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## ELIH Foundation Gala Kicks Off Stroke Center Fundraising

Melissa Azofeifa | August 20, 2024



*Paul Connor, Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital chief administrative officer at Friday night ELIH Foundation Gala. (Credit: Melissa Azofeifa)*

Last summer, Southold resident Jonathan Tibett's father, Art Tibett, was visiting from Florida and was entertaining a friend when he started feeling "light-headed and foggy," Mr. Tibett said.

"I came home sometime later to check on everyone and found my dad was lying in his bed. He shared with me how he was feeling and I immediately told him to get in the car and I drove him to [Stony Brook] Eastern Long Island Hospital," Mr. Tibett said.

The emergency room medical staff discovered that Mr. Tibett's heart had stopped for intervals of up to eight seconds, multiple times throughout that day. They addressed the issue with an external pacemaker and sent him via ambulance to Stony Brook University Hospital once he was stable, where he then underwent an emergency pacemaker procedure.

"He's here with us thanks to Eastern Long Island Hospital and their amazing staff," he said.

On Friday night, Mr. Tibett, and his wife, Magdalena, were accompanied by Art Tibett at Eastern Long Island Hospital Foundation's annual gala held at Peconic Bay Yacht Club. There, they were honored for their substantial financial support of the hospital. The gala kicked off the hospital's fundraising efforts to raise \$1.5 million to create a primary stroke center, the largest of a number of capital projects the hospital has undertaken to expand the services it offers to the community.



*Jonathan Tibett and his wife Magdalena at ELIH Foundation Gala on Friday night at Peconic Bay Yacht Club (Credit: Melissa Azofeifa)*

Paul Connor, chief administrative officer for the hospital, said that joining the Stony Brook healthcare system five years ago helped make creating a stroke center a possibility.

“We’re here to be able to take care of this population,” Mr. Connor said. “We have the oldest population per capita in New York, right on the North Fork. Two thirds or three quarters of strokes happen to people over 65, so to serve that community, to meet their needs, to meet our mission, we need to establish this stroke center.”

The hope is to have the stroke center active next year, Mr. Connor said. To make it possible, as of June, the hospital has been collecting patient data and submitting it to the state Department of Health. The hospital will then be surveyed by the state within six months after filing to become a primary stroke center.

The money raised will also purchase a new CT scanner and other essential equipment as well as fund the recruitment, training and retention of medical professionals to further prepare the hospital to become a primary stroke center.

Linda Sweeney, the vice president of foundation/external affairs at SBELIH, said they raised \$400,000 towards the goal on Friday.

“This is a great event, this is our fourth year planning it,” Ms. Sweeney said. “This is something that we had decided to do — make a high-end event — because this community just loves Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital.”

Other initiatives the hospital is fundraising toward include \$300,000 to embrace AI technology in mammography and upgrade and modernize the hospital’s radiology systems. They’re also raising \$450,000 towards enhancing the equipment for the ambulatory surgery unit including, blanket warmers, stretchers and EKG monitors.

“It’s not about us whatsoever,” said Mr. Tibett, a developer known for his hospitality projects in the region including The Shoals, Southold General, North Fork Table & Inn and the upcoming Enclaves hotel in Southold. “This is really about our community, the hospital and a level of clarity into how important it is to all of our lives.”