BY MELISSA LOWRIE
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The 2015 Living Well Health Fair was attended by a steady crowd of guests, March 21 at the Big Canoe Fitness Center. In addition to complimentary screenings by Northeast Georgia Health System professionals, there were more than 40 vendors at the event sharing products and information with attendees.

Local business representatives answered questions and provided new ways to enjoy “living well.” The vendors represented all aspects of health and well-being from financial to holistic coaching.

The event is a free annual event. The 2015 Living Well Health Fair was a great success.
Hospice expands services for local area veterans

C

ina Pendley, executive director of the non-profit Georgia Mountains Hospice in Jasper, said the group is continuing to broaden hospice services to area residents, especially veterans.

Pendley, a native of Ellijay and long-time hospice leader, said the organization celebrated its 22nd anniversary in September of last year and is expanding and refining its program to provide more in-depth services to area veterans. “Our veteran population is very important to us,” she said. “We are still the only hospice in the area that has a contract with the Veterans’ Administration.” She said that hospice had enhanced its rating with the VA under NHPCO (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization) guidelines and hopes to increase participation by area veterans. Georgia Mountains Hospice offers nursing support, personal care, physical and speech therapy, plus assistance with medical equipment, supplies and medications. Most importantly, the hospice team provides emotional and spiritual support to the patient along with bereavement and grief support for the family. “A team anchored by professionals, doctors, nurses and social workers, is joined by a staff of volunteers,” said Pendley. “All work toward the basic mission of hospice: to allow end-of-life patients the comfort and care they need along with bereavement and grief support for the family.”

Hospice services are provided at the patient’s residence or at the hospice inpatient facility. Medicare covers up to six months of hospice services and veterans are eligible for expanded services this year. Medicare also covers the costs of home health care, medications and supplies provided by the hospice, and supplies and medications provided at home. Hospice patients may receive up to five days of inpatient care per benefit period. Hospice care is provided twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Hospice of the Southern Highlands offers grief support programs to the family and friends of patients. The group is available by appointment to hospice patients and their families. The group also provides bereavement support to community members who have lost a loved one.

“Identify nighttime bruxing before causing damage

A

though bruxism is a habit that affects scores of people, many don’t realize they suffer from the nighttime condition. When the teeth are unconsciously ground together, the forces they produce can wear down enamel, cause chewing or damage to teeth or dental work (such as veneers or fillings), or even loosen a tooth.

Sometimes, soreness and visible damage alert individuals to grinding habits, other times, a dental professional will notice the evidence of bruxism during an exam or clearing: tooth sensitivity and telltale wear on chewing surfaces. Either way, it’s time to act.

Frequently, individuals don’t think the task, several other methods can be effective. When bruxism is caused by a minor bite problem, we can sometimes do a “minor bite adjustment” in the office. This involves removing a tiny bit of enamel from an individual tooth or teeth to even out the bite. When grinding is severe enough to damage teeth or dental work, we may also recommend a custom-made night guard, for use at bedtime. Comfortable and secure, this appliance prevents teeth from being damaged by contacting one another, and protects your jaw joints from stresses due to bruxing.

I want to help people achieve a high level of energy and a high quality of life. I want them to feel better so that they can enjoy life more. I feel I can do that by incorporating a natural health regimen based on bioenenergetic feedback technology.”

Tuscan Sun Wellness Center treats the ‘whole’ patient

Tuscan Sun Wellness Center treats the ‘whole’ patient

“Those who enjoy good health are rich” is an old Italian proverb and while Big Canoe resident Sandi McGriff of Tuscan Sun Wellness and Wellness Center is certainly not Italian, she does want to spread the wealth.

As a young student at Georgia Southern working toward a degree in exercise science and later, as a physical therapist assistant working in several Atlanta hospitals, Sandi couldn’t help but notice how bad the general level of health was for her patients. Their overall condition unrelated to the injury or malady that they were seeking treatment for was alarmingly low. “I was seeing up close how sick everybody was and I gradually became aware that something was missing in traditional approaches to health care,” she said.

At that time time was headed for a master’s degree in occupational therapy when she became more and more interested in natural health. Sandi then decided to become a massage therapist, and later became certified as a lymphedema Therapist.

Sandi has been treating lymphedema patients for the past 12 years and has incorporated natural and holistic health methods with her therapy. After seeing positive results with her patients, she has continued to pursue her path in holistic medicine.

Sandi’s practice has evolved to incorporate Bioenergetic Medicine as a way of bringing optimal health and wellness to her patients. “Everyone can benefit from Bioenergetic medicine, it allows us to eavesdrop into the body to see what it needs to heal. The body absolutely can heal itself if given what it needs,” she said.

Sandi attended the International College of Bioenergetic Medicine in Atlanta where she obtained her certification as a holistic health practitioner and Bioenergetic Specialist and Wellness Consultant. As the owner of Decatur based Tuscan Sun Massage and Wellness Center for the past nine years, she has focused on the philosophy of nurturing the “whole self” to promote optimal health and longevity. When Sandi attended Tuscan Sun Wellness Center treats the ‘whole’ patient

WELLNESS CENTER

Tuscan Sun Wellness Center, located at 6365 Hwy 9 in Big Canoe, is a full-service wellness center that provides natural health care services to patients of all ages.

The center offers a wide range of services, including massage therapy, bioenergetic consultation, nutrition counseling, and yoga classes. The goal of the center is to help patients achieve optimal health and wellness through a holistic approach that addresses the mind, body, and spirit.

Some of the services offered at Tuscan Sun Wellness Center include:

- Massage therapy
- Bioenergetic consultation
- Nutrition counseling
- Yoga classes
- Other wellness services

The center’s philosophy is to provide a holistic approach to health and wellness, focusing on the whole person rather than just treating specific symptoms. The center’s mission is to help patients achieve optimal health and wellness and to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for all.

For more information on Tuscan Sun Wellness Center, visit their website at tuscanwellness.com or call 770-893-2340.
Medical Plaza 400 offers convenient range of medical specialties in Dawsonville

Medical Plaza 400 is conveniently located at 108 Prominence Court off Highway 400, just north of Highway 53, and it offers a range of medical specialties for residents in Dawsonville and along the 400 corridor, bringing the award-winning services of Northeast Georgia Health System closer to home.

Services include:
- Urgent care, open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily;
- an all-digital Imaging Center, including in-house MRI and CT, with an on-site, American College of Radiology (ACR) board-certified radiologist;
- HealthLink Laboratory;
- physician specialists from a range of specialties including family medicine, internal medicine, sports medicine, gastroenterology, neurology, general surgery and urology.

According to Jo Brewer, Medical Plaza 400 administrative director, business has been booming.

“Patients have grown accustomed to the convenient services offered at Medical Plaza 400,” says Brewer. “While we have been in this community for decades through our Northeast Georgia Physicians Group office, Medical Plaza 400 has given us the platform to build an even bigger presence in this market and bring even more services to the area. We have been so pleased to see our volumes grow, as patients come to rely on the high quality services we provide.”

Northeast Georgia Physicians Group (NGPG) offers a dedicated family medicine practice through the services of Katia Adams, M.D.; Paul Behrmann, M.D.; and Ernst Nieuwoudt, M.D. At NGPG Dawsonville, this group of expert physicians provide management of acute and chronic diseases, minor surgical procedures, spider vein sclerotherapy, and routine physicals.

NGPG Dawsonville also offers the services of Dr. William Primos, a new sports medicine physician with NGPG Orthopedic Surgery & Sports Medicine, who brings over 20 years of pediatric, adolescent and adult sports medicine experience to the community. Dr. Primos is seeing patients in the Dawsonville practice, Suite 200. He provides comprehensive sports medicine services to beginner ballerinas, little league baseball players, high school and college athletes to weekend warriors to golf and tennis enthusiasts. Dr. Primos’ services include joint injections, customized orthotics, simple fracture care, osteoarthritis care, care for sprains and strains and more. When he’s not in the office, Dr. Primos will be on the sidelines working with athletes at Dawson County High School, Lumpkin County High School and Truett McConnell College.

Established and trusted providers J. Taylor Henson, M.D., and Dawn Sosebee, M.D., RN, FNP-BC, are accepting new patients at NGPG Dawsonville Internal Medicine and provide routine and preventive health evaluations, immunizations and physicals for patients ages 17 and older. Please call 706-344-6952 to schedule an appointment.

“Through our sophisticated electronic medical records system, patients have seamless access to the award winning services of Northeast Georgia Medical Center,” says Brewer.

Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) recently was named Georgia’s #1 Hospital by Carechex, a national healthcare ratings organization, and was again named the #2 Hospital in the Nation by Truven Health Analytics. This is the fourth time, and third year in a row, NGMC has been named a 100 Top Hospital, and is one of only 20 Large Community Hospitals across the country, and the only Large Community Hospital in Georgia, to make the list.

“Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) recently was named Georgia’s #1 Hospital by Carechex, a national healthcare ratings organization, and was again named the #2 Hospital in the Nation by Truven Health Analytics.”

Medical Plaza 400 connects residents along the 400 corridor to the award-winning services of Northeast Georgia Medical Center, named Georgia’s #1 Hospital for 2014 and one of the nation’s 100 Top Hospitals.
Manor House in the Meadow allows seniors to continue independent, yet carefree, lifestyle

There is probably no other senior living facility in the world that features Katahdin Hair sheep as an amenity. That distinction belongs exclusively to Rock Creek Manor, a senior living home tucked away on six bucolic acres located between Jasper and Ball Ground. The sheep and two guard donkeys doing security duty against dogs and coyotes are just one example of the creative approach the staff brings to making Rock Creek Manor an interesting and scenic place for seniors to live. The flock, including several lambs, was purchased from a local farmer and turned out to pasture in the rolling hills between the Rock Creek Manor assisted living facility and The Manor in the Meadow, a second building made up of rental apartments for more independent seniors.

Many of the rooms in both buildings overlook the field and afford residents a great view of the fenced pasture and mountains in the background. The animals, especially the lambs, have proven very popular with the residents and a huge hit with grandchildren of all ages. The Katahdin Hair Sheep is a breed developed near Mt. Katahdin in Maine, the northern terminus of the Appalachian trail which begins on Springer Mountain in nearby Amicalola Falls State Park. The "hair" portion of their official name refers to the fact that these sheep are not shorn or bred for their wool.

Turning the conversation away from sheep and more toward what other benefits Rock Creek has to offer its residents, owner Christine VanderWalt who runs the home with husband Nico, points to the relatively small size of her facility, just 37 rooms, as a positive. "We have found that keeping the facility small has allowed us to maintain a high level of individualized care for our residents," she said. "The low number of residents also is conducive to more of a family feeling among those who live here." The main building is composed of 30 rooms dedicated to residents who require assisted living. A second building, The Manor House in the Meadow, is made up of rental apartments suitable for residents who are capable of a more independent lifestyle. Opened in December of last year, it features six rental apartments plus a larger penthouse suite.

"We have found that keeping the facility small has allowed us to maintain a high level of individualized care for our residents," she said. "The low number of residents also is conducive to more of a family feeling among those who live here." The main building is composed of 30 rooms dedicated to residents who require assisted living. A second building, The Manor House in the Meadow, is made up of rental apartments suitable for residents who are capable of a more independent lifestyle. Opened in December of last year, it features six rental apartments plus a larger penthouse suite. Rock Creek Manor is a little over a mile west of Hwy 515 and the I-575 corridor enabling easy access to medical and professional facilities in Canton and the North Atlanta suburbs. Most importantly, it is 5.1 miles and just six minutes to Piedmont Mountainside Hospital and its nearby medical offices.

"We actually have had quite a bit of interest in our new independent living rental apartments at the Manor House in the Meadow. Established residents there will receive priority should they decide it is time for them to move to our assisted care facility," Christine said. Two units plus the penthouse are available for independent living seniors who do not require a high level of assistance. These are rental units that fall under the firm’s simplified all-inclusive monthly fee schedule.

We have one monthly rate for living at Rock Creek Manor," she said. "There are no surprises or confusing levels of care and no phone or cable bills."

Monthly rates for the independent living rental apartments cover three meals a day, daily housekeeping services and all utility bills including phone and cable charges. Residents have full run of the outdoor patio and terraces overlooking the pastures. The feeding station for the animals is situated close to this area so residents can get a good view.

There is also a garden area outside and gathering lounge off a small lobby inside. Residents have access to spiritual services, a full-service beauty salon and transportation is made available for local shopping and doctor appointments. A private elevator serves the penthouse.

Assisted care residents in the main building receive all of these services plus assistance with bathing, dressing and grooming, medication management and an array of services and activities designed to keep residents as busy and occupied as they want to be.

"I am very involved in "A Safe Place for Nana," a free placement service to help families in their search for a suitable facility. "We can assist families based on physical need, location and finances," she said. "We can’t help everyone at Rock Creek Manor for any number of reasons but I make it a point to tour all the facilities in the metro-Atlanta area, so I can make informed recommendations."

THE MANOR HOUSE IN THE MEADOW

The Manor House in the Meadow is currently available for rental. Rock Creek’s all inclusive monthly fee covers all meals, daily housekeeping and laundry service and all utilities. A private elevator serves this luxurious second-floor residence which has a stunning view of the home’s acre view and resident sheep and resident flock of sheep.
Not just a cosmetic problem, varicose veins require treatment to avoid complications

The computer age has made it clear that people who sit for long periods without moving, like in front of a computer screen, are also at risk for various vein conditions.

Most people think about varicose veins as mostly a cosmetic issue but, left untreated, they can progress to a more serious form of venous disease that leads to chronic leg pain, throbbing, swelling and, in advanced cases, the formation of blood clots.

One of the more widespread medical conditions in this country, it is estimated that some 30 million Americans suffer from some form of vein disease with 50 percent of those over 50 having varicose veins.

But, according to Lea Anne Edwards of the North Georgia Vein Institute in Cumming, women are much more likely to seek early treatment largely due to cosmetic considerations since their legs are more on display. She says men are much more likely to ignore symptoms and delay treatment until the disease is far more advanced.

“She wears pants and don’t worry as much about cosmetics,” she said. “Often, when we get men in here, they are the worst. They’ve walked around with horrible veins for years and don’t come in until their symptoms force them to get treatment.”

The North Georgia Vein Institute in Cumming specializes in treating vein disorders. Dr. Peter Wrobel, M.D., is the medical director who heads up a team of the most experienced and trained in the latest procedures – from radio-frequency ablation to phlebectomy and sclerotherapy.

Signs of varicose veins are not always clearly visible as discolored cord-like structures on the surface of the skin. “Depending on the severity you may not see varicosity. It may be a deep thing that doesn't show, yet the symptoms of aching, fatigue and restless legs are present,” Edwards said.

In explaining the disease, she said that the circulatory system is made up of arteries and veins. Arteries distribute oxygen-rich blood to the lungs and throughout the body while veins return oxygen poor blood back toward the heart. Fighting gravity, veins in the feet and legs accomplish this feat with a system of one-way valves that prevent blood from flowing backwards.

These valves are like little flippers so when a vein wall is damaged, it expands out and the little flippers are pulled apart. Blood flows through these gaps and starts pooling in various parts of the vein,” Edwards said. This is failure to keep blood circulating that results in varicose and spider veins.

It is generally understood that people who spend long hours on their feet are prone to varicose veins and other venous diseases. The computer age has made it clear that people who sit for long periods without moving, like in front of a computer screen, are also at risk for various vein conditions.

“The angle of the body when sitting compresses major veins in the legs and this constant compression is what does the damage,” she said. New mothers are also frequent victims due to weight gain during pregnancy and post-partum bleeding.

“People who spend long hours on their feet should see a vascular specialist if they experience tiredness, aching, fatigue and swelling,” Edwards said.

New patients at the Vein Institute are brought in for an initial screening and a history of their vein problems and past treatment is taken. This is followed by a visual exam and then a very short ultrasound scan. If the scan indicates there is “reflux” or pooling of the blood in a vein, a comprehensive diagnostic ultrasound is scheduled. Strict protocols are followed to meet insurance company requirements. Private insurance companies and Medicare typically cover most vein procedures.

Procedures usually take from 30- to 45-minutes and are done on an outpatient basis utilizing local anesthesia. “The patient walks in and walks out,” says Edwards. She says Dr. Wrobel utilizes radio-frequency ablation. A fine needle is introduced to the vein. The incision is so small it does not require stitches to close. A butterfly bandage suffices. The vein is “ablated” and allowed to die and be naturally absorbed by the body over time.

As part of the healing process, blood vessels establish new pathways around the ablated vein. The vein is “ablated” and allowed to die and be naturally absorbed by the body over time. As part of the healing process, blood vessels establish new pathways around the ablated vein. The vein is “ablated” and allowed to die and be naturally absorbed by the body over time. As part of the healing process, blood vessels establish new pathways around the ablated vein.

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The practice not only removes unsightly varicose veins from legs but also offers a complete line of medical spa services. Patients can select Botox and Juvéderm® for facial wrinkles and Latisse by Allergan for thicker lashes. North Georgia Vein Institute is also an authorized dealer of JUZO® compression hosiery for men and women for use following vein procedures.

Patient response to all procedures has been overwhelmingly positive. The practice recently received the most votes in its category in the “Best of Forsyth” promotion sponsored by the Forsyth County News.

North Georgia Vein Institute
Services: Treatment for vein disorders
Address: 4415 Front Nine Dr., Suite 600, Cumming, Ga. 30040
Phone: 678-513-1600
Web site: NorthGeorgiaVeins.com

Not just a cosmetic problem, varicose veins require treatment to avoid complications.
People are living longer than their predecessors. Unfortunately, as they get older, many folks are experiencing “growing pains” when it comes to their dental health. That morning coffee for the past 30 years may have taken a toll on the brightness of a person’s smile. Bone resorption may change someone’s facial structure and thus their overall appearance. Medical conditions can alter the integrity of a person’s jaw and teeth, making it difficult to eat.

Fortunately, prosthodontists are trained to tackle these challenges. Prosthodontics, a dental specialty recognized by the American Dental Association, deals with the restoration and replacement of missing, broken or severely worn and/or discolored teeth. Prosthodontists are not only experts in cosmetic dentistry but also specialists in restoring the optimum function of the teeth and mouth, no matter how complex the underlying condition. This expertise is achieved by completing an additional three years of training following dental school.

Dr. Emily Y. Chen is a prosthodontist in Woodstock. Dr. Chen earned her degree in dental surgery and prosthodontics certificate at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Before opening her own practice, she was an assistant professor in the Oral Rehabilitation Department at the Medical College of Georgia. Dr. Chen is currently a spokesperson for the American College of Prosthodontists. “No case is too big or too small because my focus is on the oral health of my patients,” says Dr. Chen, who treats cases ranging from tooth whitening and simple cleanings to crowns, implants or veneers, to full-mouth reconstruction including dentures and partials. “Advanced Dental Restorations is special in that Dr. Chen and her staff strive to personalize the care of their patients. It is a low-volume practice where each patient is allotted ample time for a comprehensive exam, as well as opportunities for discussion and education. Dr. Chen and her staff go above and beyond to educate patients about oral health maintenance and the relationship between general medical health and oral health. “I am committed to giving my patients the healthiest mouth possible,” she adds. Patients frequently express the sense of caring they feel at Advanced Dental Restorations from the first moment they enter the Woodstock office. “We want each patient who comes to us to know how committed we are to them,” says Dr. Chen.

Dr. Emily Chen helps restore optimum function of the teeth and mouth.

Renasant Bank provides for all banking needs

With mortgage rates lower than ever, now is the time to make your dreams reality. In good times and bad, the team at Renasant takes time to listen to their client’s needs. Whether it’s a first-time home buying experience for newyards, a refinance or remodel on an existing home, or the building of a dream home for retirement, the professionals at Renasant will guide you through the process. With more than 10 years experience, mortgage banker Donna Torres has a diverse banking background including consumer, construction and business products. “We participate in a vast array of home lending products,” Torres said. “Many times people can be overwhelmed by options. They need someone who will listen and help them make the best choice for their situation. We understand it’s not a one-size fits all proposition.”

The professionals at Renasant Bank help clients prepare for the future with a variety of retirement and investing options. Options CDs, IRA, and many other wealth management services. The knowledgeable staff can guide you through the planning process. The types of mortgages and bank products offered are wide ranging, so clients get what is right for them.

Renasant Bank Branch Manager Kay Lawrence said, “Our bank is here for you from birth through estate planning.”

Make an appointment with a Renasant banker today. Let them help you achieve your goals and realize your dreams.

Willow Lake offers new senior living community

The Villas at Willow Lake in Cumming provide a unique senior living community—the first of its kind in Georgia. The property, just open in March, features 46 two-bedroom, two-bath villas with a choice of three floor plans. Each villa is approximately 1,600 square feet on one level with a one-car garage.

With a personal care home license, Willow Lake offers residents the option of living together while one or both receives assistance with daily activities. The 24-hour on-site care makes this independent senior living community a first in the state. Elizabeth Zylstra, executive director at The Villas at Willow Lake, says there are state-of-the-art smoke and sprinkler systems in each villa and all are ADA adaptable.

The Villas at Willow Lake feature a community center with a full-service dining room. Meal options can include up to three nutritionally-balanced meals a day, seven days a week. Residents have access to a zero-entry indoor saltwater pool, a library, and other luxury amenities. There is a full-time activities coordinator providing social activities and health and wellness classes. A therapy area is also available on the property.

The attention to detail in all aspects of the community, from walking trails around the lake to the beautifully appointed villas, make sure the comfort and enjoyment of the residents are paramount.

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Willow Lake Senior Living offers new senior living community

The Villas at Willow Lake in Cumming provide a unique senior living community—the first of its kind in Georgia. The property, just open in March, features 46 two-bedroom, two-bath villas with a choice of three floor plans. Each villa is approximately 1,600 square feet on one level with a one-car garage. Willow Bank help clients prepare for the future with a variety of retirement and investing options. Options CDs, IRA, and many other wealth management services. The knowledgeable staff can guide you through the planning process. The types of mortgages and bank products offered are wide ranging, so clients get what is right for them.

Renasant Bank Branch Manager Kay Lawrence said, “Our bank is here for you from birth through estate planning.”

Make an appointment with a Renasant banker today. Let them help you achieve your goals and realize your dreams.
Heart disease is still the number one killer of women. One out of three die of cardiovascular diseases."

Statistics show 90% of all women have one or more known risk factors associated with heart disease.
McDonald family ministering to neighbors at Cumming, Dahlonega funeral homes

N
ow is a good time to think about what we’re told is life’s two inevitabilities, and one of them is due April 15. Everyone hopes the other is in the distant future, but it’s never too soon to plan the way one departs. Regardless of providential timing, Dahlonega Funeral Home and McDonald & Son Funeral Home and Crematory in Cumming will be there to honor the lives and memories of loved ones with professional, comprehensive services.

The McDonald family has been serving other North Georgia families at the Cumming location for 18 years and at the Dahlonega facility for almost five years. The family-to-family connection makes all the difference, says Lauren “Bubba” McDonald Jr. – known statewide for his service on the Georgia Public Service Commission – and Lauren III’s wife, Claire, co-owner and office manager. They and their staff of funeral experts have established relationships with many North Georgia families who rely upon the McDonalds during times of loss.

“Our goal is personalization,” says McDonald. “We’re there to serve families and provide a ministry to each person. We work 24/7/365 – we never close. It’s a calling for our people, who love helping families through the toughest time of their lives.”

Unusual circumstances led to the McDonalds’ ministry to the North Georgia community. McDonald was attending the University of Georgia on a Phillip Morris scholarship that required seniors to work for legislative leaders, and he opted for the late Speaker Tom Murphy, later Speaker Pierre Howard. On a ride to Sen. Wayne Garner’s Cartersville funeral home, Garner turned to him and said: “You’d make a good funeral director,” inspiring new career consideration.

After graduation, McDonald began a year in mortuary school and was part of about 2,400 funeral services the next two years at two of Georgia’s largest funeral homes: A.S. Turner in Decatur and Striffler/Hamby in Columbus. “As an apprentice, you work a lot of hours and sleep at the funeral home,” he said.

A computer at UGA’s Small Business Center indicated that the Cumming area would be a good place to hang his shingle, “and the community has been very supportive,” McDonald said. “We started at zero and we’ve grown to where we are today.”

The two locations share staff, responding to needs at both.

Staff members include a family service counselor and pre-arrangement specialists to help families understand wills, estate planning and medical advance directives, and licensed insurance agents on staff expedite paperwork.

“Families can make good decisions together [with pre-planning]. It gives them time to think through the celebration they want to have,” says McDonald.

“Each family is unique,” he says. “We get to know families and help them understand about the celebration of life. The process of grieving is unique to each individual we serve, and our goal is to provide a meaningful experience to every family.”

“Pre-planning just makes sense, considering costs lock in current pricing. Pre-planning avoids family embarrassment, grief, obligations, and other needs are being met, for the living,” he says. “They celebrate the life lost, and it’s a support group that brings families together.”

“Family service counselors who are family members present, informs “visitation rooms, and an honored man’s pickup truck with boat attached has been parked outside. McDonald encourages families not to forget celebrations to remember the departed. “Funerals are for the living,” he says. “They celebrate the life lost, and it’s a support group that brings families together. Funerals don’t divide families; they bring them together.”

“My Dad jokes that he wants his service next week so he can see who comes.”

Families can make good decisions together,” says McDonald. “It gives them time to think through the celebration they want to have.”

Pre-planning is free with no obligation. “We have a funeral home on each side of Big Canoe, as the crow flies,” he adds. “Forsynth, Dawson, Pickens and Lumpkin counties are in a very desirable area with the North Georgia mountains, and the population has grown. [Highways] 400 and 575 are corridors to beauty.”

Services The McDonalds provide three facets of service to their neighbors: pre-planning, funeral services and after-care.

Pre-planning just makes sense, says McDonald. People carefully plan for weddings, vacations, children’s education, etc., so why wouldn’t they make arrangements for their final disposition? Pre-planning, especially with family members present, informs everyone of the planner’s wishes for life celebration service content, medical directives, burial or cremation preferences, etc., and those who wish to pre-pay funeral costs lock in current pricing.

Pre-planning also avoids family disagreements because the loved one’s wishes are known. And there is time to consider decisions rather than having grieving family members make them under duress. Copies of pre-planning paperwork remain at the funeral home for families to access immediately.

Families can make good decisions together,” says McDonald. “It gives them time to think through the celebration they want to have.”

Pre-planning is free with no obligation. "Families can make good decisions together," says McDonald. "It gives them time to think through the celebration they want to have."
“The future of cancer treatment is here. And it’s only available at WellStar.”

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Though its name may conjure up images of scalpels and surgery, the CyberKnife Robotic Radiosurgery System involves no cutting. For many patients, the CyberKnife treatment can offer a noninvasive alternative to surgery for the treatment of both cancerous and non-cancerous tumors. The CyberKnife System is composed of a radiation delivery device, called a linear accelerator (or Linac), which is mounted on a robotic arm. The flexibility of the robotic arm enables CyberKnife to deliver radiation to tumors anywhere in the body. It also utilizes sophisticated software and advanced imaging to track tumor and patient movement and adjust the beams of high dose radiation to ensure treatment is delivered with a high degree of accuracy. Because of this exceptional tracking ability, CyberKnife eliminates the need for patients to have stabilizing frames on their head or limit their breathing during treatment to minimize movement of the tumor. The future of cancer treatment is here. And it’s only available at WellStar.

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S E N I O R C A R E

Insulation for improved air quality and lower energy bills

S outhern Foam and Coating Insulation has been serving the insulation needs of builders and property owners in the area for 13 years. With a focus on quality products and excellent service, the staff at Southern Foam and Coating Insulation (SFC) is committed to helping customers lower energy costs while improving indoor air quality. SFC uses Icynene, the leading spray foam insulation and air barrier material. The water-blown products improve air quality in homes and sets the standard for energy performance. As many homes in Big Canoe are built on crawlspaces, allergens including mold and mildew accumulate and penetrate into the living space. SFC treats crawlspaces by encapsulating the area, including the ducts and mechanical, sealing the space. This treatment makes a tremendous difference for those who suffer with allergies or asthma. Often, a rigid foam is used in wet crawl areas.

Icynene is also used in attic spaces. Fiberglass insulation was never meant to be an air-barrier, and when it ages, it gaps where air can enter. Icynene is a spray foam, non-surgical option for patients with inoperable or surgically complex tumors.

LivHOME is available to serve 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can be assured that a professional stands by you every step of the way. Live long, live well. LivHOME®

Chris Foster, CSA

LivHOME Atlanta
Contact: Chris Foster, CSA, Gerontologist • Phone: 770-890-5820
Website: LivHOMEatlanta.com • Email: chrisf@livhome.com

“In-home senior care, one client, one family at a time”

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Fran Nicholson, a woman in Milton, Georgia found herself at a crossroads this summer when she learned that she had life-threatening cancer. Again.

Fran, a 52-year-old veterinarian and her husband, William are both professionals in the medical field. But despite their extensive knowledge, Fran was baffled: what was the best way to fight cancer this time?

Fran’s Atlanta oncologist discovered colorectal cancer in the spring of 2013 and performed a colectomy, a surgery that removed a large piece of her intestine. Given her early stage disease, the physician didn’t believe the cancer had spread to other parts of her body, and did not recommend chemotherapy or radiation.

A little more than a year later, Fran had a fever on a Sunday and went to urgent care for a nasal swab and a chest X-ray to rule out walking pneumonia.

Fran wasn’t prepared for what the X-ray found: tumors in her lungs. Fran met with Michael Andrews, M.D., chief cancer officer for the WellStar Cancer Network, who requested her CT scans and X-rays from previous months for his review. When she picked up her former radiology report from the Atlanta hospital, she could not believe what it showed.

“Those nodules were on my radiology and CT scan, but no one had ever told me,” Fran said. “I was really upset.”

Before she even arrived at the WellStar STAR Cancer Clinic, she felt defeated.

“I handed them all these papers and I said, ‘I’m really scared. It sounds like it’s all over,’” she remembered.

Dr. Andrews determined Fran’s colorectal cancer had spread: there was a nodule on each lung. A PET scan showed no evidence of cancer elsewhere in her body, but still left Fran with a difficult diagnosis. Dr. Andrews developed a treatment plan that involved surgically removing the cancerous nodules followed by six months of chemotherapy.

As a vet, she often relies on second opinions for complex cases. She approached her own treatment path the same way, taking her test results to her original oncologist in Atlanta. The physician had a different opinion.

Dr. Andrews developed a treatment plan that involved surgically removing the cancerous nodules followed by six months of chemotherapy.

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Fran had the lung nodules removed in a minimally invasive procedure utilizing a thoracoscope by William (Bill) Mayfield, M.D., a thoracic surgeon and WellStar chief surgical officer.

“The experience was very, very good and it felt like all the doctors were talking to each other which was unusual,” Fran said. “I have a high level of confidence in Dr. Andrews and Dr. Mayfield. I felt like I had a whole team.”

The nursing team at WellStar Kennestone Hospital also exceeded her expectations.

“They care. He’s a family member or a neighbor that’s sick,” she said. “That’s the difference if you’re facing death. You want it to be a neighbor that’s taking care of you.”

Since surgery, Fran’s cancer is deemed stage 4 “NED,” which stands for “no evidence of disease.” She is undergoing chemotherapy to target microscopic cancer that may have remained in her body.

Fran’s current focus is on fighting cancer while spending time with her husband, daughter and animals. She’s taken up painting watercolor folk art of animals and consults on veterinary cases.

Dr. Andrews and Dr. Mayfield are just two of the specialists who are helping patients access expertise from some of the world’s preeminent specialists while saving them time, money and unnecessary travel outside of the community.

WellStar Health System
Services: Healthcare
Address: 710 Sawyer Rd, Marietta, Ga. 30062
Phone: 770-816-5555
Website: wellstar.org
most people don’t have to lead diminished lives because of hearing difficulties, but surprising numbers do. The National Audiology and Hearing Health Centers are improving the lives of area residents who have discovered, and continue to trust, their medical expertise and state-of-the-art hearing technology. "It’s not your grandfather’s hearing aid," says Steve Woodward, director and CEO for the company’s two locations. Rather than a “one-size-fits-all” proposition, the best hearing technology today can be specifically programmed and sized for each individual, making a profound difference in comfort and auditory discrimination.

What saddens Doctors of Audiology Deborah Woodward at the Johns Creek location and Jan Henriques in Woodstock is that so many people with hearing loss probably don’t know they have options that will significantly improve their lives. Or for various reasons choose not to take advantage of them.

U.S. statistics from the National Institutes of Health tell a story. On one hand, 15 million adults age 18-64 have less than 20/20 vision, and 85 percent of them wear corrective glasses or contacts to see better. On the other hand, 26 million age 18-64 have mild to profound hearing loss, but only 16 percent of them wear assistive hearing technology.

Confounding this disparity, many of those who have tried hearing aids were dissatisfied with the way they were fit, or the way they felt, gave up, and put them away.

"Nine out of 10 first-time users do not consult with an actual audiologist and/or choose based solely on price," says Steve Woodward. "Many times they either buy sound amplifiers marketed as “hearing aids” online or from TV infomercials and magazine ads. The purchase aids in retail storefronts, infomercials and magazine ads, "hearing aids" online or from TV infomercials and magazine ads, purchase aids in retail store fronts with ‘Hearing Aids’ above the door or in warehouse club stores next to the tires and office supplies where the technician is sitting."

Those who realize sooner or later that professional audiologists and personalized technology make all the difference “end up being patients for life,” he says.

“When seeking help, your choices LITERALLY run from seeing a doctor that specializes in patient hearing care to a salesperson with no formal training,” he adds. Like fingerprints, no two ears are the same, even on the same person, and a doctor of audiology can determine what is “missing” in individual ranges of hearing and properly compensate.

FACT – there are more adults age 35-55 needing help than those 56-80. Those who believe “I hear what I need to hear” literally don’t know what they’re missing and how it negatively affects quality of life. Both young and old are sometimes reluctant to consider hearing aids, thinking they might make them look older, weaker or less than normal. But 90 percent of devices used today are almost invisible and won’t be noticed unless the wearer points them out.

"Another leap forward has been the very successful extended-wear option," says Dr. Deborah Woodward. Those units are invisible to others, can be worn 24/7 and have no batteries to charge. “If you have a mild to moderate hearing loss, this cutting-edge option may be right for you.”

Hearing affects EVERYTHING between the ears, whose sound becomes information with meaning. When sound signals from ears are compromised, the brain works harder to fill gaps, taking its toll. Brains hear – not ears.

Dr. Jan Henriques

Dr. Deb Woodward

Healing affects EVERYTHING between the ears, whose sound becomes information with meaning. When sound signals from ears are compromised, the brain works harder to fill gaps, taking its toll. Brains hear – not ears.

In Johns Creek and Woodstock, hearing and proper compensation.

Dr. Deb Woodward, in Johns Creek and Woodstock, offers revolutionary pricing with initial costs often 30 percent to 40 percent less than other places because patients can choose to pay only for hearing aids and not the 3-5 years of services “bundled” into the price. “We let our patients ‘unbundle’ services. This method allows you the ability to afford a more premium product than traditionally offered,” says Steve Woodward.

Complete diagnostic testing is provided along withinnitus (ringing in the ear), vertigo and ear wax management. All major insurance plans are accepted, and no-interest finance plans are available.

North Georgia Audiology & Hearing Aid Center
Address: 203 Woodpark Place, Suite B-100, Woodstock, Ga. 30188
Phone: 770-420-8948
Address: 4045 Johns Creek Parkway, Suite B, Johns Creek, Ga. 30024
Phone: 770-864-1500
Web site: northgeorgiahearing.com
We are excited to be able to give the education and tools needed to contribute to a more lasting sustainable solution to the current food system in the U.S.

The Learning Garden, a new program at Wolfscratch Farms, is underway in Pickens County

Farm-fresh vegetable lovers have made Wolfscratch Farms in Pickens County their go-to produce supplier through the Wolfscratch CSA program and area farmer's markets for more than five years. Now, old and new customers can learn, participate and become insiders in the natural and fresh food movement that is sweeping across the nation and around the world.

A new program, known as The Learning Gardens, at the Wolfscratch Farm site in Pickens County will consist of children's summer camps as well as adult workshops and classes that range from how to cook your veggies to fundamental gardening techniques.

Created by Wolfscratch Farm owners Jamie and Kristen Rosenthal, the 501(c)3 non-profit's mission is to foster our community's interest in sustainable living through a connection with your food from the soil to your plate. The goal is to make healthy, locally grown food available and affordable for everyone and give all children, and their families, in our community a chance to reconnect with nature.

The Learning Gardens at Wolfscratch is in its infancy according to the Rosenthals. Preliminary schedules and pricing for their 2015 educational series can be found on the website learningatwolfscratch.org. “We are excited to be able to give the education and tools needed to contribute to a more lasting sustainable solution to the current food system in the U.S.,” the Rosenthals shared. “Through our programs, we teach everything from how to grow sustainable, healthy food to how to cook the food you grow while providing a place for the community to come together for communal eating and sharing of ideas.”

Workshops will typically include lunch or tastings and some include potted plants or tree saplings for attendees to take with them.

Offerings will include: Gardening with Permaculture is a workshop that provides the fundamental principles of how to plan and establish permaculture gardens.

Cooking Your Veggies will cover how to transform vegetables from the garden to “mouthwatering” dishes.

Introduction to Permaculture for the Farmer is a permaculture 101 class that teaches the importance of understanding this ecological approach to farming and the importance of changing the growth of our food from rows to curves.

Heirloom Tomato Culture will be all about heirloom tomatoes—picking varieties, growing and harvesting the perfect tomato—and will include a chef demonstration of ways to prepare them.

Pruning and grafting will feature Michael Blackwell from KSU to teach the basics of pruning and grafting fruit trees.

Hugel Bed Building is a mini-workshop that teaches the best methods for building a garden using Hugelkultur to help preserve the land and conserve water.

Container Gardening will teach proper methods for designing a container garden, including how to mix various herbs with mini-vegetables.

Medicinal and Wild Edibles is a mini-workshop in which participants will learn many properties about medicinal plants and tasty treats found us in the wild. Each participant will receive a special treat.

The Mushroom Inoculation class will share how to grow edible mushrooms. Each participant will take home a mushroom log that will produce mushrooms for your family's dinners.

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Summer Day Camp for All Ages This summer, The Learning Gardens at Wolfscratch will offer a day camp at the farm where children of all ages can experience life on a working farm. The 15-acre working farm includes a greenhouse, animal barn, rowing chicken areas, a wooden glen, duck pond, picnic area and the main farmhouse.

The staff will consist of the farmers, educators and college students who “have a heart for agriculture as well as an appreciation for teaching through play,” according to the Rosenthals. Activities will include planting seeds, picking vegetables, feeding animals, nature hikes, games, singing, journaling and crafts.

Summer camp sessions will be offered from June to August and will be for grades K-5 with opportunities for junior camp counselors for older youth (grades 6-10). Hours will be from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

In addition to their involvement with the nonprofit, Wolfscratch Farm will continue to run their successful Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program that allows consumers to purchase a membership and in return receive seasonal produce each week throughout the farming season, as well as a worker share program, fundraisers and other events.

The Learning Gardens at Wolfscratch Farms Jamie and Kristen Rosenthal Address: 673 Long Swamp Church Road, Jasper, Ga. 30143 Phone: 770 617 8403 Email: info@learningatwolfscratch.org Website: learningatwolfscratch.org

Enjoying a carrot juice popsicle in the garden.

Gardening

Heirloom gardens include lots of tiny things.

Watering the new children’s garden beds to help healthy vegetables grow.

Mushrooms are a gardener’s friend, and fun to play with too.

Heirloom Tomato Culture

Medicinal and Wild Edibles

Container Gardening

Gardening with Permaculture

Hugel Bed Building

Introduction to Permaculture for the Farmer

Pruning and grafting
A garden and gardening: therapy for the soul

The therapeutic value of gardening has become so well recognized that it now supports a professional occupation known as "horticultural therapy" and is represented throughout the United States by the American Horticultural Therapy Association.

Cynthia Hendry, proprietor of Woodland Gardens, has helped hundreds of her Big Canoe neighbors make a garden and gardening an important part of their lives. In addition to landscape design, installation and maintenance, she will also help you with creating a private place for yoga or tai chi, a perfect view from your bedroom window or a small kitchen garden to compliment your diet, with a tailored scheme to fit your budget. If asked, she will tell you about the therapeutic value she derives from her own garden. As a former manager in the high-stress world of medical management, she makes a point of maintaining her physical, spiritual and emotional balance, and much of that comes from her garden.

"Experts claim the therapeutic benefits of gardening have been recognized since humans first cultivated plants," she says. "Now there is a growing professional practice linking gardening to numerous, wide-ranging health benefits." Hendry agrees with the experts, but prefers to summarize her thoughts in words from a favorite poet Dorothy Frances Gurney: "Kiss of the sun for pardon. Song of the birds for mirth. You’re closer to God’s heart in a garden than any place else on earth." - Dorothy Frances Gurney

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Address: 1385 Petit Ridge Dr., Big Canoe, Ga.
Phone: 707-317-2777

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T he Lodge at BridgeMill, located in Canton, is an independent apartment community for active adults aged 55 and up. The Lodge has been recognized again this year by SeniorAdvisor.com. The SeniorAdvisor.com Best of 2015 Award recognizes senior living and home care providers who receive consistently high ratings and positive reviews from residents, families and care providers who receive consistently high ratings and positive reviews from residents, families and care providers. As a recipient of the award, The Lodge at BridgeMill is one of the top one percent of more than 100,000 senior care facilities nationwide for providing consistent, quality service. Based on the overall high ratings provided by its residents and their families, the award clearly distinguishes The Lodge at BridgeMill among the many other senior living communities – it is the only senior living center given this honor in the city of Canton.

With 12 spacious one- and two-bedroom floor plans and on-site fitness and recreational facilities, including a swimming pool and health spa, The Lodge at BridgeMill offers comfort and style plus a social, carefree, maintenance free lifestyle. With affordable luxury in mind, it’s the perfect alternative for seniors with discerning taste and a higher level of standards.

The Lodge at BridgeMill is an award-winning, independent senior community for active seniors living in North Georgia. Of services and activities designed to foster and support independent living and to enhance the active senior lifestyle. From fitness programs to golf outings, educational seminars to musical concerts, dancing or movie nights, there always is a full calendar of events for almost every day of the year. Also available are activities including gardening, day trips, jewelry shows, games and more. Residents have a variety of choices to suit their unique interests and desired levels of recreation. Within an arm’s reach of much of northern Georgia, The Lodge at BridgeMill is convenient to highways and transportation hubs, fine dining, recreational areas and the recently opened Outlet Shoppes at Atlanta. Close to Northside Hospital Cherokee, The Lodge at BridgeMill also provides regular transportation to take residents to and from doctors’ visits. This apartment community enjoys a peaceful spot in a continuously expanding area. For your comfort, peace of mind and continued independent living for many years to come, The Lodge at BridgeMill is a home you and your loved ones can count on.

DENTISTRY

There is no need to travel to Atlanta for state-of-the-art dental care. Top-notch dentistry is available at Dawsonville Distinctive Dentistry where the patient always comes first. They believe in building long-lasting relationships and are committed to providing the best of care for you and your entire family. For nearly 30 years Dr. Michelle Morrow has been providing the ultimate in dental care to her patients. She understands the anxiety that you or your child may experience about visiting the dentist and strives to make your time with her as pleasant and relaxing as possible. Her goal is to provide a setting in which the patient and doctor work together for optimum, cost-effective care. She says, “That’s what makes us different. We seriously consider our patients’ opinions and concerns when discussing treatment. We generally can offer acceptable alternative treatment plans to accommodate the budget, which we like to do.” In addition, their focus on routine preventive care is designed to help minimize the need for future treatments and the associated costs. From the moment you walk into the comfortable waiting room and are greeted by the front office staff you will notice the familiar-like atmosphere where patients become friends. When you are escorted to the treatment room for your appointment you will appreciate the light, airy feel in all of the spaces. The dental team understands that each patient’s needs are unique and they are committed to making your visit as stress-free as possible. Check out the testimonials from your friends and neighbors that are posted on their website at dawsonvilledistinctivedentistry.com.

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Seniors live well at The Lodge at BridgeMill

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T
the past year has been a very busy one for the Northside Hospital Healthcare System, as it continues to expand and enhance its services to meet the healthcare needs of the community. Currently, the BST, or non-profit healthcare provider has more than 150 locations across the state, including three acute care, state-of-the-art hospitals in Atlanta, Cherokee and Forsyth. More than 2,500 physicians and close to 13,000 employees at Northside serve nearly 2 million patient visits annually across a full range of medical services. During 2014-15, key projects include:

- Expansion of MRI services at Dawson Medical Campus
- Expansion of the Northside Hospital Cancer Institute
- Acquisition of new robotic surgical technologies
- Groundbreaking of the Northside Hospital-Cherokee replacement campus
- State-of-the-Art Imaging

Northside is highly respected in the community for its state-of-the-art imaging services. A staff of board certified, sub-specialized radiologists and registered technologists provides high-quality advanced imaging services, for patients of all ages, with the highest level of customer service. Since 2008, Northside/Dawson Imaging has offered high-quality radiology/imaging services. The imaging center recently expanded its MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) services to five days a week. Northside offers MRI for brain, spine and orthopedic exams. The facility, which moved to the Northside/Dawson Medical Campus in 2012, also offers CT digital screening mammography, digital X-ray, bone densitometry and ultrasound exams.

"The additional MRI service gives patients in the Dawsonville area a more convenient service through the Northside Hospital system, without having to go to the hospital," said Lisa Gilman-Lowery, manager of radiology, Northside Hospital Forsyth.

Leading-Edge Cancer Care

The Northside Hospital Cancer Institute is one of the largest and most respected providers of cancer care services in the Southeast. In the last year, Northside has introduced advanced robotic technologies.

Northside Hospital-Forsyth was the first hospital in Georgia to offer the Leonardo da Vinci®® Perfection® with Extent™ radiology system to treat a wide range of brain tumors and other neurological conditions. Through the most advanced and non-invasive technology that delivers Gamma solution.

In 2014, a partnership sponsored by Northside Hospital Cancer Institute was selected to implement a new cancer research program that aims to much more Georgians in their own cities and towns. The National Cancer Institute Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP) awarded the partnership a five-year, $5.85 million grant. The research will have great potential for improving cancer outcomes and reducing disparities in care for people throughout Georgia.

Minimal Invasive Robotic Surgery

Northside continues to lead the way in surgical care, performing more minimally invasive robotic-assisted procedures than any other hospital in the Southeast. In the last year, Northside has introduced advanced robotic technologies.

Northside Hospital-Forsyth was the first hospital in Georgia to utilize the groundbreaking Maquet Robotic system, designed to perform a wide range of minimally invasive endoscopic procedures. The system’s catheters rotate 360 degrees and bend 180 degrees in any direction, allowing surgeons more control and precision while navigating through small blood vessels in complex vascular procedures.

"This technology grants an unprecedented level of precision to Northside vascular surgeons navigating the extremely complex anatomy of peripheral blood vessels," said Dr. Joseph Ricotta, medical director of vascular services, Northside Hospital Heart & Vascular Institute and the lead Northside physician for the procedure. The MAKOplasty procedure, also offered at Northside Hospital-Forsyth, has helped to improve the surgical outcomes for patients requiring hip and partial knee replacements. Through 3D models, motion capture and real-time virtual views of the patient’s anatomy, surgeons are able to provide more accurate fittings and ensure that post-procedure pain is reduced significantly for patients.

"MAKOplasty provides hip and partial knee replacement patients with access to a superior system that gives the surgical team more room around the patient," said Dr. Jon Minter, orthopedic surgeon and lead MAKOplasty physician. The system allows surgeons to fine-tune the implant’s positioning and shape, making the most accurate joint replacements available and increasing patients’ mobility faster than ever before.

The da Vinci Xi Surgical System, the latest version of the da Vinci robot, is being utilized for complex procedures like partial nephrectomy (kidney removal) at Northside in Atlanta. The technology soon also will be available at Northside Hospital-Cherokee. The technology provides multiple benefits like better visualization and multi-quadrad access (a boom overhead that gives the surgical team more room around the patient).

Replacement Hospital in Cherokee

Replacement Hospital in Cherokee

Site preparation is well underway for the Northside Hospital-Cherokee replacement campus, which will initially include the hospital, a distinct Women’s Center, a multispecialty medical office building, cancer center and 500 parking spaces. Construction is scheduled to begin in March of 2015.

Follow Northside Hospital on social media, and for more information visit northside.com.

**Northside Hospital-Cherokee**

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