



Owen Benn and family pictured above

IN THIS ISSUE:

**FALL REPORT MESSAGE FROM
INCOMING BOARD CHAIR**

Page 3

**INVESTMENT IN ENDOSCOPY TRAINING
SAVES LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS**

Page 5

**DONOR'S QUALITY OF LIFE BOOSTED
BY INNOVATIVE PROCEDURE**

Page 8

MOTHERS SHARE NICU EXPERIENCES ON PODCAST

When Kaitlan Benn knew her son Owen could hear what she was saying, it meant the world to her. And now she and her friend, Tamara Spearing, are making themselves heard in support of health care.

Kaitlan and Tamara have more in common than just friendship. Apart from appearing on *The Gwen Effect* podcast together, both are also deeply involved in giving back to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC).

"Our podcast has been able to provide a platform for our stories and those of other women experiencing loss and grief, as well as women sharing uplifting stories, education and experiences," Kaitlan says. "It is heartfelt but also shares humour and happiness.

The mission of the podcast is to raise funds for research, care and treatment for infants who were born early, as well as children and youth who have received one or more medical diagnoses, and to provide support for their family members.

Kaitlan is the owner of The Good Home Company in Newburgh. A portion of her sales for the month of June were donated to KHSC.

Kaitlan's son, Owen, was diagnosed with congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV), which on its own is common. While one in 200 babies will test positive, only a small percentage will develop symptoms. In Owen's case, it affected his hearing.

Continued on page 2...

MOTHERS SHARE NICU EXPERIENCES ON PODCAST

Continued from page 1.

"Owen developed symptoms, and he is now profoundly deaf," she says. "We've been really fortunate to receive care at KHSC through the audiology clinic."

Kaitlan pointed to Emily Rosen, Audiologist at KHSC, as a crucial supporter for Owen.

"As audiologists in the Infant Hearing Program, we closely follow children who are at risk of developing hearing loss," Emily shares. "Owen passed his initial hearing tests, but was identified with a profound permanent hearing loss in his right ear at 18 months of age. Since that time he has received a cochlear implant to help restore his hearing, and he is now wearing a hearing aid on his left ear."

"Owen and his mom, Kaitlan, are frequent visitors to our department," continues Emily. "Owen has been such a joy to work with, and it has been amazing to see how well his speech and language have developed since receiving his hearing devices."

"Emily has become truly such a support on so many different levels for us," Kaitlan says. "I feel like we've bonded, and I know that she'll be a part of Owen's journey for the next 15 years."

Tamara's journey has been different, following the passing of her daughter, Gwendolyn.

Gwendolyn was born prematurely with esophageal atresia, where part of a baby's esophagus, which connects the mouth to the stomach, does not develop properly. There were other aspects to her early birth as well, with the family receiving care from institutions throughout Ontario and Gwendolyn undergoing multiple surgeries.

"I guess the podcast originally started when we wanted to make our story a little bit more personal," Tamara reflected. "It started with me sharing my experience through the



Tamara Spearing and baby Gwendolyn pictured above

medical field, dealing with different specialists and spending time in the hospitals with Gwendolyn. And then from there we found it was a huge hit."

The podcast not only resonates with families going through care for their children, but also in the mourning process when one passes. It helps to show the links that families share with the NICU dating back to their first times there.

For episodes of *The Gwen Effect*, visit [Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and follow @diaryofamedicalmama on Instagram.



Kaitlan Benn (left) and Tamara Spearing (right) toast on set of their podcast, *The Gwen Effect*

FALL REPORT MESSAGE FROM INCOMING BOARD CHAIR

As a retired physician with 45 years of academic, clinical and administrative service in our hospitals, I am deeply aware of University Hospitals Kingston Foundation's value. I became involved with University Hospitals Kingston Foundation (UHKF) believing that physicians needed to be active in securing resources to ensure that our health-care infrastructure, across the continuum of acute, subacute and community care flourishes.



John Leverette,
Incoming Board Chair,
UHKF

It's an exciting time for UHKF. Thanks to donor support, we completed Providence Care Hospital, the new Breast Imaging Kingston Centre and look forward to the construction of the new Providence Manor and Hospice Kingston. Our attention now turns to the needs of Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) — its hospital and community sites. We benefit immensely from KHSC's leadership in acute care service, education and research. That contributes to people living better, healthier lives and getting the best care possible, when and where they need it.

The Kingston General Hospital and Hotel Dieu Hospital sites are two of the oldest academic hospitals in the country. They have served us well, but their physical infrastructures have significant operational and

space limitations. These buildings require repair or replacement which represents a significant cost. Tax dollars do not cover everything — neither the entire costs of new builds nor annual funding requirements.

The truth is that donations are essential to success.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many generous donors in our community who make health care better and more accessible to all of us across southeastern Ontario. We couldn't do this without you.

- Dr. John Leverette

3 | FALL 2023

YES! I WANT TO SUPPORT LIFE-SAVING CARE...

Cut out this form and mail to: University Hospitals Kingston Foundation, 55 Rideau Street, Suite 4, Kingston, ON K7K 2Z8

- I wish to support care by making a **monthly gift** of \$_____ which will be withdrawn on the 10th day of the month.
- I wish to support care by making a **single gift** of \$_____.
- I am interested in learning about the Honour Your Caregiver program. Please send me information.

Method of payment:

- I have enclosed a cheque payable to UHKF or a VOID cheque for my monthly gift.
- I prefer to donate by credit card.

Visa Mastercard American Express

Name on card: _____ Phone Number: _____

Card number: _____ Expiry date: _____

Email: _____ Signature: _____

BREATHING EASIER: CHANGING LIVES WITH UNRESTRICTED DONOR FUNDS

Breathing is a fundamental human need that many people take for granted, but for some patients it's a daily struggle. That's why the recent purchase of 13 next-generation ventilators for patients on the Complex Medical Management unit on Lakeview 2 at Providence Care Hospital is so significant.

With help from donors, the hospital can now provide additional breathing support to patients 24 hours a day, while also improving their quality of life. The new ventilators are smaller, more portable and offer extra modalities such as CO2 monitoring. Patients who are bed- or wheelchair-bound can now be moved around the hospital or walked around the grounds outside. This is a far cry from alternatives which might include being confined to an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) room with little access to natural light.

"The freedom and improved quality of life, offered by these new ventilators is life-changing," says Alison White, Program Manager, Complex Medical Management and Palliative Care. "One patient was able to attend a wedding ceremony for their son on the patio outside the hospital, others can attend therapy appointments in different areas of the hospital or go to the park. It's not just about physical health, it's also about their mental and emotional well-being. Seeing them smile and enjoy being out in the fresh air is priceless. We're fortunate that we can offer this level of care for our patients."

The impact of the ventilators also extends to the hospital staff, who are now able to provide a higher level of care and quality of life to patients. The purchase of all 13 ventilators would not have been possible without donor generosity and access to unrestricted funds, which allow staff to respond swiftly to the hospital's most pressing needs.

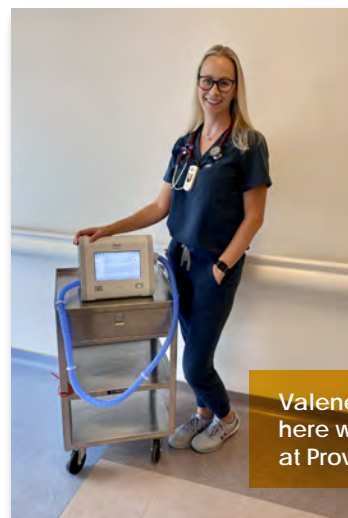
"To be able to request the ventilators and then receive them so quickly is incredibly special. It was like Christmas morning for our staff when they arrived," says Valene Gordon, Respiratory

Therapist. "It's so meaningful to see the impact this equipment has on the lives of our patients. It blew my mind when I learned it was possible thanks to help from kind local donors. It's incredible!"

The purchase of these life-changing ventilators is a testament to the power of community support and access to unrestricted funds. With donors playing a vital role in providing new equipment, staff on Lakeview 2 can continue their exceptional care and support, while also enhancing quality of life to the people they serve.

"It feels so good to know that this upgraded equipment was provided with donor support," says Alison. "It's truly rewarding for us as staff and a reminder of why the support of donors is so vital. Without this generosity, we would've had to purchase the equipment another way, taking time and resources away from other hospital needs. We are so grateful."

"We are deeply grateful for the generosity of donors, both large and small," says Tom Zsolnay, CEO and President of the University Hospitals Kingston Foundation (UHKF). "These ventilators show that every gift, no matter how modest, has the potential to change lives. UHKF needs more community members to consider giving unrestricted funds to help local health-care organizations respond to their needs with this kind of agility."



Valene Gordon pictured here with the new Ventilators at Providence Care



INVESTMENT IN ENDOSCOPY TRAINING SAVES LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS



Dr. Robert Bechara,
KHSC Gastroenterologist

To have your whole stomach removed is a daunting prospect. For Maureen Lollar, whose passion for food gave her a 20-year career at a cooking school in Toronto, this nearly became her reality in May 2018.

“I was violently ill at four in the morning and had to be taken to hospital by ambulance from Wolfe Island,” says Maureen. “The doctors said I had pancreatitis caused by a gallstone that had escaped my gall bladder, which they removed. But I still wasn’t right.”

Maureen was referred to the Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) Gastroenterology Clinic. The team took random biopsy samples from her stomach and incidentally found signet ring gastric cancer—a rare form of cancer that can be very difficult to detect in its early stages. Traditionally, she would have had her whole stomach removed in a life-changing surgery, but Maureen was referred to KHSC Gastroenterologist, Dr. Robert Bechara.

In 2013, the Department of Medicine helped to fund Dr. Bechara’s one-year advanced therapeutic fellowship. During this time, he

became the first Canadian to receive formal training in magnifying endoscopy and a procedure called Endoscopic Submucosal Dissection (ESD), which allows him to see precisely where a cancerous tumour is located and remove it.

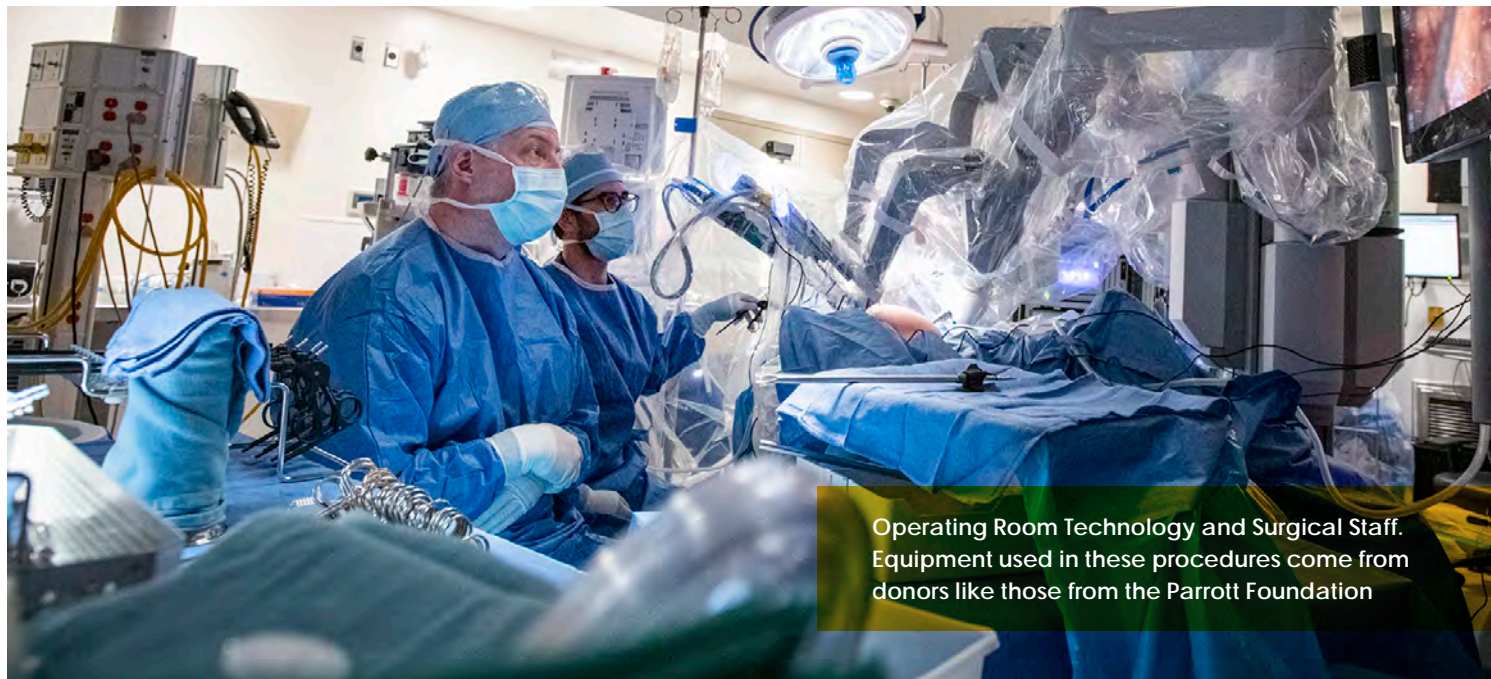
“I’m very grateful to have learned the ESD technique in Japan, one of the few places to offer formal training,” says Dr. Bechara. “Even though it is a relatively new technique here in North America, it’s been the standard of care in Japan for almost 30 years. It’s significantly less invasive for the patient who can go home the same day, and it decreases costs for the health-care system. There’s no downside.”

Within days of the cancer being found, Maureen underwent the procedure and was home. She credits her recovery to the skills of Dr. Bechara and the integrated way the hospital teams collaborated, particularly those in the Gastroenterology Clinic, who have now performed the ESD procedure 200 times.

“I was so lucky. This cancer is not usually caught early enough,” says Maureen. “I was so impressed with Dr. Bechara, but the whole clinic works together incredibly well. The nurses are phenomenal. I was just excited that I didn’t have to go to Toronto or Ottawa for care and that I can keep eating the foods I like. Kingston has no idea how lucky it is. Without that investment into Dr. Bechara a number of years ago, I may not be here today.”

As health-care supporters who give to KHSC and Providence Care through UHKF, donors are supporting research, education and training opportunities that can make a lifesaving difference in the outcomes of patients, like Maureen.

SURGICAL EQUIPMENT DONATION BENEFITS PATIENTS ACROSS SOUTHEASTERN ONTARIO



Kingston Health Science Centre (KHSC) not only services the Kingston area, but is also an acute care facility servicing areas all across southeastern Ontario.

The John M. and Bernice Parrott Foundation has contributed \$400,000 to KHSC through the University Hospitals Kingston Foundation (UHKF), with the funds earmarked for its surgical equipment campaign.

“We know that a number of people every year from the Quinte area go to Kingston for care,” explains Lyle Vanclief, President of the John M. and Bernice Parrott Foundation. “We had in the past made some considerable contributions to the oncology center there, but this is for surgical equipment, so the board made the decision that we would support that on behalf of the people in the Quinte area.

“Access to this equipment will not only benefit residents locally, but will also help those who travel from outside the Kingston region for specialized care. We are very appreciative of this generous donation from the Parrott Foundation,” says Michelle Mackay, Program Operational Director Perioperative Service

and Executive Director of Cardiac, Critical Care, Surgical, Perioperative and Anesthesia (SPA) at KHSC. “This donation will be used to fund critical capital equipment for a variety of surgical procedures and services to address surgical backlog procedures and tertiary care activity. This is particularly important for the KHSC Perioperative Program, given the tertiary surgical care we provide.”

Founded in 1977, the Parrott Foundation has the responsibility of dispersing funds every year to support causes across the Quinte region, as well as to improve the lives of those in their area. That said, Vanclief agreed there are ways for the public at large to play a role in supporting health care, wherever they may be.

“I think that speaks for itself. People want to have access to the best health care possible, as close to home as they can,” Vanclief says of the importance of supporting hospitals throughout the region. “We all know that the health-care facilities and teams are stretched. So, anytime that individuals, companies or corporations can make a contribution to financial aid and support health care, which is a benefit to everybody.”

FAMILY'S ANNUAL FUNDRAISER HIGHLIGHTS

BOND SHARED WITH NICU STAFF

When your newborn son is under around-the-clock care, it's natural for a parent to spend so much time at the hospital that they know the different staff working every day.

Brittany Cook feels a connection with the physicians, nurses and staff at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) through the Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC), pulling long hours with them after the early arrival of her son, Cale.

Cale was born at 29 weeks, and he was in the NICU for two months. Brittany describes the experience as "interesting." Part of the complicated situation was being isolated from her newborn after she tested positive for COVID-19 during the pandemic, and being put into a 10-day quarantine leave. The staff connected Cale with Brittany through video messaging during her quarantine period.

"He was born on a Tuesday," she remembers. "I had a specialized visit in the middle of the night while I was still in the hospital, but no one else was there. And then, I didn't get to see him again for a week.

"It's a struggle when you're home away from your child, your newborn baby," says Brittany. "And that time is so precious. I would wake up to a message from that nurse with a video or pictures of Cale as if he's talking to me, telling me about his night, and how that went. And that was really, really meaningful."

She recalls pulling 12-hour shifts alongside the nurses, and when they would take a break on their changeover, she'd meet with the next nurse, and so on.

"At a certain point, you are living in the hospital," she says. "I stayed there for a few days before (Cale) came home. They helped us prepare for our baby to come home. I'm so grateful for all the things that I've learned, and they've taught me."



Brock, Brittany and Cale Cook presenting donations from the TakeAway & Recycle Scrap Metal Collection

As a way to give back, Brittany and her husband, Brock, have been running the TakeAway & Recycle Open Golf Tournament fundraiser, supporting the NICU for the last few summers. She says the response and positivity generated by these events has been overwhelming.

"Support from our community is invaluable for our patients, families and care teams in the NICU at KHSC," says Damiano Loricchio, Program Operational Director of the Women/Children program. "Care is impacted every day by the generosity of those who are able to give. Donors help provide specialized medical equipment as well as patient-centered initiatives like our virtual connect system, which allows families to see their babies even if they are not physically on site. Every bit of support translates into an improved experience for the tiniest patients in our care as well as their families."

"We can relate in some capacity to what families are going through. But everyone's situation is so diverse," says Brittany. "It's a community that we didn't really know existed, but we are very grateful to be a part of it and grateful to be able to support it."

DONOR'S QUALITY OF LIFE BOOSTED BY INNOVATIVE PROCEDURE



Rene and Cheryl Doornekamp
Pictured above

Rene Doornekamp used to have tremors so severe, he couldn't pass his friend a cup of coffee. As part of his Parkinson's diagnosis, Rene used to take up to 14 different pills a day to treat his affliction. In the words of his wife Cheryl, the deep brain stimulation procedure Rene underwent at Kingston General Hospital (KGH) site put quality years "back on his life." That cup is getting passed, and fourteen has shrunk to four.

"It just literally gave his life back," Cheryl says. "He could do things to the level that he had been doing them four or five years prior to (the procedure), because (before then) he'd just been declining and movements were too hard to control."

The procedure has changed lives for people around the world, as well as those in southeastern Ontario, with Rene Doornekamp being one of them.

"Essentially, they drill two holes in your head and put these stimulators in and they're hooked

to a power pack in my chest, which supplies the power, and it did wonders," Rene says. "Before I always had a tremor and once I had that done, the tremors stopped."

The Doornekamps have supported health care in the Kingston area for many years, with Cheryl serving on the University Hospitals Kingston Foundation (UHKF) board of directors as well from 2017 to 2020.

In terms of the care he received, Rene and Cheryl spoke of professionals, like doctors Stuart Reid and Ron Levy, as well as nurse practitioner, Kim Mahoney. As such, a most recent generous donation to be used for the "greatest good" to the Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) through UHKF shows the level of commitment this family has repeatedly displayed over many years.

"Thank you Rene and Cheryl for the generous gift," says Dr. Levy. "Your donation will aid the Foundation with improving health care in the Kingston region."

In addition to this, Cheryl shared how philanthropy is something that runs throughout the family, even down to its youngest members.

"One thing that comes to my mind is that recently my niece had breast cancer and my sister did a bake sale with her granddaughters," she says. "They raised almost \$500, just the two little girls. And they say 'If one person could do that, just imagine if everybody did a little bit.'"

"And it is true! I mean it sounds simple, but it really is that simple. It doesn't matter how much it is, (so long as) you're giving what you can."

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