

# CATALYST

Connect with Community. Make an Impact. Create Change.

## Movement is Medicine at the AKTIV Center at Summit Health

Most people would agree that exercise – whether 15 minutes or several hours a day – is beneficial to one’s health. But what some may not know is that exercise is also a core part of cancer care. The AKTIV Center at Summit Health, powered by Summit Health Cares and inspired by the Norwegian AKTIV Against Cancer model, is built on the belief that movement is medicine. The center is rooted in the science-backed understanding that physical activity is a critical part of cancer care – improving outcomes, strength, and overall well-being.

Data repeatedly shows that cancer patients who participate in a prescribed and dosed exercise and strength training program experience:

- Reduced risk of recurrence and cancer-specific mortality;
- Fewer treatment-related side effects like fatigue, brain fog, and bone loss;
- Improved immune function, cardiovascular health, and muscle mass;
- Enhanced mood, energy and sense of control.

“I am in clinical research by profession and have been very impressed with the data from the Norwegian program,” expressed Dawn Buchanan, AKTIV participant and Cancer Warrior. “The benefits and the improved out

*“If physical activity was a pill, it would be the most prescribed medicine on the market.”*

- Grete Waitz,  
co-founder of the AKTIV  
Against Cancer program

and is adapted and changed as those needs change over the course of treatment,” said Alyssa Matthews, PT, DPT, CLT, EOI; Summit Health Director of AKTIV. Participants can take part in activities to build strength, reduce stress, and foster recovery, such as: Pilates, yoga, HIIT classes (high-intensity interval training with cardio + strength training) and more! “Our small group training classes are not like the typical

group exercise class you may experience at a gym,” added Matthews. “There is an emphasis on a personalized approach, while still experiencing the benefit of community building

and the comradery of a group.”

With every referral to the AKTIV program, Matthews and her team coordinate with the patient’s oncologist to discuss their participation in the program and any restrictions or precautions that should be taken. They also check in at each session to review any medical changes to appropriately adjust the exercise treatment plan.

SHC is proud to partner with AKTIV Against Cancer to offer this exciting program - the first hospital-based program in the United States. Buchanan went on to say, “I encourage other cancer patients to consider the program. It will pay dividends on your cancer journey!”



comes make sense for cancer patients.”

Located in Summit Health’s Berkeley Heights location, the AKTIV Center offers free, professionally guided exercise programs to cancer patients undergoing treatment. The goal is not only to improve outcomes before, during and after oncology treatments, but also to build lifelong fitness habits.

Participants have three one-on-one sessions with an AKTIV certified Exercise Oncology Instructor who collaborates with the oncology team then curates and oversees the exercise prescription. “Whether patients are exercise enthusiasts or exercising for the first time, each program is designed to meet their current needs



If you are receiving duplicate copies of the CATALYST or would like additional copies please contact the Development Office at 908.277.8788.



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Summit Health Cares



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# Starling Physicians Foundation's Annual Gala Was a Night to Remember!

This November, Connecticut was buzzing with excitement from Starling Physicians Foundation's Third Annual Gala! The community came together in their finest attire for an evening of delicious food, sparkling cocktails, laughs and camaraderie - all to support the foundation. Proceeds continue to provide needed services for Connecticut communities.



# Summit Health Employees Team Up to Support SHC's Together Against Hunger

Holidays are often thought of as a time when people gather for decadent meals and celebrate the spirit of the season. But for many, putting any food on the table can be a struggle. That's where Summit Health Cares' *Together Against Hunger* initiative comes in. *Together Against Hunger* is a community-focused campaign addressing food insecurity through donations, food drives and partnerships with local food banks. The program engages SHC's "Care Crew" to collect pet and human food for pantries, distribute holiday meals, and promote nutrition education to enhance overall community health. "Donation drives are a powerful tool with a goal to ultimately reach our mission to fight food insecurity," explained Jess Pocheck, a Patient Service Representative at Summit Health, who organized food collections at her orthopedics office. "A campaign like a donation drive allows our community to stay healthy and well," she said. "It permits our neighbors to find a sense of belonging through purpose, trust, and participation. Patients can learn and recognize their relationship with their

community to promote change and create impact."

This year, the donated food was distributed to local pantries in areas that were especially low on food supplies during the holiday season.



Many Summit Health employees took the campaign to heart, spearheading collections within their departments, as Pocheck did. "I thought it was important to create this donation drive because I have been deeply involved in my community, mostly my entire life," she expressed. "My office typically has patients returning weekly and

I knew that they might donate to those less fortunate, human or animal, and contribute to the donation box. We collected more than just food; our awesome patients also donated towels, blankets, skin care, pet leashes,

pet toys, and so much more. We are eternally grateful for our amazing, magnanimous patients."

Laura Balsamini, PharmD, BCPS; Chief Pharmacy Officer at Summit Health and Gwen Egloff-Du,

PharmD, BCPS; Senior Manager, Clinical Pharmacy Services at Summit Health also rallied their colleagues to support the campaign. They said their clinical pharmacy team regularly serves the community through various SHC events and they were deeply motivated to work together to make a tangible difference. "This campaign allowed us to give back in a new and equally meaningful way," explained Egloff-Du. "Access to nutritious food is foundational to good health and by helping provide the building blocks for balanced, wholesome meals, we're supporting patients' well-being beyond medications alone."

Balsamini and Egloff-Du reiterated that food insecurity is a "real and growing challenge in

our community." Pocheck agreed. "We need each other more than ever in times like these," she said. "Let's be there for our neighbors and support those in need!"



## Honor Your Healthcare Hero

Has your life been touched by a healthcare professional who said or did just the right thing at just the right time? Someone who made that extra effort to reach out and comfort you, heart to heart, human to human?



Show that person how much they mean by honoring them as your Healthcare Hero and making a donation to Summit Health Cares.

You can make a secure donation online at [www.sh-cares.org](http://www.sh-cares.org)

Your Summit Health Healthcare Hero will be notified of your donation in their honor and will receive a special pin and a certificate in recognition of the outstanding care they provide.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SUMMIT HEALTH CARES ANNUAL

*gala* & AUCTION

SATURDAY,  
MAY 9, 2026  
THE GROVE  
CEDAR GROVE, NJ



SPECIAL APPEARANCES BY:  
comedian & actor **DANA CARVEY**  
actor & celebrity auctioneer **CHRISTOPHER J. HANKE**

WE ARE HONORED TO RECOGNIZE OUR 2026 HEALTHCARE HEROES



DR. KERRY LEBENGER



DR. MARIE NEVIN



DR. RICK NITZBERG

# Marathon City: Team Summit Health Cares Laces Up for a Good Cause!

Whether novice runners or marathon warriors, Team Summit Health Cares is full of people who are turning their fitness goals into powerful support for SHC's community programming. Last November, 10 Team SHC runners completed the New York City Marathon, raising more than \$40,000 to support SHC's mission. And there are many more races on the horizon!

Interested in joining the team? Spots are filling up quickly so apply now and don't miss out on these upcoming iconic races.

Join us! Fundraise for a cause with Team SHC. Learn more and apply at: [sh-cares.org/get-involved/team-summit-health-cares/](https://sh-cares.org/get-involved/team-summit-health-cares/)





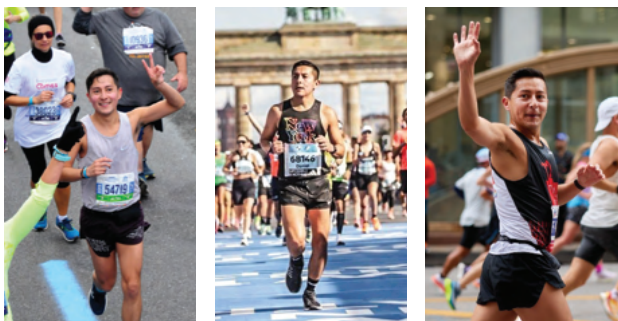
**United Airlines NYC Half Marathon**  
March 15, 2026

**Bank of America Boston Marathon (130th Anniversary)**  
April 20, 2026

**RBC Brooklyn Half Marathon**  
May 16, 2026

**TCS NYC Marathon**  
November 1, 2026

## Spotlight on Team SHC Runner: Daniel Sanchez



Daniel Sanchez did not ease into becoming a marathon runner. After volunteering at the New York City marathon in 2018, he was so inspired by all the different types of runners that he decided to enter the lottery himself to compete the following year. There is only a two to three percent chance of getting into the race through the lottery, but he did. And so, defying all the odds, his marathon training began.

"I was a total novice," Sanchez explained, who was simply running three to five miles on the weekends until a colleague explained that he needed to run during the week as well. "It was a challenging first marathon, but it was so much fun," he said. "It was so inspiring to live it after just watching it the previous year." Now, Sanchez is on an Abbott World Marathon

Majors journey - a quest to complete all six elite marathons and he's just one race away.

Sanchez, who is the Director of Individual Giving at New York Road Runners, joined Team SHC to help raise funds for Summit Health Cares' programming. "I've always enjoyed added meaning to my miles," he explained. And raising money for causes that are "near and dear" to his heart is the way he loves to give back. In late 2023 as he was training for the Tokyo marathon, his mom called to say the optometrist had noticed spots on the back of his dad's eyes. After multiple tests and a dreadful period of waiting for results, his dad was diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (CML), a slow-growing blood cancer of the bone marrow. "The rug was pulled out from under me," Sanchez expressed.

As a part of Team SHC, Sanchez has set a goal of raising \$25,000! "It was an easy choice to choose SHC," he said. Sanchez understands that there are many families out there who "do not have insurance or don't have someone who can help advocate for them." And that's why he feels passionate about raising funds for SHC. It's not surprising - Sanchez has a deep history of working and volunteering with organizations

that help those going through difficult times - including participating in the AIDS LifeCycle (bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles) and working for the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and more.

*"I'm impressed by the work the foundation does around cancer care, especially with the AKTIV Center. I believe bodies in motion is medicine for our bodies and minds."*



Sanchez's father is now doing well. He's stable and has lots of love and support around him. As does Sanchez, who feels the running community is a community of people wanting to do good. When he's not training for a marathon, he enjoys spending time with his partner (a six-time marathoner) and their basenji, running, cycling, solving puzzles and travelling. After he completes the Boston marathon with Team SHC, he and his partner will begin training for the Paris 2027 marathon together. We can't wait to cheer him on! ❤️



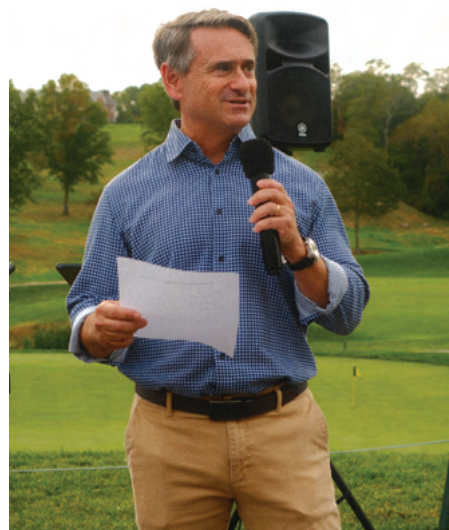
**Get Ready for Some Birdies at the SHC Annual Golf Invitational**

**MONDAY, SEPT. 28, 2026**

**Hamilton Farm Golf Club Gladstone, NJ**

# SHC's Annual Golf Invitational: Nothing but Aces!

Golfers and golf enthusiasts alike showed up this fall to play on the legendary greens of Hamilton Farm Golf Club, one of the most beautiful courses around, during Summit Health Cares' Annual Golf Invitational. We are grateful to our sponsors, participants in the online auction and raffle, and of course, all of the amazing golfers. Your support allows us to continue providing care, transforming lives - with free health screenings and education, cancer support services, scholarships for future healthcare leaders, and more. Thank you!



# Broadway In Bend Spreads Holiday Cheer



Summit Health Cares hosted a star-studded event last December: Broadway In Bend! Broadway's top stars came together to belt out holiday tunes and help raise money for critical community programming to support Oregonians. Prior to the event, SHC staff teamed up with Summit Health Oregon and the

event's host, Christopher Hanke, to help the community. Together, they filled care packages with socks, blankets, skincare, and holiday goodies and delivered them to seniors with fixed incomes at the Council on Aging of Central Oregon. It was the perfect way to kick off the holidays. ❤️



# Sponsor Spotlight: 2M Electric



For husband and wife team, Lindsay and Matt Moeller, giving back to the community is fundamental to who they are. It's no surprise that their giving spirit spills into their company, 2M Electric. 2M is a relationship driven company focused on commercial and industrial projects. Their work is top notch, but more importantly, the Moellers built 2M as a company brimming with a positive work environment that treats people with respect, builds strong relationships and encourages all employees to work hard along the way. Giving back is a huge part of its ethos.

"Everyone should give back," expressed Matt. "It's part of your responsibility as a human being. We all live in this world together and we take so many things for granted. If we all helped each other, we could live in a much better place."

Lindsay added, "When we started the company in 2013, we always said that if we can make this grow and work, we always want to contribute to something bigger than us. We've been fortunate to find organizations that we believe in and want to support."

Summit Health Cares has been one of those organizations that

2M has generously supported. "The Moellers have proven to consistently show up and support us wherever needed," said Andrea Smith, Director of Corporate Partnerships at SHC. "They were one of our first sponsors for the Summit Challenge, supported our Gala and have been a constant at our Annual Golf Invitational. And when we launched our first ever Gather & Inspire event to raise funds for period poverty

and provide supplies to local shelters, they stepped in to help support us and sponsor the event."

The Moellers appreciate the transparency SHC offers surrounding its partnerships. They said they always know exactly where their dollars are going and how their support

contributes to a program. 2M is a partner to many organizations in the community. Their generosity has touched the Valerie Fund, CarePlus Foundation, Abilities of Northwest New Jersey, Habitat for Humanity, and more.

"Not only do they have generous hearts, but the Moellers are such lovely people," expressed Smith. "We enjoy working with them very much." ❤️

For more information on 2M Electric, visit [2melectric.com](http://2melectric.com).

**"If everyone just smiled at one person a day, the world would be a happier place."**

**Matt Moeller,**  
President and Founder  
of 2M Electric

# SHC's Special Events Boost Spirits for Cancer Warriors

When you're going through cancer treatment, it's nice to do something that can take your mind off treatment and bring some emotional relief. This fall, Summit Health Cares offered two events to do just that. Participants enjoyed the camaraderie of being together and walked away from each event



feeling a little lighter with smiles on their faces.

Research shows that art therapy can help lower depression, anxiety and pain for cancer patients while providing an outlet to process emotions. Summit Health patients at Berkeley Heights had an opportunity to enjoy those benefits at SHC's Art Workshop in October. Participants enjoyed the fellowship of other Cancer Warriors while decorating mini pumpkins with paint pens and preparing for the holiday season.

"Our patients loved painting the pumpkins," expressed Monica Cotton, Summit Health Cares' Director of Cancer Resources and Navigation Program. "They enjoyed being creative and sharing their designs with each other. It created a wonderful opportunity for patients to talk with each other while bonding over a joyful project."

In addition, SHC offered a Skin

Care Beauty Day in partnership with the professionals from Elysium Biodynamic Spa & Salon. Oncology patients at Berkeley Heights were treated to complimentary skincare consultations with Elysium's experts. "This event provided a meaningful opportunity for patients to speak one-on-one with a professional about their skin and hair," said Cotton. "They got to ask detailed questions about their personal situations, which helped them feel heard in regards to their side effects and how to handle their individualized issues." All participants received goody bags with natural skin care products designed to help with side effects from cancer treatment. Elysium also offers free in-salon hair consultations, shaving, wig trimming, and discounted at-home services, including oncology facials and scalp detoxes. The staff was incredibly knowledgeable and sen-



sitive to each participant's needs.

"After my treatment, I wasn't expecting to feel like myself," explained a participant. "Elyse and her team at the event were very knowledgeable and supportive. It was so nice to see that people really do care. I feel like I can look beautiful again." ❤️

## Supporter Spotlight: Abbey Samuelson

Abbey Samuelson, a registered nurse in Summit Health's Radiation Oncology department, spends her days taking care of cancer patients. Throughout her nearly eight years with Summit Health, she's gone above and beyond to support patients fighting cancer. From wine tasting fundraisers benefiting Summit Health Cares to working with patients in survivorship to make goody bags for other patients - she's done it all. "Our patients are AMAZING, strong, resilient and they inspire me all the time," said Samuelson. "Giving back to them however we can is the absolute goal."

Recently, she teamed up with her son Henrik's three- and four-year-old class at White Meadow Lake Preschool to collect snack donations for SHC's Cancer Comfort Cart and create breast cancer awareness ribbons. The children sponge painted the

ribbons in beautiful shades of pink so that the foundation can decorate during Breast Cancer Awareness month. "Even at such a young age, the kids were so excited (and adorable) to present us with the items they donated and made!" exclaimed Samuelson. "I credit Henrik's fabulous teachers for collaborating and spreading kindness. It shows you that even the youngest people can make a difference."

Samuelson is a huge supporter of the foundation and sees first-hand



*"The inspiration is so simple, people helping people at one of their hardest and lowest times."*

Abbey Samuelson

the positive impact the Cancer Comfort Project has on her patients. She says she knows the programs are making a difference "because I can literally see the stress melt away from patients after their experience with the foundation team members." Samuelson explained, "There have been patients who have mentioned they might not have been able to pursue cancer treatment at all if it were not for the emotional/economical support of the foundation. It is truly

unimaginable to process a cancer diagnosis and on top of it not being sure how you will get rides for treatment, purchase groceries or be able to tap into mind and body programs to help alleviate some of the stress. We would not be able to offer these wonderful resources if not for the Summit Health Cares' Cancer Comfort Project and team!"

Throughout the years, Samuelson's generosity has been instrumental to the foundation. She wants to ensure that her son Henrik and his eight-year-old brother, Hakon, see that being kind, even by doing something that seems like it takes very little effort, can go a long way. We feel Samuelson is an inspiration to everyone around her and we're incredibly grateful for her support. ❤️



# SHC Community Wellness Screenings Provide Access to Care and Health Equity

Health is a right, not a privilege, but in some underserved communities, access to care can be challenging. That's why Summit Health Cares offers free community wellness screenings at local food pantries to those in need, empowering individuals to take charge of their health. SHC's wellness screenings provide essential wellness checks coupled with health education materials and access to local support services. With a focus on diabetes and blood pressure checks, volunteers from Summit Health work to identify issues early and help participants manage chronic diseases.

"Our program is all about equity and offering access to healthcare," explained Pamela Singer, SHC's Director of Operations and Community Engagement. "We know the benefits are tremendous because when you have limited access to healthcare in underserved communities, people are often not diagnosed for health issues, causing outcomes to worsen."

In 2025, Summit Health Cares' wellness screenings continued to adapt as community needs and partnerships evolved. As the Community FoodBank of New Jersey adjusted its approach to SNAP education and supplemental food

**Participants in the wellness screenings are seeing real results. Eighty-four percent of participants improved at least one key health measure during the year and 71% saw a drop in their A1C levels during the year, a critical marker in diabetes care.**



support, SHC transitioned away from that partnership and refined the model to ensure continued access to health screenings for food pantry visitors. By keeping screenings open to all food pantry guests, SHC was able to reach a broader population, providing access to care for more in the underserved community.

Esther, a program participant, comes to each screening fully prepared, with her past biometric cards in a baggie. She said, "I really look forward to the screenings. They help me keep track of my health and it feels good to know someone is really looking out for me."

Over the course of the year, SHC welcomed more than a thousand new guests and completed more than 2,500 total screenings, demonstrating both increased access to care and sustained demand for the trusted services provided. In addition, to support thoughtful growth, SHC shifted from monthly to quarterly screenings. This change allowed the foundation to expand to additional food pantry sites while maintaining the quality of care and volunteer experience. Volunteers are a critical component of the program; SHC is working to ensure all volunteers and potential volunteers have access to the schedule of screenings for the full year so they can plan accordingly. ❤️



SHC's 2026 wellness screenings will take place at the following pantry locations:

**Advent** - New York City  
**Nourish NJ** - Dover

**CUMAC** - Paterson  
**Father English** - Paterson



SHC is grateful to its trusted, long-standing partners, including:

- St. Joseph's** - Elizabeth
- Leaders Without Limits** - Jersey City
- Grace** - Summit
- Toni's Kitchen** - Montclair
- IFPO** - Orange
- Deeper Life** - Irvington
- SDA** - Orange
- Solid Rock** - Irvington

## Special Donors to the Cancer Comfort Project Spread Kindness and Goodies

Summit Health Cares is incredibly grateful to all the people, groups, organizations, and teams who have donated to the Cancer Comfort Project, ensuring that people fighting cancer have a little extra something that brings them comfort, smiles, and joy. **THANK YOU** to:

**The Somerset Hills Garden Club:**  
seasonal holiday arrangements

**La Roche-Posay:**  
gentle skin care products with skin regimen education

**Mt. Olive Hockey Team:**  
Comfort Cart goodies

**White Meadow Lake Preschool:** Comfort Cart goodies and beautifully hand-crafted Breast Cancer Awareness Ribbons

**Knit Crochet with Love:**  
gorgeous hand-knitted hats

**Elysium Biodynamic Spa and Salon:**  
hair consultations, shaving, as well as washing, cutting, and customization

**Morristown Football Team:**  
Comfort Cart goodies

**Linda Kostialik:**  
handmade light weight fleece blankets

**Rebecca Widdick and Rebecca McDonough** (mother/daughter duo):  
hand-sewn port pillows

# Stand Tall With Us in the Fight Against Cancer

Make a lasting tribute on the Wall of Inspiration

Share your message of hope or compassion on the beautifully lit Wall of Inspiration permanently on display in the lobby of the Summit Health Cancer Center in Florham Park, New Jersey.

Proceeds from the wall support the SHC Cancer Comfort Project - providing care, comfort, and compassion to patients fighting cancer when they need it most.

Your gift is 100% tax deductible.



## Inscribe a Personal Message of Love and Hope

- Up to 5 lines of text on your 4" x 4" tile
- Reserve your tile today

Visit [www.sh-cares.org](http://www.sh-cares.org) or call 908.277.8788

Summit Health Cares is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization committed to promoting the courage, confidence and emotional well-being of individuals facing cancer and their families.

# Broadway Rocks Cancer Returned to NJ for a Huge Holiday Celebration

Hundreds of people tapped their toes and sang along with Christopher Hanke and Broadway's brightest stars at Summit Health Cares' Broadway Rocks Cancer last December. From Natalie Joy Johnson (*Kinky Boots*) and John Riddle (*Frozen*) to Justin Showell (*Hamilton*), Alyssa Umphress (*American Idiot*), and more, amazing performers came out to support SHC and celebrate the holidays. Proceeds from the event help fund the foundation's cancer programs, including one-on-one navigation, emotional support services, wellness programs, and emergency assistance grants.



CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS WITH US AT

# BROADWAY in Bend

**FRIDAY, DEC. 11, 2026**  
**Tower Theater | Bend, OR**



# SHC Gears Up for Period Poverty Awareness Week: May 11-17!

SHC is supporting Period Poverty Awareness Week the entire month of May!

The foundation is working to pack and distribute 20,000 Fresh Start Pouches, each containing an average day's worth of period products as well as bilingual educational flyers with hygiene tips, for those in need. Through this awareness campaign, SHC not only hopes to provide needed products, but also to help end the stigma of menstruation, in general.

Period products are basic necessities, like toilet paper!  
Yet period poverty is impacting people all over the United States.

## Period Power: Access for All!

Help us provide Fresh Start Pouches to **20,000** women and girls!



### What is Period Poverty?

Period poverty is the struggle many low-income people face while trying to afford menstrual products. Every month, they have to decide between paying bills or buying basic hygiene products. One in three women can't afford period products and one in four teens in the US has missed class due to lack of access to period supplies. No one should have to miss school, work, or activities in daily life because they are unable to afford a basic necessity. Through this campaign, SHC hopes to bring awareness to period poverty and the negative impact it has on menstruating individuals.

### Want to Help?

Drop off boxes of unopened period products (tampons, pads, liners) at SHC's donation boxes at any Summit Health, NJ OB-GYN or pediatric offices throughout the month of May OR drop off boxes of unopened period supplies at any time at:  
**Summit Health, 150 Floral Ave., New Providence, NJ.**

**Questions?** Reach out to Charlie Williams, [cwilliams11@sh-cares.org](mailto:cwilliams11@sh-cares.org), for more info on how you can help.

### Donate Now!

**Donate Now!** Use the QR code below to donate funds to help SHC purchase period supplies and reach the goal of distributing 20,000 Fresh Start Pouches in May.  
**Join us!**



Give the gift of a **Fresh Start** to the day



## Spotlight on Volunteer: Taja Barlow

Taja Barlow has always been passionate about volunteering. "It's something I watched my grandmother do all throughout her life," she said. "She never looked for anything in return but always showed kindness and cared for others in need." Barlow has followed very closely in her grandmother's footsteps.

Barlow, a mother of two, is currently in her last year of nursing school and works as a Certified Medical Assistant in the OB-GYN department at Summit Health. Despite her busy schedule, she's been volunteering with Summit Health Cares at community wellness screenings since 2023. She has made giving back a family event; Barlow's two daughters, Janiyah and Stephanie, volunteer with her. "Having them join me, started out as a great way for my daughters to earn some hours for community service," she explained, since her oldest daughter was gearing up for college and needed volunteer work.

Barlow and her daughters enjoy getting to interact with all the people they encounter at SHC's community wellness screenings. "They are people who we've never met before, but they are so thankful for our help," she said. "I love watching my girls build bonds with the participants. They trust them to help, know my girls by name, and even ask for them when they come in for



*"It's important for me to show my kids the same (giving spirit as my grandmother) and help them to develop the same type of empathy to others."*

Taja Barlow

their screenings."

During the holidays, Barlow approached Pamela Singer, SHC's Director of Operations and Community Engagement, with an idea: she wanted to find a way to do something meaningful at a local shelter. Her goal was to bring joy to those who may not be as fortunate during the holiday season and to instill in her daughters that the holidays are not just about presents under your tree. Singer, Barlow, her daughters, and SHC's Care Crew headed to the Newark YMCA's Emergency Residence Shelter for their nighttime holiday party. The Newark YMCA provides 300 beds to individuals and families who need a safe place to call home. The group distributed warm blankets, cozy Bombas socks, hats, and mittens – all donated by SHC; played games and made crafts with residents; and handed out pizza and hot cocoa. Singer expressed, "We met new friends, shared small moments that felt meaningful and were reminded that the holidays don't look the same for everyone - but kindness and community can show up anywhere." And that kindness is exactly what Barlow had hoped to share.

SHC is grateful to Taja, Janiyah, and Stephanie for their continued generosity and compassion. ❤️

## 2025 SHC Community Impact Report

Thanks to those who supported us in 2025, measurable progress was made across community health screenings, cancer care navigation, and basic needs support. These results reflect real people strengthened, real barriers reduced, and meaningful advancement toward healthier communities we serve.

### KEY IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



**14,200**

#### CANCER SUPPORT TOUCHPOINTS

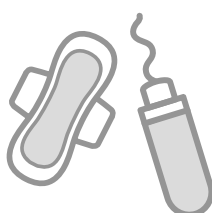
Nearly 40 meaningful moments of guidance, advocacy, and comfort delivered every single day—ensuring patients and families never navigate cancer alone.



**4,200**

#### PREVENTIVE HEALTH SCREENINGS

Free BMI, HbA1c, and blood pressure screenings delivered directly in community settings. 1,700 clinical hours were provided by licensed healthcare professionals, ensuring trusted expertise at every interaction.



**245,000**

#### ESSENTIAL PERIOD SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED

Restoring dignity, protecting health, and reducing unseen barriers for individuals and families in need.



**\$104,500**

#### INVESTED IN FUTURE HEALTH-CARE LEADERS

Scholarships awarded to aspiring healthcare professionals—strengthening long-term access to quality care in the communities we serve.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN ACTION



**5,600+**

hours of hands-on cancer support – more than 233 full days of compassionate care.



**175+**

hours of pet therapy programming – offering comfort, connection, and emotional relief during treatment.



**65%**

of Patient-in-Need grants supported families experiencing food insecurity while undergoing cancer treatment – helping ensure patients and loved ones could focus on healing rather than choosing between groceries and care.



**2,500+**

winter essentials distributed to protect vulnerable neighbors.



**1,000**

students equipped with backpacks to begin the school year prepared.

### COMMUNITY WELLNESS: MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

#### Bringing Health to Underserved Communities

Through community-based screenings delivered by licensed professionals, we meet people where they are, remove barriers to preventive care, and equip individuals with trusted knowledge and clear next steps toward better health.

**98%** said the program helped them.

**94%** now report knowing more about their health.

**90%** learned at least one specific action they can take to improve their health.

This is what community partnership makes possible. Because of committed supporters, access to care expands, barriers are reduced, and individuals receive the stability and support they need during life's most difficult moments. Together, we can continue building healthier, more equitable communities for all.



# Small Actions Make a Real Difference: Local Teens Support Fresh Start!

It's easy to think of Gen Z as a group who are lost inside their phones. But the truth is, they're one of the most generous generations. Data shows a striking 93 percent of young people are motivated to volunteer by the chance to have a tangible impact on their community. And that's exactly what three groups of local New Jersey teenagers have done in their compassionate efforts to support Summit Health Cares' Fresh Start program.



**Anna Levy**, a high school sophomore at Saddle River Day School, started volunteering for Summit Health Cares at the end of her freshman year when she saw a statistic that startled her: 1 in 4 girls and women in the United States miss school or work because they do not have access to period supplies. "This is not something that should ever happen," she explained. Anna reached out to several local food pantries and non-profits and learned that many of them do not receive donations of period supplies. She worked with SHC to begin stuffing and donating Fresh Start pouches. Working two to three hours a week, she has stuffed more than 2,000 pouches, with a goal of personally stuffing 7,000 before she graduates from high school. "This project means a lot to me!" she said. Anna provides Fresh Start pouches to seven local organizations, including food pantries, and is always searching for

additional places in need of period products. "I also recently identified an organization in Washington, DC where I am shipping products to as well," she explained. When asked what this type of volunteer service means to her, she said, "It feels good to help other girls and women and know that I am hopefully making a difference in improving their lives in a small way."

Like Anna, twin sisters **Iniya and Nithila Senthil**, high school freshmen at Gill St. Bernard's School, learned of the prevalence of period poverty within their backyards in New Jersey and decided they could do something about it. Together with their 11-year-old brother, **Selvan**, and their great-grandmother whom they call "**Paatti**" (which means grandma in their mother-tongue, Tamil), the sisters took over their dining room table and began stuffing Fresh Start pouches. "This volunteer work is meaningful to us because it allows us to directly support people in our community," they said. "It also shows us how small actions can make a real difference in someone's daily life." Iniya and Nithila have been volunteering since they were in the 5th grade, but their most recent efforts in helping address period poverty became even more personal. While stuffing period pouches, their great-grandmother, who grew up in India in the late 1930s/early 1940s, shared stories of how girls often missed school and other commitments while they were on their periods. Nithila explained, "Paatti told us that oftentimes girls would drop out of school altogether once they started their period because access to hygienic products was so difficult." The twins also learned that a girl's period was not something that was discussed openly back then, leaving very little awareness of the difficulties being



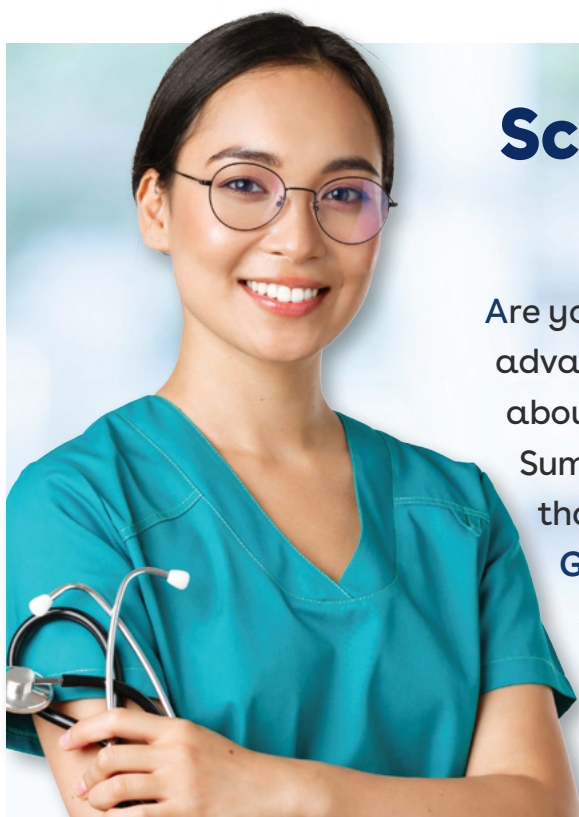
faced. "Hearing her experience helped us understand how critical access to these basic supplies is and it inspired us to take action," they said. Together, the group has stuffed over 500 pouches thus far and worked with SHC to donate them to Grace Food Pantry. Iniya told us that they "were so thankful to be able to work with not only one, but two great local organizations, ensuring that people who need these products can access them easily and with dignity." The twins are excited to continue volunteering for Summit Health Cares' Fresh Start initiative and are making room to take over their dining table once again!

For **Sonia Prabhakar**, being involved in Fresh Start meant she could help raise awareness of period poverty and address the issue in her community. Sonia, an eighth grader at Warren Middle School, knew she could make a difference. She planned two events to support the cause. First, she set

up a fundraising table outside her local Walgreens and collected donations. "I enjoyed talking to the people of my town about the Fresh Start program and cause, and found that once people heard the problem firsthand, they felt the need to help," she explained. With the success of the first event, she organized another event in the fall - a charity yoga class. Sonia said, "I chose to organize a yoga class because while raising funds for and spreading more information about an amazing cause, I was also getting to share the experience of one of my favorite hobbies with others!" Between the two events, Sonia raised nearly \$1,600 and received multiple boxes of period products. She expressed, "The volunteer services that Fresh Start carries out are crucial in creating a society where all women are guaranteed to have access to menstrual and hygiene products as well as accurate information about their own bodies and health."

SHC is in awe of these teenagers and their creative drive. Through these acts of kindness, they remind us that anyone can move the needle. And just like the data shows, they are making a tangible impact in their communities. Thank you, Gen Z! We are grateful that you are our future.

For more information about SHC's Fresh Start program, visit [sh-cares.org](http://sh-cares.org)



## Scholarship Applications Open this Spring

Are you working in healthcare and hoping to get an advanced degree? Are you a student who is passionate about medicine and helping your community? If so, Summit Health Cares has a scholarship program that may be perfect for you. Through the **Next Generation** and **Dr. Marcia A. Sherman Memorial Scholarships**, SHC hopes to equip the next generation of healthcare leaders to build a healthier, more equitable future. Applications open this March. Learn more at [sh-cares.org](http://sh-cares.org)

