

Art can help bring solace and salve to patients who are undergoing the stress that comes with a difficult diagnosis. Leaders at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center in Alton believe so strongly in the healing power of art, they are taking special care in the selection of art that will be included in the new Moeller Cancer Center that is set to open this fall.

Sister M. Anselma, chief operating officer at OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center, says the environment can greatly influence a patient's anxiety level.

"Particularly for those who are struggling with medical crisis or situations of uncertainty; this environment, what they see, what they feel, what they hear, what they take in makes a huge difference, she said.

There have been some studies that indicate better outcomes for patients who have been admitted to a hospital when they have a view of nature. One of the first and still cited studies involved 23 surgical patients assigned to rooms with windows looking out on a natural scene in Pennsylvania.

They had shorter postoperative hospital stays, received fewer negative evaluative comments in nurses' notes, and took fewer potent analgesics than the same number of matched patients in similar rooms with windows facing a brick building wall.

Sister has heard many anecdotes about patients heading into surgery becoming transfixed on art featuring a scene from nature.

"They have an ability to focus on that and they can enter into that scene in that picture let the chaos around them fall away. I've heard people with these types of experiences and it's very powerful."

Sister Anselma says the power of the sun, water and land has always been able to fill the soul with renewed energy and viewing scenes of nature inspires hope there will be many more opportunities to enjoy that experience. Sister believes even a bright palette can allow viewers to ease into a place of peace and be uplifted.

By design, the infusion area of the Moeller Cancer Center will include plenty of light-filled inspiration as patients spend at times, possibly several hours immersed in chemotherapy. The Center will have a healing garden visible to patients from where they'll sit at infusion bays strategically open to the view.

She believes nature-themed art that focuses on renewal or new beginnings will complement the garden view and other areas that will be open and light-filled.

A passion for art came from the time Sister Anselma was a young child and tagging along with her mother to help an artist friend and neighbor sell her paintings at weekend fairs and festivals. Likewise, in announcing a two-year sponsorship of [the Jacoby Arts Center's](#) Main Gallery, Saint Anthony's President Ajay Pathak affirmed his support for art's transformative and healing powers.

"Art can be a refuge from the intense emotions associated with illness," he declared.

Darla Andree is a dance instructor at the Jacoby Arts Center. Andree, a self-declared introvert, says she is often restored spiritually by the healing power of artistic expression.

"As a student, I often experienced the same thing that my students experience – having a bad day, go to dance class, really internalize what's going on and feel much better," she shared. She also believes participating in a public performance or collectively viewing any one of the performing arts uniquely connects people through that shared experience.

"It leaves me feeling much more emotionally open and feeling just good in general and feeling connected to people that perhaps in other ways I might not be connected to if there are subjects that, you know, one

doesn't agree on. It's the universal language," Andree said referencing an often repeated sentiment about dance.

Andree has also taught dance to developmentally or physically disabled students but she says individuals living with mental and physical challenges love the ability to express themselves through art.

So with anecdotal evidence and some scientific research to back it, Sister Anselma announced the Ministry is seeking to purchase art to enhance the healing environment of the new Moeller Cancer Center at OSF Saint Anthony's.

A committee, including some cancer survivors, will review submissions that must be made by **May 1, 2019**.

Selected artwork should:

- Reflect the natural beauty of the Riverbend area.
- Be consistent with the OSF HealthCare Mission of serving with the greatest care and love in the Spirit of Christ.
- Illustrate nature and new beginnings such as spring, summer, sunrises, trees, plants, flowers and birds.
- Express themes such as light, strength, health, healing, wholeness, beauty, peace and freshness.
- Figurative art should be non-abstract, depicting positive messages.

Items sought should include:

Photography or paintings

- Several pieces approximately 30-by-20 inches
- Some pieces that are approximately 4-by-5 feet
- Potential for a large panoramic piece
- Two pieces of 3D art to fit a 2-by-4 foot space
- Suspended art for 17-foot ceilings in the infusion area

To submit, send photos, concepts, or renderings plus details such as dimensions and mounting requirements along with name and contact information to [OSFCallforArt@gmail.com](mailto:OSFCallforArt@gmail.com)

If the file size of submission exceeds email capabilities, please send an email notification you are using an alternative method of submission.

[Learn more](#) about how you can support the Moeller Cancer Center.

