

# PA

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# HEALTH

YOUR GUIDE TO FITNESS & WELL-BEING

## His time to shine

Chris Nagy's pursuit of better health

+

MEET THE DOGS  
OF GEISINGER  
STAYING  
OUTBREAK-READY  
CARING FOR MIND,  
BODY AND SOUL

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# WELCOME

## On the cover:

Chris Nagy's medical journey has inspired his friends and relatives to seek better health for themselves.

Photo by Elizabeth Gorbey

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# Better Together

We've been part of the region for more than 100 years — celebrating with you at parades, fairs and sports events and supporting happenings that lift up our communities. Here's the latest on how we're connecting with you and your neighbors.

**Snow angels** • Wintry weather is no match for Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine students. They help out their communities by volunteering to clean the sidewalks and driveways of older adults after each snowfall.



**\$10 million raised for maternal and pediatric care** • Mothers, children and families benefit from funds raised by Geisinger Health Foundation in support of the Beyond the Bricks campaign. Contributions from the community made it possible for our nonprofit health system to reach this goal. Donations fund healing — just visit [geisinger.org/becauseofyou](https://geisinger.org/becauseofyou).

**Serving up gratitude** • To honor and thank our local U.S. military veterans for their service, Geisinger handed out 2,500+ free drive-through dinners across our region on Nov. 7.



**Explore, learn and thrive** • Visit [events.geisinger.org](https://events.geisinger.org) to find resources for a healthier you. Sign up and attend virtual and in-person classes, talks and events, find support for chronic health problems and much more.

**Transplant travel made easier** • Patients who travel to Geisinger Medical Center in Danville for kidney or liver transplants can get help with travel and lodging costs, thanks to a recent grant from the Gift of Life, funded by the Transplant Foundation.



**PA HEALTH**  
M a g a z i n e

**Interim Chief Marketing & Communications Officer/Vice President of System Marketing**

JEFF BEAN

**Director of Content Marketing**

KAYE SPECTOR

**Contributing Writers**

KIMBERLY ADLER-MORELLI

LYNDSEY FREY

BETH KASZUBA

**Managing Editor**

JESSICA MARTIN

**Creative Manager**

JESSICA HINE

**Photography**

MARK DASTRUP

ELIZABETH GORBEY

ROBB MALLOY

VICTORIA TUREL-WIKTOR

**Designer**

LEENA HASHIM-WARIS

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**Geisinger**

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing an orange t-shirt and dark shorts, is running on a wet, leaf-covered path. The path is lined with trees and foliage, and the ground is covered in fallen leaves. The man is in the foreground, running towards the camera.

By Kimberly Adler-Morelli

# Running toward a healthier future

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When he became short of breath and blacked out at work, it was a frightening wakeup call for Chris Nagy of Mifflinburg.

In the emergency room, his blood pressure was off the charts at 250/200. His severe increase in blood pressure, called a hypertensive crisis, meant he needed to be hospitalized until treatment could bring his numbers down to a more normal range.

At 503 pounds, the challenges of being overweight were not lost on Mr. Nagy. He struggled with everyday activities that many take for granted, like hiking or even air travel.

“I’ve been big my entire life,” he says. “I thought I had to make do with what I’d been given.”

But at his follow-up visit with his physician after he left the hospital, Mr. Nagy’s mindset shifted. “My doctor said I could possibly see my 50th birthday, but 55 was a pipe dream if I didn’t do something about my weight,” he remembers.

He considered bariatric surgery, despite his fears and concerns about being judged as taking the “easy way out.” But he wasn’t quite ready.

## Deciding to be healthier

Fast-forward 5 years after his health scare and hospital admission: Mr. Nagy had been working with dietitians, but knew he had to do something more.

Being overweight had led to some related medical conditions, like diabetes and severe sleep apnea, in which breathing is interrupted during sleep. Mr. Nagy was concerned about his quality of life and his ability to care for Aiden, the grandson he and his wife Wendy are raising.

In 2020, he decided to undergo bariatric surgery at Geisinger.

“I discussed that bariatric surgery can be safely performed through small incisions with a short recovery,” says David Parker, MD, the Geisinger general surgeon who performed Mr. Nagy’s bariatric surgery.

The procedure, called a biliopancreatic diversion with duodenal switch (BPD-DS), bypassed part of Mr. Nagy’s small intestine to limit calorie absorption and reduced his stomach size.

The result was a success — not just in weight loss, but in overall health improvement.

“Because Chris had many weight-related medical complications, he was a perfect candidate for bariatric and metabolic surgery,” says Christopher Still, DO, director of Geisinger’s Center for Nutrition and Weight Management.

“He was diligent in his postoperative care and exceeded all expectations in resolving his medical conditions. Although Chris lost a tremendous amount of weight, in my opinion, it was secondary to his profound medical benefit from the surgery.”

“His surgery went very well, and Chris quickly began to work on his weight loss journey,” Dr. Parker says. “Bariatric surgery can dramatically improve the overall health and quality of life in patients with obesity. Chris Nagy’s story is why I love being a bariatric surgeon.”

## Motivation leads to inspiration

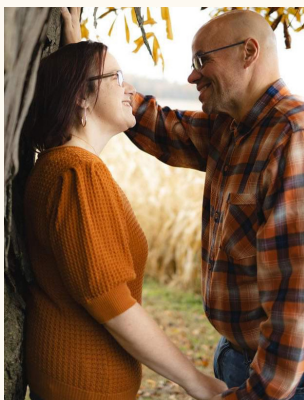
Post-surgery life was a new beginning for Mr. Nagy. Just 3 months later, he was hiking and soon started running 5K races — virtual



**“My doctor said I could possibly see my 50th birthday, but 55 was a pipe dream if I didn’t do something about my weight.”**

Watch Chris Nagy tell his story in his own words:

🔴 [geisinger.org/chrisnagy](https://www.geisinger.org/chrisnagy)



**“The best thing I’ve ever done was marry my wife, Wendy. The second-best thing I’ve ever done was have the surgery.”**

and in person. His newfound passion peaked when he completed a half marathon. He ran in a T-shirt that read, “503 pounds to 13.1 miles.”

His biggest fans and supporters, Mr. Nagy says — at his races and in pursuing his new goal of better health — are his wife; their grandchildren Aiden, Haven, Sela, Abram and Makinley; his stepchildren Madison and Tyler and their spouses.

What finally changed Mr. Nagy’s mind about having bariatric surgery? Time.

“Time is the most precious thing we have on this earth,” he says. And he wanted more of it with his family and to enjoy life to its fullest. When he goes on vacation now, he looks for

physical activities like hiking and climbing — things he couldn’t do before his weight loss.

Through his shift in mindset, Mr. Nagy inspires others who see him run and know his story. Being an inspiration wasn’t his intention, he says, but he’s accepted it. He encourages everyone to be fit and healthy and estimates he’s helped ignite a spark in more than 80 people to start their own weight loss journeys.

## Staying on track

Mr. Nagy says the procedure was life-changing. “The best thing I’ve ever done was marry my wife, Wendy. The second-best thing I’ve ever done was have the surgery.”

Today, physical activity and healthy eating keep Mr. Nagy’s weight between 230 and 240 pounds. He’s a regular on the running circuit, where he’s often joined by his wife. Regular health checks monitor his nutrition levels and he continues to work with dietitians.

His story is a testament to the transformative power of medical intervention, coupled with personal determination and an excellent support system. Now he’s looking forward to running his first full marathon in London in 2026.

By Lyndsey Frey

# How about a round of appaws for Geisinger’s dogs?

Meet a few of Geisinger’s furry employees with 4 paws

**Geisinger employs many furry friends to bring comfort, joy and security to patients and staff.**

Dogs in the hospital? Cute and cuddly canines play a vital role at Geisinger. From therapy pups to K-9 security dogs, furry friends bring comfort, joy and a sense of safety — plus, pooch smooches and wagging tails — to patients, visitors and staff.

Some of these 4-legged volunteers spend their days visiting patients and staff to offer unconditional love and emotional support. Others have more serious work: sniffing out possible explosives and firearms.

Get to know a few of the dogs roaming our hallways and how they help everyone have a paws-itive experience at Geisinger.

*Because of you*

Doggone! Geisinger’s K-9 security officers are supported by donations to Geisinger Health Foundation. And the Child Advocacy Center, where Ollie works, is supported through philanthropy.



Aria

**Breed:** German shepherd • **Age:** 5 years

**Birthplace:** Czech Republic

**Handler:** Vicki Housner, public safety regional K-9 handler at Geisinger

**Role at Geisinger:** Since 2021, Aria has served as Geisinger's certified Explosives Detection Police K-9, covering our central (Danville and Bloomsburg area), north-central (Muncy and Jersey Shore area) and western (Lewistown and State College area) regions

**Qualifications:** Certified in locating explosives and firearms, trained in tracking and de-escalation

**Favorite treats:** Ice cream and cupcakes

**Fun fact:** Loves to play ball, swim and keep everyone safe

**Breed:** German shorthaired pointer • **Age:** 2.5 years

**Birthplace:** Hungary

**Handler:** Karri Dodson, public safety K-9 handler at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center

**Role at Geisinger:** Since 2023, Jäger has served as Geisinger's certified Explosives Detection Police K-9, covering our northeast region (Scranton and Wilkes-Barre area)

**Qualifications:** Certified in locating explosives and firearms, trained in tracking and can assist in de-escalation

**Favorite treat:** Enjoys all dog treats — except for hard Milk-Bones®

**Fun fact:** Jäger means "hunter" in German

Jäger



Ollie

**Breed:** Goldendoodle • **Age:** 3 years

**Birthplace:** Huntingdon, Pa.

**Handler:** Alexis Smith, program coordinator at Geisinger's Child Advocacy Center

**Role at Geisinger:** Since 2024, Ollie has served as a therapy dog in Geisinger's Child Advocacy Center in Sunbury and the Paws to Reflect program

**Qualifications:** Certified therapy dog through Therapy Dogs International, and certified as a Canine Good Citizen through the American Kennel Club

**Favorite treat:** Anything with peanut butter

**Fun fact:** Loves walks, car rides, pup cups, playing with dog toys and snuggling with patients and employees



## Paws to Reflect combats provider burnout

Caregivers need care and support, too. That's why in 2022, Geisinger's Paws to Reflect program launched to combat burnout and trauma by connecting healthcare professionals with the healing power of pet therapy and peer support.

The program connects Geisinger employees with therapy dogs and their handlers, along with a peer support team,

offering an empathetic ear, relief and comfort. When needed, they can also direct staff to other resources.

Today, Paws to Reflect includes 22 dogs and handlers, along with more than 500 peer supporters. What began as an initiative to support nursing teams is now available to many Geisinger employees across several locations.

Paws to Reflect was selected for a funding grant at the NurseHack4Health Pitch-a-Thon. It was one of just 3 pitches chosen to receive full funding, out of dozens of entries from organizations across the country.

# They're fearless — because they're prepared

Imagine news has just broken. Someone in our region is suspected of carrying a new, contagious virus after traveling abroad.

Do you go into lockdown mode? Or do you say, "I'm ready to help"?

If you're one of about 90 volunteers across Geisinger who are trained to work in the biocontainment unit at Geisinger Shamokin Area Community Hospital, you'd likely do the latter.

The unit, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, is part of a national network created in response to an African Ebola outbreak.

The goal is to have self-contained spaces, staffed by people who've undergone extensive drills and training, ready for a public health threat involving any contagion.

The facility is carefully planned, with its own lab, a separate trash disposal process and an airflow and cleaning

## Meet the folks who staff Geisinger's biocontainment unit, a first line of defense against contagious disease.

system that includes airlocks for certain spaces. Every detail, right down to pass-throughs for transferring things like lab specimens between rooms, is designed to reduce any chance for the spread of contaminants.

But the unit's most important "safety features" are the people who staff it. While most folks might instinctively avoid getting close to invisible, dangerous pathogens, this team is eager to face these threats.

"We all work together," says Katherine Kemberling, emergency management director. "Everyone wants to be here."

Although most of the volunteers are scattered throughout Geisinger's footprint and only meet in person for training, "We're like family," says nursing assistant Heidi Rupp.

The team includes Geisinger employees who hold all kinds of roles, including doctors, nurses and environmental services

workers. But the nature of the work makes the team uniquely egalitarian. Cleaning — constant, careful, relentless cleaning — is done by everyone on the unit, from environmental service technicians to physicians.

And everyone is empowered to correct their teammates. "We have a culture of safety here," says Ms. Kemberling. "If you see a safety risk, you say it."

### A compelling interest in contagion control

John Harahus, RN, emergency preparedness coordinator, jumped at the chance to work at the unit when it was in development.

His interest in public health emergencies started when he was a kid after watching the 1995 movie



Members of Geisinger's emergency preparedness team practice different scenarios in the biocontainment unit at Geisinger Shamokin Area Community Hospital to make sure they're ready to care for patients in the event of a deadly outbreak.

Outbreak, about the spread of a deadly virus. "I had my mom take me to a medical library to learn about Ebola," he says. He worked on an EMS crew when he was young and later joined Geisinger's nursing staff. "When I found out they were starting a unit here, I said, 'Yes. Sign me up.'"

Ms. Kemberling and Ms. Rupp say Mr. Harahus is especially good at concocting substances that mimic bodily fluids for training. Using a cabinet full of items like cake mix, coffee grounds and oatmeal, he can replicate things like vomit — including its change in color and consistency as an Ebola case progressed.

It might sound odd, but the goal is serious. If a team member gets even a spattering of the substance on their personal protective equipment (PPE), they need to know how to handle the situation in a way that protects themselves and everyone around them.

### COVID sets team in motion

Thankfully, the unit has yet to host a patient. But the team's training was crucial to keeping Geisinger patients and staff safe during the pandemic, when members were deployed across the system as COVID safety site managers.

Rather than scaring off potential volunteers, the pandemic served as a recruiting tool. "When staff saw how effectively we reduced the risk of spreading COVID, people became passionate about the work we do," Ms. Kemberling says. "When you do things the right way, you are safe."

For example, the team follows strict protocols for donning, doffing and fitting PPE. The unit has several full-length mirrors, so team members can check and re-check their gear. And everyone, including staff who monitor team members using video cameras, watches to make

sure PPE fits properly and doesn't need adjustment.

Ms. Rupp is proud of her work during the pandemic and her ability to share her knowledge. "Not one person got COVID in the ER while I was a site manager," she says.

### Combating stress

Being ever vigilant about cleanliness and prepping endlessly to fight contagion might sound stressful. But Mr. Harahus says the endless training, both locally and with national partners, has the opposite effect.

"Training reduces stress," he says. "It becomes second nature. That's why we're more like family than coworkers. We're always looking out for each other."

And if another outbreak happens?

"I would come in no matter what," says Ms. Rupp. "I love this unit, and I want to help the patient. It's all about training."



# Advanced vascular care at your doorstep

*Rob and Linda Brown of Julian, Pa.*

## **Take heart: Smaller incisions in vascular surgery mean shorter recovery.**

Every February, American Heart Month reminds us to consider heart disease and how to prevent it (and so might the ubiquitous red valentines). But caring for your ticker goes beyond just the heart muscle — it's also about keeping all the connected blood vessels just as healthy.

"Without healthy blood vessels, you can't have a healthy heart and vice versa," says Jeremy Irvan, MD, a vascular surgeon at Geisinger. "When we live a heart-healthy lifestyle, we're not only reducing our risk for heart disease, but also heart attacks, strokes, aneurysms and more."

So, take your health to heart this February by talking to your doctor about routine vascular screenings. If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity or other vascular disease risk factors, preventive screenings can save your life.

By Lyndsey Frey

## Advanced vascular care close to home

Your blood vessels — veins, which carry blood to your heart, and arteries, which carry blood to the rest of your body — can have a variety of conditions, from common to complex. Some we consider unsightly or uncomfortable, like varicose veins and spider veins. More serious conditions include peripheral artery disease, stroke, blood clots and aneurysms.

Central and northeastern Pennsylvanians can find world-class care for all these conditions from Geisinger's vascular surgeons, who are trained in the latest technology, diagnostic testing and treatments for vascular conditions. Whenever possible, they use minimally invasive surgery, such as robotic and image-guided techniques.

"For the patient, this means smaller incisions, shorter hospital stays and recovery times with a reduced risk of complications," says Dr. Irvan. "Some marks left behind are no bigger than you'd see from a simple IV placement."

He points to one advanced procedure called transcarotid artery revascularization (TCAR) that he's been performing on patients since 2018. TCAR is a stenting procedure to improve blood flow to the brain and prevent a stroke. But it offers a key advantage over traditional stenting by reversing blood flow across the blockage, decreasing the risk of a piece of plaque breaking off, which could cause a stroke.

"TCAR is a new way to deploy a stent for someone who has carotid narrowing and a risk for stroke," says Dr. Irvan. "The 'gold standard' open surgery to remove plaque from the carotid artery is known as endarterectomy. But studies have shown TCAR is approaching equivalent outcomes with endarterectomy. That's profound."

## Easy recovery from vascular surgery

Centre County resident Rob Brown recently had TCAR to open up a narrowing in his carotid artery. A local hospital had referred Mr. Brown to Dr. Irvan after doctors discovered the blockage while treating him for a minor stroke — because Geisinger is the only healthcare system in the region with the facilities and expertise to do the procedure.

Dr. Irvan made a small incision above Mr. Brown's collarbone to place the stent, using only local anesthetic. And because Mr. Brown chose to be awake during the procedure, he had a remarkable recovery and great outcome.

"As soon as the procedure was finished, I was done and ready to go," says the 77-year-old retired social studies teacher. "The recovery was so easy. The care I received was top of the line."

See more of Rob Brown's story:

▶ [geisinger.org/robbrown](https://www.geisinger.org/robbrown)

## Arterial surgery helps outdoorsman rediscover his passion

Michael Gill, 66, had always been an outdoorsman. But over the past few years, the Clearfield, Pa., resident couldn't hike, hunt and fish like he used to. His left leg had weakened to the point that he developed a limp and would have to stop and rest constantly when he was on his feet.

"I had to give up a lot of things I enjoyed doing," says Mr. Gill. "I assumed the reality was that my days of doing things I love were over."

That all changed after an orthopaedist referred him to Geisinger vascular surgeon Jeremy Irvan, MD. Dr. Irvan discovered Mr. Gill had peripheral arterial disease — a blockage in his iliac artery that restricted blood flow to his leg.

In November 2023, Mr. Gill had an outpatient procedure during which Dr. Irvan placed a stent to open the blocked artery. Almost immediately, his leg strength returned to normal. He could go right back to his previous level of activity, with no restrictions. Just 2 days after his surgery, Mr. Gill hiked 1.5 miles.

"I was zooming around the woods. I hadn't been able to do that for a long time," he says. "I'm just elated. Until Geisinger did the procedure, I didn't realize what I had lost."





# Spiritual care with a human touch

By Kimberly Adler-Morelli

**A** hospital chaplain's job entails more than saying a few prayers and offering comfort. To patients, their families and even hospital staff, these unsung heroes of healthcare are a calming presence, a listening ear and a guiding light in navigating the complex journey of illness, injury and recovery.

Alongside the clinical and administrative staff, the spiritual services team plays a vital role in supporting everyone who needs help at Geisinger. Whether listening, praying or just sitting with people, chaplains are the heart — and soul — of the hospital.

"It's about being a calm presence in the storm, guiding families through the process and providing emotional and spiritual support," says Anne Kasper, manager of spiritual care chaplain services at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center.

For example, when a patient comes in through the emergency room, the chaplains spring into action. They confirm the patient's identification and emergency contact information, greet family members and aid communication between the family and medical staff. Follow-up care and support also are crucial aspects of their role.

"It's about being present — being there for people in their most vulnerable moments," Chaplain Kasper says.

## A path of learning and growth

Geisinger chaplains go through extensive education and training before practicing in a hospital setting. They must hold a master's degree from a college, university or theological school. Then the Geisinger School of Spiritual Care provides residency training, which involves seminars, class time, interpersonal relations training and clinical work.

The learning doesn't end there. Chaplains keep up with current theological and scientific literature related to spirituality and health. They must be familiar with different faiths and traditions, maintaining resources from religious texts to contacts such as imams or Buddhist monks.

## Supporting the medical care team

While the spiritual services team cares for patients and their families, they're also a calming presence for the hospital staff. Dan Hamilton, a chaplain at Geisinger Lewistown Hospital, remembers

supporting employees during the second wave of COVID in September 2021. "Several members of the healthcare team had family members die," he says.

Chaplain Hamilton and team can be a sounding board for hospital staff in a high-stress environment. Sometimes it's just about validating their feelings and helping them understand they're having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.

Chaplains even have a hand in educating medical residents on what they do and how they can help, passing along their skills of empathy and emotional support.

## Care for the whole person

Chaplain Hamilton recalls a woman in hospice, wracked with pain and unresolved emotional turmoil. In helping her express unresolved feelings to her mother through a letter, he eased her pain in her body and her heart, highlighting the deep connection between emotional and physical well-being.

A chaplain's work often involves addressing existential questions and spiritual suffering. They provide a safe space for those in crisis to work through their feelings and come to peace with what's happening to them or their loved one.

Julie Stumpf, a chaplain at Geisinger Wyoming Valley, says a big part of helping someone spiritually is assessing who they are as a person. "What are their personal coping strategies or belief systems? Identifying them allows us to help them use those tools in their current situation," she says.

That happens through simply listening. "The key to everything we do is to listen to what they're saying, and sometimes it's just reflecting it back to them," says Chaplain Stumpf. "What they need is someone to be present with them, hear them and allow them to feel whatever it is they're going through in the moment."

*Because of you*

Geisinger PrayerNet is a website where volunteers provide

prayer, comfort and support. It's free and available to everyone, regardless of faith.

PrayerNet is funded through generous donor support.

To submit a prayer request, pray for others or donate funds, visit [prayernet.geisinger.org](https://prayernet.geisinger.org).

*At left: The Rea Interfaith Chapel at Geisinger Medical Center, Danville*



# A silver palate

Hospitals aren't known for their tasty food. That's because patients need meals that are high in nutrition, low in salt and soft.

But did you know Geisinger serves up plenty of mouth-watering fare, from wood-fired pizza to sushi, for staff and visitors?

In fact, two foodservice employees — Brian Dixon, regional operations director, and Brianne George, supervisor of foodservice at Geisinger Medical Center Muncy — recently took home a silver medal at the national 2024 Association for Healthcare Foodservice Culinary Competition.

It's basically *Iron Chef* for healthcare

The chicken and cheese quesadilla is the most popular meal in Geisinger cafeterias.

chefs, which means it's even tougher than the show.

Not only did their pan-seared venison with blackberry-infused

Bordelaise sauce have to taste great, but a serving had to come in at 700 calories max, with less than 23 grams of fat and less than 750 mg of sodium. And all at a cost of no more than \$8 a portion.

## The path to Geisinger

So how does a love of cooking lead to a career in healthcare?

For Mr. Dixon, it started when his grandfather encouraged him to make the most of his cooking talent by attending culinary school. "I didn't know what that was," Mr. Dixon admits.

But off to Penn College's culinary school he went. In his last semester, Mr. Dixon learned about a full-time

cook position at Geisinger. "And here I am," he says. "July of next year will be 20 years with Geisinger."

During those 2 decades, Mr. Dixon used Geisinger's tuition reimbursement program to earn his MBA at Bloomsburg University. He worked his way up from cook to regional director, and now he oversees foodservice for Geisinger's hospitals in Bloomsburg, Muncy, Jersey Shore and Lewistown.

Ms. George's path to Geisinger wasn't quite as direct. "While working in a modular housing company, I spackled and painted and all those things," she says. "And I would cook meals for our team to enjoy when we had breaks."

Her lasagna, meatballs and other dishes, which her Italian grandmother taught her to make, earned high praise from her coworkers. "They said, 'You're good at this, but you should go to culinary school,'" she recalls. "And I was like, 'Huh?'"

After her initial uncertainty passed, Ms. George attended Le Cordon Bleu, a culinary school in Atlanta, where she studied under French chefs. Upon graduating, she held a number of roles — catering, cooking, bartending and running pizza places. Something didn't feel right, though.

"I was missing home. And missing my parents," she says. "So I applied for Geisinger when I was still living in Atlanta."

When Ms. George moved back to central Pennsylvania, Mr. Dixon hired her as the foodservice supervisor at the

In the past year, Geisinger purchased more than 189 tons of produce for meals.

brand-new Geisinger Medical Center Muncy, where she's been for 3 years. But cooking for a hospital took some adjustment. No more late nights — and far less salt and butter than fine French cuisine calls for.

**The mystery ingredient they had to incorporate into their competition recipe: tamarind!**

"It was like shell shock for me," says Ms. George, laughing.

## Food that's good for your wallet, too

Cost is nearly as big a consideration as nutrition in preparing meals for patients, visitors and Geisinger employees.

"We kind of have a captive audience with the employees here every day," Mr. Dixon says. "We try to be mindful and keep our price points as low as possible while outside food sources are becoming more expensive."

They source local, fresh, in-season ingredients whenever possible, and everything is homemade. "We put love into it," says Ms. George. "We want our patients to be happy and we want our staff members not to go somewhere else to eat."

And why would they? Ms. George's hospital, Geisinger Medical Center

Muncy, is at the platinum level in the Good Food, Healthy Hospitals program. That means it meets all 5 of the program's standards for

food served throughout the hospital: patient meals, cafeteria service, catering, vending and purchasing plans.

## Putting their cooking to the test

This marked their third year entering the AHF's competition. As soon as this year's "market basket" was revealed, Ms. George and Mr. Dixon started coming up with ideas for a dish they could make using the required ingredients. Once their recipe was picked as a finalist, they spent the next 3 or 4 months practicing and fine-tuning it.

By the time the competition began, they could make the whole recipe in 75 minutes using nothing but 2 induction burners and 2 chafing dishes. "The only thing you can start with is boiling water," says Ms. George.

But they finished with a silver medal.



Brianna George and Brian Dixon plate their venison dish during the AHF Culinary Competition.



**2024 AHF Culinary Competition  
Silver medal winner!**

## Pan-seared venison with blackberry-infused Bordelaise sauce

*Served over a fennel mirepoix cowpea cake and peach vinaigrette-dressed dandelion greens, with honeyed goat cheese and candied figs.*

Farm-raised venison is seasoned simply and seared until tender and juicy. It lies over a fennel mirepoix cowpea cake, providing a light crunch and smooth texture. Traditionally rich Bordelaise sauce is infused with fresh blackberry to give it a burst of robust sweetness. The peach vinaigrette perfectly balances earthy dandelion greens, while the honeyed goat cheese and candied figs provide a sweet, tangy finish to this flavorful dish.

Is your mouth watering? See the full recipe, plus plating instructions: [geisinger.org/venison](https://geisinger.org/venison)

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And because we offer more robots than any other provider, you'll enjoy optimal accessibility and convenience, along with superior outcomes and a smoother recovery.

Visit [geisinger.org/fixmyjoints](http://geisinger.org/fixmyjoints) and see the difference our surgeons' innovation and expertise can make in your journey to pain-free movement.

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