

Exhibiting Compassion

VISUAL ARTS
INSPIRE COMFORT
AND HEALING AT
SENTARA MARTHA
JEFFERSON

Jacquelyn Ragland, a retired Charlottesville educator, knows firsthand the healing power of art and beauty. Five years ago, diagnosed with aggressive non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and facing down an intensive course of chemotherapy and radiation, she signed up for an art therapy class at the Sentara Martha Jefferson Phillips Cancer Center.

"In the midst of the procedures and treatments and blood tests, creating something felt so healthy and healing," Ragland recalls. "I don't remember what I even made, but I do remember how the process made me feel. It was absolutely a direction that my soul wanted and needed to go. The class was so therapeutic."



Cancer survivor Jacquelyn Ragland drew on the beautiful art of the Phillips Cancer Center to find a sense of calm and balance during her cancer journey.



The hospital's 1,200 piece permanent collection includes the Elm Street series by Virginia artist Rob Browning.

Healing, Calming Spaces

Recognizing that healing comes in many forms, Sentara Martha Jefferson's leadership team makes an intentional effort to integrate beauty and art into the hospital campus. From the colors on the walls to the quiet beauty of the surrounding mountains, the facility is situated in a healing environment designed to provide a sense of comfort and caring.

This focus on thoughtful design puts Sentara Martha Jefferson in good company, as more than half of America's hospitals are now infusing art therapy into their design and programming by brightening hospital walls, offering classes and in other ways. According to the World Health Organization, infusing art into the healthcare setting benefits patients' loved ones and healthcare providers, in addition to helping patients navigate the emotional journey of battling an illness.

"Having something beautiful to look at when you're sick is a wonderful thing," says Matalie Deane, who worked at Sentara Martha Jefferson as a respiratory therapist for 34 years. Now a professional artist herself, Deane leads the hospital's Art Committee.

Comprised of board members, physicians, staff and volunteers, the committee is charged with selecting original art and media, and determining where that artwork will be placed in the hospital. The 1,200-piece permanent collection includes large works that can be appreciated from across



Art Committee chair and artist Matalie Deane enjoys sharing the hospital's art with her young granddaughter.



A generous gift from Marty and Ann Meth enabled the purchase of beautiful art pieces by regional artist Susan McAllister for a hospitalist conference space dedicated to the memory of their beloved son-in-law, Nicholas C. Brandt, MD.

the lobby, as well as others that beg one to approach and marvel at small details.

“What they all have in common is an ability to divert attention, engage the mind and lift spirits,” says Carol Hurt, chair of the Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital Board of Directors. “All of the pieces are also created locally, from a community of artists that is so vibrant, we rarely need to look outside of Charlottesville to find pieces that intentionally connect patients, visitors and staff with our beautiful surroundings.”

The hospital’s permanent collection is supplemented by rotating art exhibits that are thoughtfully assembled and kept fresh in the maternity ward, the lab testing area and the cancer center—higher-traffic areas where patients and visitors might feel the most anxiety. Also keeping in mind how many hours hospital staff members put in, the Art Committee regularly rotates art in busy hospital corridors.

Support This Work

Visit mjhfoundation.org to download a walking tour and support the art collection through the Kitty Stroud Fund.

Sharing Your Love Through Art: Special Exhibitions Showcase Local Artists



“My art is my passion,” says figurative artist Bryan Trent Fair, a Central Virginia native who honed his craft studying with well-known artists on the East and West Coasts before moving home to Buckingham County and joining the Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital team as an executive assistant.

Fair, who currently serves on Sentara Martha Jefferson’s Art Committee, was recently featured in a hospital exhibition of portraits that paid homage to classic Hollywood icons. The paintings hung in the second floor Phillips Cancer Center hallway in one of three rotating exhibit spaces, all of which were designed to be accessible as a source of comfort for anxious patients and families.

The Art Committee looks for two-dimensional work (no sculpture) that is bright, engaging and uplifting. Exhibitions rotate every few months and typically include five to 10 works. Art is available for purchase.

“This is a great opportunity for local artists to display their work for the community, in a way that really makes a difference,” Fair says.

To find out more about exhibiting your artwork, contact Renee Dinwiddie at rmwalker@sentara.com.

“The intentional art creates a more calming space for patients—and also for staff walking between units,” says Sentara Martha Jefferson hospitalist Mark Mandichak, MD.

Art also adorns the walls in many of the staff spaces, including a recently dedicated hospitalist conference room honoring the memory of Nicholas C. Brandt, MD. The space features two beautiful landscape paintings by regional artist Susan McAllister that were gifted to the hospital by Dr. Brandt’s family.

Choosing Joy

When Jacquelyn Ragland first received her frightening diagnosis, her doctor told her, “It’s a bad cancer, but you don’t have a lot of it, so I think we might be OK.”

Today, Ragland is cancer-free, feeling healthy and enjoying retirement, grateful every day for the team of doctors who saw her through her diagnosis, treatment and recovery. She also remembers the healing power of the art on Sentara Martha Jefferson’s walls.

“I recall several times when I would stand in front of one of those paintings to have a personal ‘mini-retreat’ before a treatment,” she says. “The beauty and the calming scenes balanced out the more difficult parts of my healing process. They gave me an opportunity to choose light, joy and creation.”