

Newsletter

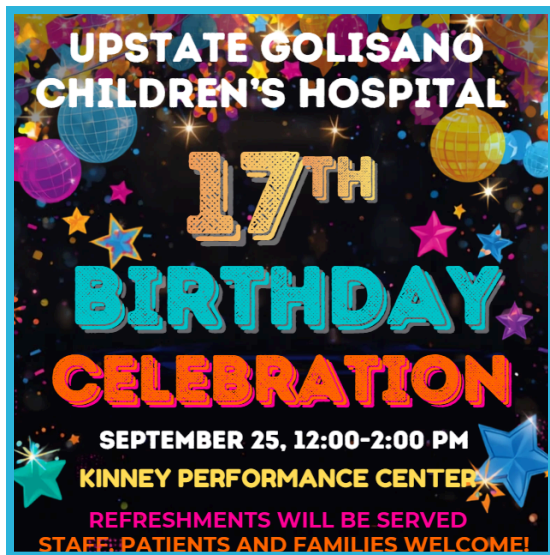
STAY IN THE LOOP WITH UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Happy 17th Birthday Upstate Golisano!

🎉🌟 Dust off your dancing shoes and mark your calendars! **We're celebrating 17 years** of making a difference next week, September 21–25, with a disco-themed Birthday Party on September 25th! 🎉🌟



[Print here](#)



[Print here!](#)



[Print here!](#)



[Print here!](#)



[Print here!](#)

UGCH Apparel Sale: The apparel sale is currently active! Check out the merch here: [Upstate Golisano Apparel Sale](#).

Announcements

Upstate Opens Kimberly and John Mezzalingua Pediatric Behavioral Health After Hours Center

Upstate University Hospital recently celebrated the opening of the Kimberly and John Mezzalingua Pediatric Behavioral Health After Hours Center, a first-of-its-kind program in Central New York providing after-hours behavioral health support for children and adolescents. Located on the second floor of the Nappi Wellness Institute, the center offers walk-in evaluations, therapy, medication management, short-term follow-up care, and telephone triage for children ages 5 to 18 experiencing mental health concerns that do not require

emergency medical care. Supported by a \$5 million gift from Kimberly and John Mezzalingua, the center will also help expand the pediatric behavioral health workforce by supporting the recruitment and training of specialized providers.

🌐 [Upstate opens Kimberly and John Mezzalingua Pediatric Behavioral Health After Hours Center | U...](#)

UGCH Renovations

Our Family Space renovations on the 12th floor are coming along! Renovations to the 11th and 12th floor waiting rooms will begin soon to create comfortable and inviting areas for families to rest, recharge, and connect. Thank you for your patience as we make these improvements.

Expansion of the Golisano Center for Special Needs into the remainder of the Madison Irving Medical Center third floor continues to progress!

40th Annual Nursing Excellence Celebration!

If you would like to attend, tickets are available here: [UpstateFDN](#).



The 40th Annual
Upstate Nursing Excellence Celebration
You're Invited!

WEDNESDAY
OCT | 07 | 2026
AT 4:30 PM

4:30pm Celebration Begins/Networking Hour
5:30pm Welcome Guests/Call for Seating
5:45pm Dinner Begins
6:45pm Award Presentation

Marriott
Syracuse
Downtown

Semi-formal attire, masks are encouraged!

Awardees from Pediatrics!

11E Robert Castillow 12F: Medena Kawar BBHU Maisha Brown Peds Hem/Onc Cancer Center Rebecca Walker Sabrina Naylor Quality & Safety: Michelle Jeski	Peds Pulmonary: Julie Sequin Peds Support Pool & Float Pool: Shamika Blyden-Mayo Peds SWAT: Dawn Akkoul Renee Buck Melissa Warner Jessica Falgiatano
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2026 Awardees



NURSING RECOGNITION FOR EXCELLENCE IN PHARMACEUTICAL CARE AWARD

Leah Rizzo, BSN, RN
Travis Volitine, BSN, RN
Alaina Stojkowski, RN
Medena Kavar, RN, CPN, CCRN
Kristin Rapasadi, RN
Heather Coleman, BSN, RN, OCN
Julie Seguin, BSN, RN

WILLIAM PAINTER CLINICAL PRACTICE AWARD

Genevieve Gabrielsen, BSN, RN, TCRN

WILLIAM PAINTER MANAGERIAL PRACTICE AWARD

Beth Wells, MSN, RN

DAISY INDIVIDUAL AWARD

Christopher Wieland, RN
Meaghan Riffle, BSN, RN
Sarah Hirsch, BSN, RN, CMSRN
Victoria Brown, BSN, RN
Rebecca Walker, BSN, RN
Jenny Nguyen, RN
Makenzie Desbiens, RN
Ashley Wojtczak, BSN, RN, CCRN
Robert Castillow, BSN, RN
Sabrina Naylor, BSN, RN
Grace Stone, RN
TBA

BEE AWARD

Danilo Esperon, HCT
Ghaffran Alshemmary, HCT
Roseline Kadio, HCT
Andrea Gemmill, MHTA
Tennille Weaver, UST
Ciara Glen, HCT
Shannon Knight, SOT
Printa Benallou, HCT
John Lando, MHTA
Gavin Ciszewski, UST
Nakita Cogger, HCT
Taylor Coleman, HCT

UMESCHANDRA PATIL FAMILY PEDIATRIC ENDOWMENT EDUCATION & ENRICHMENT AWARD

Dawn Akkoul, RN, CCRN, C-NPT
Maisha Brown, BSN, RN
Shamika Blyden-Mayo, DNP, RN, CNML, CPN
Renee Buck, RN, CPN, CBRN, CPEN, C-NPT
Jessica Falgiano, CPNP-C, CPN, CCRN,
CFRN, CPEN, CEN, C-NPT, CTRN, TCRN
Melissa Warner, BSN, RN

MAUREEN OHARA AWARD

Michelle Jeski, DNP, RN, PCNS-BC, CPN

SPIRIT OF SOCIAL WORK AWARD

Loren Ulrich, LMSW

EXCELLENCE IN GERIATRIC CARE AWARD

Genevieve Gabrielsen, BSN, RN, TCRN
Kristen Thornton, HCT

DAISY NURSE LEADER AWARD

Todd Schuler, MSN, MBA, RN

DAISY TEAM AWARD

6th Floor Orthopedics

COLLABORATING COLLEAGUE AWARD

Quinnonei Bell-hunter, CSPT

PRECEPTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Diana Clark, RN, OCN

INNOVATION OF THE YEAR AWARD

'Geospatial Mapping of EMS-Dispatched
Falls Among Older Adults: Five-Year
Descriptive Study'

Anthony Scalise, MBA, MS, FNP, RN,
CCRN, CEN, TCRN, NREMT and Team

SPIRIT OF NURSING AWARD

Kimberly Cerasani, NP-C

NANCY PAGE NURSING LEADERSHIP AWARD

TBA

Mandatory Training

The following courses are mandatory for all employees and must be completed by December 2026:

- Institutional Compliance Education
- HIPAA Privacy and Security Awareness Training
- Cybersecurity Training
- Ethics Live Training

Access to the education on compliance, HIPAA, and cybersecurity is available via Brightspace through the Upstate iPage.

Access to the live ethics course is available here <https://www.upstate.edu/pdl/intra/register/index.php?topicid=148516> as well as annualethics@upstate.edu.

Strategic Plan Updates

Quarterly Update

If you missed our previous quarterly update on 7/30, you can find the recording here:

[UGCH Quarterly Update Meeting July 30 2026.mp4](#).

The next Quarterly Update meeting will be on 10/29 at 12:00 p.m.

Inpatient Updates

Pediatric Quality & Safety September newsletter [here](#).

Shoutouts & Celebrations!

Faculty Convocation Honors Pediatric Leaders

Upstate Medical University recognized more than two dozen individuals for outstanding service, leadership, research, and community impact during its Fall Faculty Convocation on September 9th.

Congratulations to our pediatric honorees on this well-deserved recognition! 🎉

Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Faculty Service

Steven Blatt, MD, Professor of Pediatrics

Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Classified Service

Robin Jodoin, Administrative Assistant, Pediatrics

President's Award for Excellence in Clinical or Translational Research by a Young Investigator

Andrew Craig, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA, Associate Professor of Behavior Analysis Studies

President's Award for Excellence in Faculty Service

Nienke Dosa, MD, MPH, Professor of Pediatrics and Family Medicine

President's Award for Excellence in Voluntary Faculty

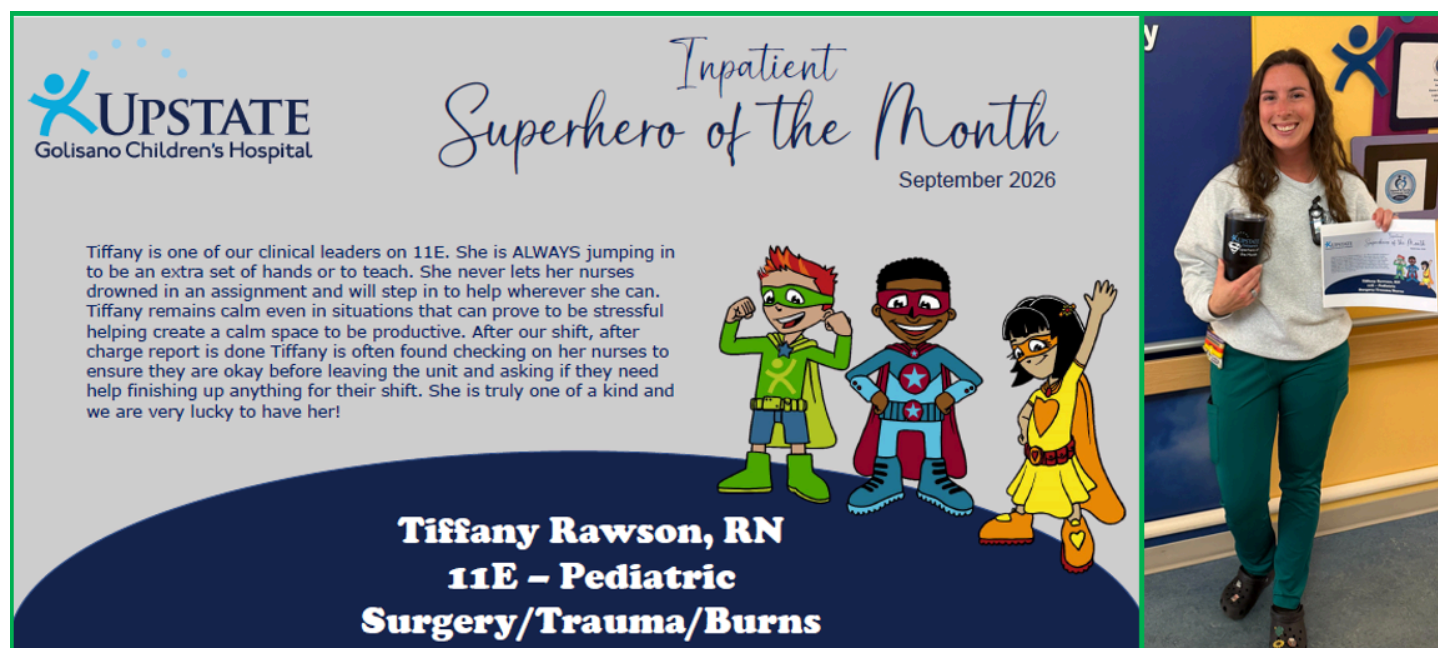
Sean Smith, PhD, College of Health Professions

President's Award for Excellence in Teaching

Travis Hobart, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, College of Medicine

Dr. Gregory Conners also received the designation of **SUNY Distinguished Service Professor**, recognizing his longstanding commitment to extraordinary service and leadership within Upstate and beyond.

🎉 Congratulations to our August Inpatient and Ambulatory Superheroes! 🎉





Ambulatory Superhero of the Month

September 2026

Anne has worked tirelessly with the Upstate CARE Program at McMahon Ryan Child Advocacy Center for 25 years. I've worked with her for the last 20 and have observed her to embody the superhero qualities every single day. Examples are easy to come by. For example, yesterday she alerted me to a missed opportunity for appropriate photo-documentation for a survivor of sexual assault who was evaluated outside of our program. She was concerned this might impact the legal case, came to me with a proposed plan and then spoke with the family about the issue and listened compassionately, helping them weigh the pros and cons of an earlier outpatient visit with our program to obtain better photo-documentation. Anne does this type of work every single day for our program and the community.



**Anne Galloway, RN, Manager,
CARE Program, McMahon Ryan
Child Advocacy Center**



Nominate a Superhero!

Do you have a coworker who represents UGCH PEDS?

Uplifting
Genuine
Compassionate
Hardworking

Patient/Family Centered
Empathetic
Dedicated
Supportive



Anyone can be nominated both
Inpatient and Outpatient!



**Scan QR
code or
click [here](#)
to vote!**



Congratulations!

Peds Support Pool RN, **Sabrina Synesael**, just
passed her CPN (Certified Pediatric Nurse)
Certification exam! Way to Go!



 Patient & family praise for our staff from Press Ganey surveys! 

Inpatient

11E

Gabby, RN
Emily, RN
Meal Servers
Hope
Maura, RN
Katherine Sanderson
Bre
Alyssa

12E

Angela, RN

12F

Jenna, Medical Student
Matt, Volunteer

Outpatient

Peds Cancer Center

Brooke
Joslyn

Peds Neph/Rheum:

Dr. Baluta

Peds Pulm:

Front Desk Staff
Courtney Amedro
Mary Foster
Dr. Yabe-Gill

Peds ID:

Lab Tech
Receptionist

Upstate Peds:

Dr. Schurman
Dr. Sisskind
Front Desk Staff
Olivia Myers
Dr. Okhman

UPAC:

Dr. Sloan
Jacqueline Kelly, NP
Dr. Berry

Peds GI:

Front Desk Receptionist
Dr. Justinich
Dr. Rivera

GCSN

Erin Blair
Front Desk
Jessica Petrick

Peds Surgery

Nursing Staff

Getting to Know Our UGCH Team

Who am I?

Hello, my name is **Shamika Blyden-Mayo, DNP, RN, CNML, CPN**. I'm a Pediatric Nurse Manager at Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital, overseeing the Pediatric Float Pool, Pediatric Support Pool, and Pediatric Throughput. I recently earned my DNP in Educational Leadership, which was an important personal and professional goal for me.

What attracted me to this role?

Working in the Pediatric Float Pool allowed me to work throughout the Children's Hospital and Pediatric ED and build relationships with staff across many areas. I wanted to continue growing professionally while also helping bridge the gaps between units. I've always believed that although we work in different areas, we are one team working together to serve our children and families.

What do I enjoy most about my job?

I really enjoy watching my staff grow. I love seeing new nurses in the Support Pool become confident nurses, build their skills, earn certifications, and continue their education. I enjoy watching my Float Pool nurses develop as leaders and seeing our techs grow in their roles, with some going back to school and becoming nurses. Even when staff transfers to other units, I'm proud to see them continue to grow and develop. Seeing their progress makes me proud.

Fun fact about me:

I've been known to sing over Vocera to remind staff to approve their timecards. I even gave the PICU a performance once!



Upcoming Events

Child Life Calendar of Events: ([print October here](#))

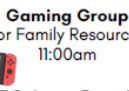
September 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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21  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	22  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	23  Coffee House Karaoke 12th Floor Family Resource Center 12:30pm	24  Between 11am and 1pm Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	25  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
28  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	29  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	30  BINGO 11th Floor Performance Center 2:30pm	1  Syracuse Common Council Story and Activity 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	2  Movie on the Big Screen 11th Floor Performance Center 1:00pm

October 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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28  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	29  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	30	1	2  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
5  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	6  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	7  Sound Bath for Caregivers 12th Floor Solarium 2:00pm	8  Short visit in your room Between 11am and 1pm Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	9  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
12  INDIGENOUS PEOPLE day	13  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am  Utica Zoomobile 11th Floor Performance Center 2:00pm	14	15  Short visit in your room Between 11am and 1pm Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	16  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
19  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	20  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am	21	22  Short visit in your room Between 11am and 1pm Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	23  Music Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm
26  Family Lunch 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:45am-12:30pm	27  Gaming Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 11:00am  MOST Science Experiments 11th Floor Performance Center 2:00pm	28  BINGO 11th Floor Performance Center 2:30pm	29  Art Group 12th Floor Family Resource Center 2:00pm	30  Halloween Parade 11th Floor Performance Center 10:30am

***All events are subject to change and your/your child's ability to participate depends on everyone's health and safety. Please ask your nurse before attending any events.**

Halloween 🎃!

Volunteers needed for our annual Halloween parade Friday, October 30th. All volunteers must have an Upstate ID to participate and be willing to supply treats to pass out to patients. Child-friendly costumes are encouraged. To register as a volunteer, email Maggie Burns at BurnsMar@Upstate.edu.

Decorate a pumpkin for this year's Halloween pumpkin decorating contest, to be held the week of Oct. 26. Participants must provide their own pumpkin(s). To participate, email Maggie Burns at BurnsMar@Upstate.edu.

Flu Clinics Coming!

More information on specific times for the clinics listed below will be forthcoming. Save the dates:

- Friday, Sept. 25, 2244 Academic Building
- Monday, Oct. 5, Performance Center
- Friday, Oct. 23, Performance Center
- Monday, Oct. 26, Community Room at Community
- Friday, Nov. 6, Performance Center

Upstate Foundation Updates

Allocations Applications Due 9/25: Upstate staff are welcome to submit applications for projects that enhance the pediatric patient experience at Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital. Guidelines and applications are available here: [2026 Upstate Foundation GCH Allocation Application – Fill out the form](#). It's due Sept. 25 by 4 p.m. Questions? Email Rebecca Broome at BroomeR@upstate.edu.

Miracle Family Requests: Know a charismatic, funny patient eager to share their story? Recommend them for our Miracle Family program! We're seeking new families to represent the Upstate Foundation and UGCH at 2026 community events. **Nominations:** Please check with the family and send their information to Cassandra Rucker at ruckerc@upstate.edu.

Upcoming Events — Thank a UGCH Partner!

Spirit of Halloween

Collecting donations: September 1–October 31

Tops Friendly Markets

Free Gas & Groceries campaign: September 27–October 10

Price Chopper & Market 32

Collecting donations: October 1–31

Love's Travel Stops

Collecting donations at the Binghamton and Waterloo locations: August 21–September 25. Celebrate National Coffee Day! \$1 from every coffee purchase will be donated to UGCH.

Matthews Auto Walk-A-Thon — October 3: Walk anywhere! Join us in person at the Rail Trail in Vestal, NY, or walk in your neighborhood, on a treadmill, or at your favorite park.

- **Pledge to walk:** Matthews Auto will donate \$10 to UGCH for every mile you walk on October 3. Pledges are on the honor system.
- Choose "**Upstate Golisano Binghamton/Syracuse**" as your charity of choice.
- **♥ Challenge:** Register yourself and recruit a friend!
- [Click here to register: Matthews Auto Annual Walk-A-Thon](#)

Welcome to the Team!



Ambulatory:

3NOR:

Molly Veator, RN (from SOT)

Peds Pulmonary:

Tootie Perryman, RN (from LPN)

UPAC:

Brianna Doohar, OAS

Inpatient:

11E:

Janee Deluca, RN

Jahdaiszha Dowdell, HCT

12E

Gianna Leonard, RN

Sandra Pineda, RN

12F:

Hadley Michaels, RN

Peds Float Pool

Shannon Dooley, SCA

BBHU:

Renee Capria, Beh Tech

Daniel Condon, MHTA

Aliga Elhgyne, TN

Reeves Osemwegie, TN

Peds ED:

Emma Evanchak, RN

Madison Rufus, UST

Donella Fields, TN

Ciara Moreta, LPN

Welcome Dr. Alex Nanchanatt to Upstate Cancer Center as a Pediatric Hematologist/Oncologist



Please join us in welcoming Dr. Nanchanatt to Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital! Inspired by the patients and families he met throughout his life and medical training, he pursued a career in pediatric hematology and oncology. He completed his fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center/NewYork-Presbyterian Weill Cornell, where his research focused on improving outcomes for children with lymphoma. Dr. Nanchanatt is excited to bring his expertise to CNY and looks forward to caring for children and supporting their families throughout their treatment journeys. He is also eager to contribute to clinical research that advances pediatric cancer care.

Join us in welcoming a new member of the Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine, Nisha Qazi, MD. Dr. Qazi joined the department on September 10th. She received her Medical Degree from Quaid-E-Azam Medical College in Bahawalpur, Pakistan. She later completed her pediatric residency at St. Joseph's University Medical Center in Paterson, NJ followed by her Pediatric Hospital Medicine Fellowship at SUNY Downstate in Brooklyn, NY. Most recently she was a Pediatric Hospitalist at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston, NJ.

Welcome Dr. Nisha Qazi, MD to our Peds Hospitalist Team



Welcome Dr. Jessica Reiffer to the Division of Child Development, Behavior & Genetics



Join us in welcoming a new member of the Division of Child Development, Behavior & Genetics, Jessica Reiffer, MD. Dr. Reiffer joined the department on September 1st. She received her Medical Degree from Michigan State University. From there, she completed her pediatric residency at the Golisano Children's Hospital at Strong Hospital in Rochester. She remained at the University of Rochester for fellowship in Developmental-Behavior Pediatrics, then remained there as a faculty member for several years. We are very excited about having Dr. Reiffer join the team. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Reiffer to the Department!

Social Media Highlights

Interested in being featured on our social media? Have something interesting you think the community would love to see? We'd love to interview you! Email melicem@upstate.edu.

[Make sure to check out all of our Birthday highlights of some of our amazing departments and programs!](#)

[Some other](#) incredible stories on our social media platforms!

- [Dr. Alicia Pekarsky "Swim 4 Kids"](#)
- [Syracuse Football Team visits our kids!](#)
- [Dr. Jaclyn Siskind shares tips to help families recognize and manage back-to-school stress](#)
- [Dr. Chris Fortner and registered dietitian Becki Fuller raising awareness and funds for cystic fibrosis research](#)

Additional Highlights

Podcasts & In the News

[Dr. Priyanka Kaul on Preventing Eating Disorders, Obesity](#)

[Dr. Joan Pellegrino - Improving Awareness, Treatment of Rare Diseases](#)

In the News: Dr. Shaw and the Measles Comeback -

<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/rochester/news/2026/07/29/measles-makes-an-alarming-resurgence-back-to-the-u-s->



August Question: True or False: A child's brain reaches about 90% of its adult size by age 5.

Answer: True!



September Question: 🚌 What year was the yellow school bus officially standardized in the U.S.?

- A. 1939
- B. 1955
- C. 1927
- D. 1948

We'll share the answer in the next newsletter.



September is Down Syndrome Awareness Month, National Physical Therapy Month, National Occupational Therapy Month, Health Literacy Month, and National Bullying Prevention Month.



Good Things at Golisano!

Please feel free to share some good things that happened this week using this link:
<https://redcap.upstate.edu/surveys/?s=NDTP978CC3J9RCA7>.

