward for years to come.



Gala honoree Dr. Svetoslav Bardarov, Chair of RUMC Clinical Laboratory, poses with his family, Svetoslava Bardarova and Niya Bardarov

Richmond University Medical Center Appoints New Chief Financial Officer



By Cheryl Garber

Richmond University Medical Center announced the promotion of Robert Es-Haq to Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. Es-Haq previously served as Vice President of Finance at RUMC since 2021.

"I am honored to assume the role of Chief Financial Officer and grateful for the opportunity to continue serving RUMC," said Es Haq "I look forward to partnering with our dedicated employees, physicians, and leadership team to strengthen our financial foundation, support strategic growth, and ensure we have the resources necessary to deliver exceptional care to the patients we serve."

Es-Haq is a healthcare finance executive with more than 25 years of experience leading financial strategy, accounting, and revenue cycle operations. He has been recognized for his ability to drive performance improvement, strengthen fiscal discipline, and support mission-driven growth in complex healthcare environments.

"Robert brings extensive healthcare finance experience, and a clear understanding of the important role financial stewardship plays in supporting exceptional patient care," said Dr. John C. Evanko, president of Richmond University Medical Center. "Robert has earned the confidence and respect of his colleagues throughout RUMC. Together with our Board of Trustees and leadership team, Robert will play an important role in strengthening our organization, advancing our strategic priorities, and building a sound and sustainable future for RUMC, while continuing to invest in the people, programs, and services our community depends on."

Before joining Richmond University Medical Center, Es-Haq served as Vice President of Finance for New Jersey Urology/Urology Management Associates and held senior financial leadership roles with Hackensack Meridian Mountainside Medical Center and Emergency Medical Associates.

Es-Haq holds a master's degree in finance from Montclair State University and a bachelor's degree in accounting from Rutgers University. He is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in New Jersey and an active member of the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA).

RUMC Marks National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and is seen as a time to support those battling the disease, celebrate survivors, and remember those with us in spirit. This year, as in years past, Richmond University Medical Center held a flag-raising ceremony. The ceremony was held on October 23 and was attended by staff, some of whom have waged their own personal battle with breast cancer.



Hospital leadership with RUMC's breast cancer awareness flag, which flew throughout the month of October in honor of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month



RUMC Shows Support for Staten Island Nonprofit Community



RUMC's Vice President for External Affairs, Alex Lutz (middle), moderating a panel on AI with Josua Braverman from Tekie Geek (left) and Chris Ferrera of Comserv Connect

On October 22, NonProfit Staten Island held its 14th annual Nonprofit Conference. For the third straight year, Richmond University Medical Center was the leading sponsor of the conference. Over 300 people attended the event, held at the Hilton Garden Inn.

The daylong conference brought together nonprofit leaders for a day of workshops, panel discussions, and networking opportunities intended to strengthen and support organizations and services. Workshops focused on board governance, fundraising, marketing, and incorporating AI into everyday operations.

This year's theme, "Built to Last," reflected the resilience of Staten Island's nonprofit sector and the leadership, partnerships, and innovation needed to build organizations that will continue serving Staten Island for generations to come.

RUMC's Vice President for External Affairs, Alex Lutz, served as Conference Chair for the third year in a row and was moderator for a panel decision on how AI can assist in decision making, workflows, and organizational capacity.

"The challenges facing our communities are complex and constantly evolving. Yet the Staten Island nonprofit sector accomplishes its greatest work when it come together," Lutz said in his opening remarks. "No single organization can solve every issue alone, but together our nonprofits are a network built on tremendous compassion, incredible expertise, and impactful action that changes lives."



RUMC's External Affairs Department providing information on services and programs

NICU Team Gets into Halloween Spirit with Annual Trunk or Treat

The team from our Wayne Zenna Neonatal Intensive Care Unit held their annual trunk or treat event for NICU families. The annual event, held on the hospital campus, is an opportunity to celebrate our NICU graduates and for the families to re-connect with the care teams that provided support to them and their newborns.



From Health Screenings to Hero Awards, RUMC Shines at Annual Health & Wellness Expo



Left to right: SIEDC Executive Director Michael Cusick, Dr. Jessie Saverimuttu, and RUMC's Chief Operating Officer Dr. Jonathan Zipkin



Left to right: Community Heroes ceremony MC Elysa Fein-Cunningham from Community Health Action of Staten Island with Evette Battle and her supervisor Sheena Rogers

By Alex Lutz

On October 16, Richmond University Medical Center was once again a proud sponsor of the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation's Health & Wellness Expo.

Held on the campus of CUNY-College of Staten Island, over 1,000 people visited throughout the day, including students from several local high schools. The students are enrolled in their school's medical technology classes. Information tables, educational seminars, and free health screenings were the features of the event. Highlights of the event included:

- Over 100 free screenings provided by RUMC, including EKGs, blood pressure, glaucoma, lung capacity, and prostate cancer.
- Lung Nurse Navigator Nancy Sayegh-Rooney spoke on the dangers of vaping and importance of tobacco cessation.
- Geriatric medicine overview and when to see a geriatrician was shared by our Medical Director of Geriatric Primary Care, Dr. Aaron Gottesman.
- Lead Recruiter Romeo Smith and Podiatric Resident Dr. William Slattery shared insights with the student audience on how to better prepare for a career in healthcare.
- The Healthcare Hero award was presented to our Director of Infectious Disease, Dr. Jessie Saverimutttu.
- The Community Health Hero award was presented to Evette Battle, a longtime member of the support team for our Head Start Program.
- Our hospital finished first in the Battle of the Fittest Business competition. Our team's steps and exercise minutes were tracked over a one-month period. The team totaled an average of 440,915 points. Congratulations to teammates Joseph Cuozzo, Meredith Gaskins, Cheryl Garber, Maureen Harrington, Alex Lutz, and Michael Ruzzi.
- The Battle's MVP was Joseph Cuozzo, who accumulated the highest earning points of all participants with 725,268 points.



Members of our winning Battle of the Fittest Business team: (l-r) Joseph Cuozzo, Alex Lutz, Meredith Gaskins, and Cheryl Garber

New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Reem Aziz — *Food Service Worker*
Abdallah Aldiabat — *Staff Accountant*
Adam Anoukhayal — *Plumber*
Farhan Asad — *Central Sterile Tech*
Antonette Balatero — *RN*
Stephen Basile — *X-Ray Tech*
Rose-Marie Bondswell — *Nursing Assistant*
Yelitza Calvache — *Benefit Manager*
Kaylin Cancel — *RN*
Bellone Cruz — *RN*
Christa Cucurillo — *Receptionist*
Giuliana Esposito — *RN*
Kristina Ferraro — *Delivery Room Tech*
Ellen Graham — *Admit Clerk*
Joanne Griffin — *Nursing Assistant*
Eileen Hartman — *Social Worker*
Zakee Homes — *Mental Health Tech*
Nikita Jones — *X-Ray Tech*
Vladyslav Karchevskyi — *Central Sterile Tech*
Yasmin Lopez — *Nursing Assistant*
Ida Lopez — *Video EEG Technician*
Elinam Mikoku — *Transporter*
Melissa Millen — *Physician Assistant*
Gabrila Minew — *Supply Chain Contract Ananyst*
Jada Nazon — RN
Nicholas Nikolovienis — *Respiratory Therapist*
Michael Occhiogrosso — *RN*
Jhehannah Perez — *Clinical Informatics Specialist*
Ezekiel Philnert — *Transporter*
Vanessa Roca — *Unit Clerk*
Jaymi Rondolet — *Building Service Worker*
Gabriella Sanz — *Ultrasound Tech*
Salvatore Scarrabaggio — *Building Service Worker*
Jewel Sisodia — *RN - Care Coordinator*
Oyuki Solis — *Supply Chain Coordinator*
Amanda Stueber — *X-Ray Tech*
Jessica Tekle — *Ultrasound Tech*
Pawel Tolpa — *Electrician*
Michael Torrabala — *X-Ray Tech*
Catherine Torres — *RN*
Carolina Torres — *RN*
Daniel Zosayes — *Nursing Assistant*

November Observances

Please join us in acknowledging the following health-related observances for the month of November:

Month-Long:
American Diabetes Month
Bladder Health Month
COPD Awareness Month
Diabetic Eye Disease Month
Stomach Cancer Awareness Month
Lung Cancer Awareness Month
National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month
National Diabetes Month
National Epilepsy Awareness Month
National Family Caregivers Month
National Healthy Skin Month
National Hospice and Palliative Care Month
National Marrow Awareness Month
Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month
Prematurity Awareness Month
Pulmonary Hypertension Month

Week-Long:
November 5 to 11: National Diabetes Education Week
November 8 to 14: National Radiologic Technology Week
November 8 to 14: National Nurse Practitioner Week
November 18 to 24: US Antibiotic Awareness Week
November 22 to 28: GERD Awareness Week

Recognition Days:
November 8: International Day of Radiography
November 9: National Diabetes Heart Connection Day
November 10: World Keratoconus Day
November 11: CTEPH Awareness Day
November 12: World Pneumonia Day
November 14: World Diabetes Day
November 17: World Prematurity Day
November 19: World COPD Awareness Day
November 19: Great American Smokeout
November 20: World Pancreatic Cancer Day
November 22: International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day
November 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
November 26: National Family Health History Day





Gala guests danced the night away to entertainment featuring a percussionist and a saxophone player.



Guests enjoyed a memorable evening celebrating two decades of caring for the community.



The commemorative program for the gala reflected the evening's theme.



RUMC President Dr. John C. Evanko addresses guests.



Medical Staff President Dr. Simon Kokkinakis paid tribute to honoree Dr. Svetoslav Bardarov, highlighting a distinguished career dedicated to clinical excellence and compassionate care.



Live musical performances added excitement and elegance to the gala celebration.