



UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
HEART INSTITUTE
INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

FOUNDATION
FONDATION

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Foundation **CONNECTION**

Newsletter of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute Foundation

> ISSUE NO. 23 | SUMMER 2022

Foundation CONNECTION

“Lessons often come dressed up as detours and roadblocks.” This Oprah Winfrey quote came to mind after a sit-down discussion I had with Dr. Emilio Alarcon. Alarcon, a scientist in the Division of Cardiac Surgery and the Director of the [Bio-nanomaterials Chemistry and Engineering Laboratory](#) at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute has had so many roadblocks and detours in his life, it’s amazing he’s standing at all. His life experiences, innovative thinking and passion for teaching will no doubt have a lasting impact on the future of heart health. When you read his story, you will

be in awe of his attitude and passion for life, despite the heartbreaking challenges his young family has faced. You will also be intrigued by his work as a scientist, especially when it comes to his recent discoveries. Science fiction is on the verge of reality and if I had ever been a strong science student, I would have cherished being his student.

“The results of philanthropy are always beyond calculation” and that has never been more evident than in understanding the million-dollar transformational gift we received from the Myers Automotive Group, led by the Mews Family. In this edition you will get a glimpse into the family dynamics that make up one of the most successful group of car dealerships in the city. Philanthropy is seen as an investment into the community and the Mews family is banking on just that for the city they so proudly serve. Take a moment to learn about Hank and Phyllis Mews, their children, the family business, and the reason behind their incredible gift, all told through the eyes of their sons Harry and Rob.

A note to myself to have a box of Kleenex on hand when we record some of our interviews with donors. Tissues were needed when Russell and Linda Grass stopped by our new Foundation offices. The Grass’ open up about their own personal health experiences as well as the family’s history with heart disease. Through their family business Waterdon Construction, as well as the Linda and Russell Grass Foundation, they have taken a lead role in becoming matching donations for both National Nursing Week and Father’s Day initiatives. They look to inspire others to give, knowing the difference in our health care

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Cover Photo: Dr. Emilio Alarcon with his wife Madleen and son Alonso.

is not initiated by the government but rather the community at large. They reflect deeply on their own responsibility to improve the system.

Speaking of donor impact, National Nursing Week has just passed and we wanted to thank many of you who donated. We also wanted to take this opportunity to bring you the stories and impact many of the nurses have felt from you, the donors. As patients you may recognize your favorite nurse, but we loved hearing their own personal responses to what they love about the job, the challenges they face, and how they have the opportunity to do more based on the funding support from the community. Thank you for answering the call, as they do each and everyday.

And finally, its not that far off in the distance. We have already hit the ground running for

Jump In™ for Women's Heart Health coming to you once again this September.

Slowly but surely, we are starting to resume our lives with glimpses of normalcy. I hope this summer brings you much joy, love, and reasons to smile with your health and wellness at the top of the list.

Much Love,
Lianne



Lianne Laing
Executive Director
University of Ottawa
Heart Institute Foundation

HEART OF GOLD

Meet Dr. Martin Green

Dr. Green is a cardiologist at the Heart Institute and professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Ottawa. His clinical interest is focused on heart rhythms.



“Dr. Green provides exemplary professional service. His competence, thorough care and kindness have guided me through my health problems. I sincerely appreciate his expertise. I would like to recognize his efforts and want him to know they make a difference.”

Grateful patient and Heart of Gold donor



THANK ONE. HELP MANY.

If you would like to acknowledge a health care professional, a volunteer or an entire unit who made a memorable difference in the care you received at the Heart Institute, consider making a donation to the Heart of Gold program. Your honouree(s) will receive a Heart of Gold pin accompanied by a card with your personal message. Heart of Gold

pins are proudly worn as a reminder how important exceptional patient care is to everyone who comes to the Heart Institute.

All Heart of Gold donations will be matched by generous corporate support from JD Brule Equipment. A matched donation means your gift will go twice as far supporting vital programs and saving lives.

You can make a Heart of Gold donation online at Foundation.ottawaheart.ca/gold or call us at 613.696.7030.

BE BOLDER DREAM BIGGER

Dr. Emilio Alarcon on finding inspiration in family

Patients of the Heart Institute often say they are grateful to receive the “gift of time” with their loved ones. At the Foundation, we ask you to give the “gift of time” by investing in the purchase of specialized equipment and ground-breaking research. Dr. Emilio Alarcon, a scientist in the division of cardiac surgery and Director, Bio-nanomaterials Chemistry and Engineering Laboratory, shares what the gift of time means to him.



Growing up in Santiago, Chile, I never imagined that I would one day become a researcher here at the Heart Institute. I started working at the age of 12 to help put food on the table at home and persevered to rise above the widespread poverty in Chile to become the first person in my family to go to university. Once I was there, I discovered a passion for science and worked towards receiving a PhD in Chemistry which I completed in 2009. That same year, my wife Madleen and I moved to Canada when I was offered a postdoctoral position at the University of Ottawa. That was where I first explored the development of new bionanomaterials for the health sciences. I also wanted to learn English, which was difficult,

I have autism and learning a language can be challenging for me. We planned to return to Chile when my post doctoral work was complete so I could take up a position as a professor. Madleen and I decided to start our family and we were on track to return to Chile in 2012 with our first child.

But then everything changed.

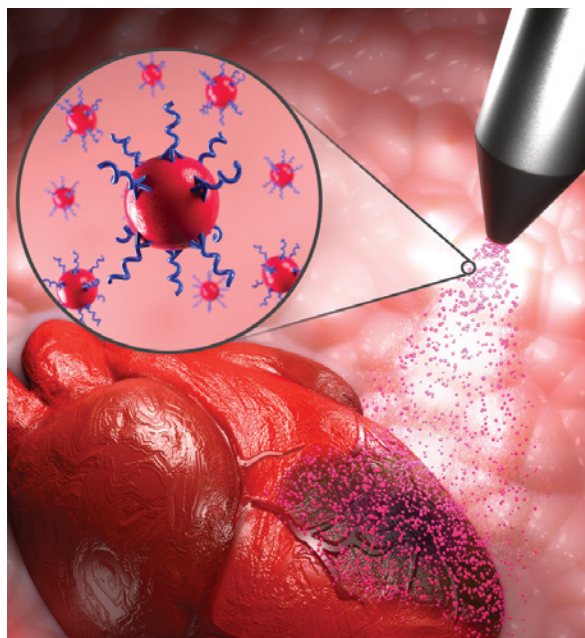
Our son Alonso was born with Down syndrome and a hole in his heart. He was too tiny to leave the hospital and travel. We had to re-evaluate our plans and I was able to continue my research work here in Ottawa. After a year or so, Alonso was getting stronger, and we began to make

plans to return to Chile. Then everything changed again; Alonso was diagnosed with leukemia. My wife and I practically lived in the hospital with him. I witnessed science and medicine in action together, I saw the need firsthand. The chemotherapy didn't work for Alonso, and he was released from hospital to spend time with us. That was almost eight years ago, he will be 11 this year. It's a miracle. Each day I truly experience the "gift of time" and I know that's exactly what I want to do. Canada is our home now, and here I can begin to give the gift of time to others. Fortunately, I was recruited by the Heart Institute and now, I can spend my career doing research focused on precisely that.

As the Director of the Bio-nanomaterials Chemistry and Engineering Laboratory, I have a stellar team of scientists and researchers making life changing discoveries every day. Modern medicine can do a lot, but it cannot cure everything, there is still a lot to do. If you have survived a heart attack, the injuries sustained to your heart during the attack can lead to a condition called heart failure which is often fatal. In Canada, 750,000 people are living with heart failure and 100,000 more are diagnosed each year. Imagine if we could prevent that condition from happening? What if we could intervene at the time of the attack and introduce a material that would prevent the scarring that can lead to heart failure? Is there a therapeutic solution that could help repair heart tissue that is already damaged?

In the BEaTS Laboratory (Bio-Engineering and Therapeutic Solutions,) we are excited about developing new therapies and technologies that will heal wounds in tissues and failing organs. For example, our team is developing a material that can be sprayed on an infarcted heart (a heart with reduced blood flow or other damage following a heart attack.) The spray is made up of tiny nano particles of gold mixed with equally tiny strings of amino acids that will grab onto the damaged heart tissue. We use gold nanoparticles because

they are extremely tiny and gold has been proven to be stable, with very little degradation, when used in the human body. Our early findings indicate the spray will increase cardiac function, muscle contractibility and electrical conductivity that was lost following the heart attack. We have just released our data for peer review and are eager for other scientists around the world to take a long look at it with a critical eye. Our drive and eagerness to publish in scientific journals is about generating interest from equally passionate researchers who will push us to the next level with comments and recommendations.



The March cover of ACS Nano depicts a nanoengineered sprayable therapy painted onto damaged heart tissue.

Our research didn't stop at developing the right formula. How do we deliver it to the heart? We spent many months painstakingly testing over 2,000 formulations to make sure we have the material that will work. At the same time, we know we cannot depend on anyone else to create the delivery mechanism, so we are developing that too. A teeny tiny little spray system, one or two centimeters in size, that can spray a fine mist of about four microliters to cover the damage and begin to repair the heart. It's taken a couple of years to get here and there is a lot of work to

Dr. Alarcon leads several research teams focused on the fabrication, development and implementation of new materials with regenerative capabilities for tissue regeneration of heart, skin, and soft tissues. ▶



Scientists like Dr. Marcelo Muñoz target the rehabilitation of failing organs and tissues with poor regenerative capabilities, such as infarcted heart muscle. ▶



The research of PhD student Cagla Eren focuses on biomaterial and cell-based therapeutic approaches for the treatment of myocardial infarction. ▶



do and many peer reviews before we can take it to the next step. We want to make it even less invasive. Instead of the heart being exposed for even five seconds for the spray, we want to look at delivering the spray in a completely non-invasive procedure. We know it will be a long time before the science is ready for trials with our patients here at the Heart Institute, but this discovery has ground-breaking potential. Preventing a heart attack patient from becoming a heart failure patient is not only a scientific possibility, but we may see it within our lifetime!

Everything we do in research is because of our patients. The Heart Institute is so unique because our research takes place right here. Doctors that treat patients are also researchers in our labs. It can be bench to bedside and back to the bench. Collaboration is everywhere. As a chemist, I'm also working on bio-inks that will be used in handheld 3D printers, and in the future, microscopic bio-printers that can create a patch or vessel for blood flow around a blocked artery, that is unique and custom for each individual heart. That is truly the ultimate in precision medicine! It may sound like science fiction, but it's happening right here in Ottawa.

When I'm interviewing students to join our lab, the first question I ask is, "What did you see in the lobby when you came into the Heart Institute?" And I only recruit those who answer, "Patients and their families." The students that come to work and study in the research labs inspire us with their curiosity and innovation. In turn, they receive the best training and access to world-renowned mentors. I am very proud of them – they will become much better scientists than I am. Walking into and out of the building, you see the need, and that is truly the best and only motivation we have here. I know that the breakthroughs that I may not see in my lifetime, will be achieved by one of our students. That is giving the gift of time. That is the legacy of the institute.

Donations to the Research Matching Fund ensure that scientists like Dr. Alarcon are in the best position to apply for competitive funding that could match your contribution up to five times or more! Thank you for supporting our research at the Heart Institute.

DID YOU KNOW?

Donations to the Research Matching Fund will support the work of Heart Institute scientists and researchers, and could be matched up to 5x (or more!) through competitive grant funding? Donate today to the Research Matching Fund!



If you would like to support the Research Matching Fund visit donate.ottawaheart.ca/research

JUMP IN™

FOR WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH
SEPTEMBER 1 - 30



FROM COAST TO COAST TO COAST

BE INSPIRED!

This September
**JUMP IN™ FOR
YOUR HEART
HEALTH!**

JUMP IN™ is a nation-wide 30-day physical activity challenge to encourage you to get moving in your own space and at your own pace, in support of women's heart health across Canada.

JUMP IN™ to support research, education and programming at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute and the Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre. When you participate in JUMP IN™ you will help raise funds and awareness for women's heart health AND improve your own heart healthy lifestyle.

Indoors, outdoors, at home or at the gym. It's up to you! **GET ACTIVE** for 30 minutes each day September 1 to September 30. Share your journey, be inspired and win great prizes!

Here's what participants from 2021 are saying:

"I loved loved loved this 30-day jump in again! Thanks for creating this incredible initiative."

-Nicki



"This has challenged so many of us and I have found you all so inspiring! You have certainly changed me."

- Nicole

"We have all joined for different reasons. For me, life is precious and unfortunately my dad lost his precious life one month shy of his 58th birthday from a heart attack. He didn't get to walk me down the aisle or witness the birth of his grandchildren. I want to be there as my children blossom through life. I want to be there as they experience love, heartbreak, and all other life experiences.

When this is over, I know that I will still hear your words of encouragement and support as I continue to Jump In."

- Stephanie



Russell and Linda Grass, being part of the future today

If you visit the “About Us” tab on the Waterdon Construction website, you will find a description of their core values as a company: respect, teamwork, accountability, and versatility, followed by a photo of a large team of more than 75 employees wearing their Waterdon branded shirts and jackets, and a smile. Community is clearly another core value.



Russell and Linda Grass

The founder of Waterdon Construction, Russell Grass Sr. and his wife Linda, are the first people to admit that, when they started out, they didn't

have much financially. As their businesses, and their family grew, they increasingly looked for opportunities to give back that would make an impact in the community and align with the values of both their family and their family of employees. The growing list of charitable partnerships would include organizations that support food security, children with life threatening illnesses, mental health and addictions, women's breast health and an organization that has had a profound impact on the Grass family, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. Although neither Linda nor Russell has been a patient, heart disease hits close to home. Russell lost both his parents to heart disease, his mom died in 1989 at the age of 57 and his father only a few years later in 1993 at the age of 63. Their daughter-in-law has been treated at the institute as is Russell's brother. Linda's brother is both a patient and active volunteer.

Today, philanthropy is a family activity. The Grass' three children are now adults, and Russell and Linda have five grandchildren. They beam with pride when they talk about the ways their family has embraced community building and philanthropy. They plan to encourage their grandchildren to choose a charity and present reasons why it's a good choice for donations. The family will then make a gift to the organizations the children have selected and start the children on a lifetime of giving back. They established the Linda and Russell Grass Foundation which, along with Waterdon Construction as a corporation,

supports charities and associations throughout the capital. In 2021, Waterdon Construction matched all Father's Day donations to the Heart Institute Foundation which was so successful they have agreed to repeat their generosity and offer the match for Father's Day 2022. In addition, the Linda and Russell Grass Foundation matched all donations during the recent National Nursing Week Appeal in May.

"We hope that by offering to match donations, it will encourage other donors to give, maybe even give a little extra because they know it will now have double the impact for the Heart Institute," says Linda. "When I was being treated for breast cancer, the nurses gave me strength. I built personal connections with them, if we can do something that helps nurses get the funds needed to advance their skills and knowledge and buy the equipment that helps them do their jobs more efficiently for them and their patients than it's a win-win."



Grass Family Finding the perfect Christmas tree.

Russell adds, "We know that our healthcare system has a lot of gaps. Government funding and our tax dollars only provide the bare minimum. When you're sick, you want the best. In Ottawa, we are already way ahead of most cities because we have a place like the Heart Institute. Now it's up to us, to the community,

to keep it at the top. We want the best trained nurses, the latest equipment and the kind of research that will save lives now."

Looking ahead, when Russell and Linda were in the process of planning their estate, the decision to leave a \$1-million gift in their wills to the Heart Institute was an easy one. It was their way of ensuring that future generations have exceptional heart health care.

"We came from nothing, and, as time went on and the businesses became more successful, we knew we needed to give back. Supporting the Heart Institute means this community will have the best cardiac care in the world. It's good for everyone."

Russell Grass Sr

"We want better than basic health care. We want the best health care, so we stepped up," Russell explains. "So many people do not understand that, unless donors give generously, we will not have the specialized equipment we need to have the best. We shouldn't have to travel outside of this region for the best care possible for our hearts. There is a story behind every gift we give to charity. Our family, including my parents and brother, have been affected by heart disease. The Heart Institute is world-class. To think we have

this incredible cardiac centre in a city of a million people is amazing. We just needed to help.”

As the Grass’ begin to learn more about the innovative research currently underway at the institute, and the difference it could make now for cardiac care, they are considering the impact their donation would make during their lifetime instead. Donations invested in early-stage research programs can go on to receive funding up to five times the original investment!

The Grass’ are now considering changing their planned gift into a donation during their lifetime. They realize what it would mean to the research teams at the institute who are focused on the diseases that are a priority right now. Diseases like atherosclerosis, valvular diseases, and heart failure. Russell sums up what they both feel, “The research that’s happening right now at the Heart

Institute sounds like science fiction, imagine being able to turn back the clock and prevent a heart attack from happening or reverse the damage that was left behind. Linda and I want to be a part of that.”



The Grass family celebrating Mother’s Day 2022

YOU’VE PLACED YOUR HEART IN OUR HANDS – WE’RE PLACING OUR FUTURE IN YOURS!

A **Legacy Gift** to the University of Ottawa Heart Institute goes straight to the heart of care in our community. Your thoughtful donation will mean that the Heart Institute remains a place for healing, learning, and caring for generations to follow.

"Because it is possible for one action to shape a spectacular outcome"

— *Dr. Wilbert J. Keon, Heart Institute Founder*



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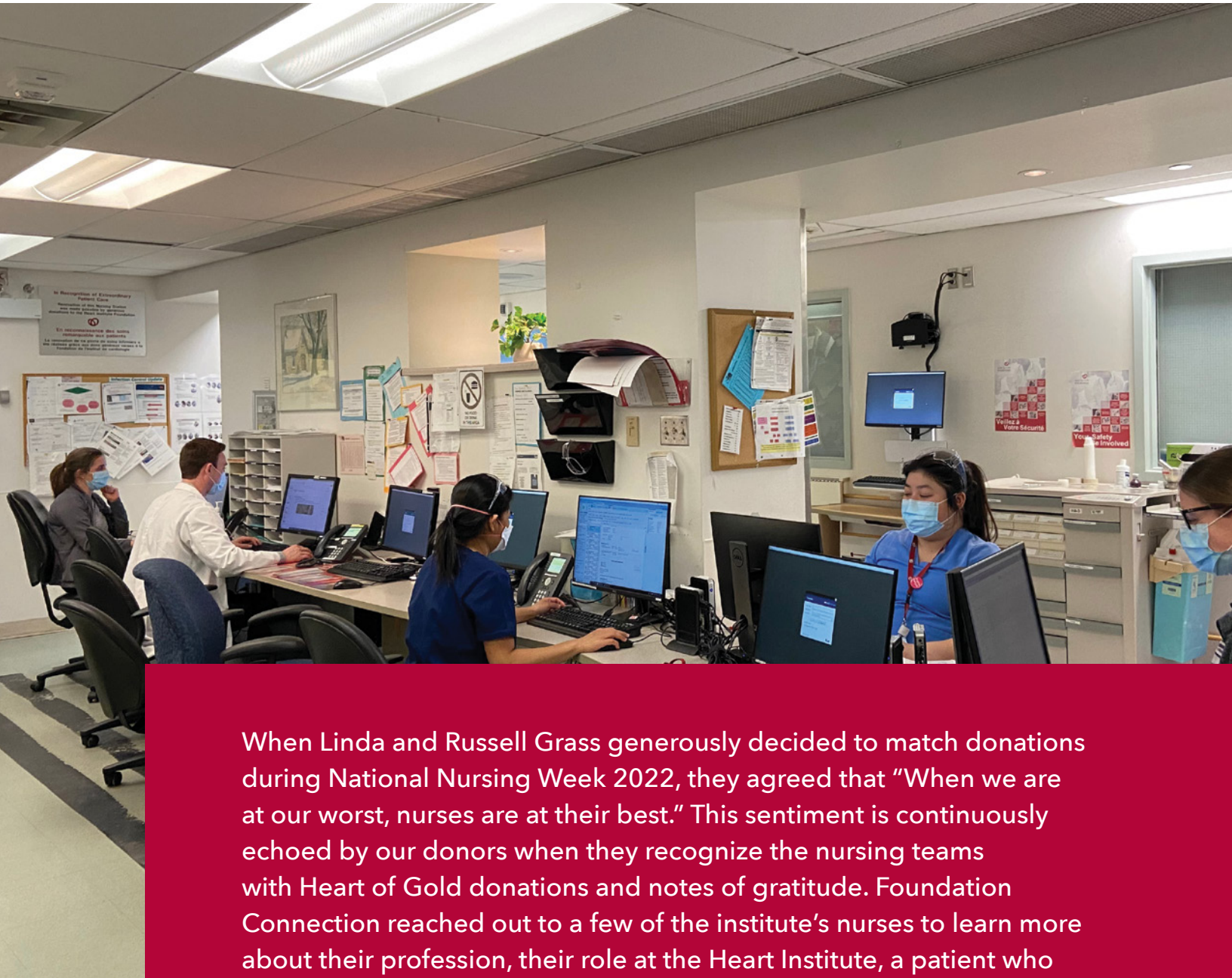
To find out more about leaving a gift to the Heart Institute in your Will, please contact Selva Trebert-Sharman at **613-696-7251** or wjklegacysociety@ottawaheart.ca. All conversations are confidential.

Visit foundation.ottawaheart.ca/ways-give/legacy-giving for more information!

Charitable registration number 14081 3452 RR0001.

INSIDE THE INSTITUTE

Nightingales of Care



When Linda and Russell Grass generously decided to match donations during National Nursing Week 2022, they agreed that “When we are at our worst, nurses are at their best.” This sentiment is continuously echoed by our donors when they recognize the nursing teams with Heart of Gold donations and notes of gratitude. Foundation Connection reached out to a few of the institute’s nurses to learn more about their profession, their role at the Heart Institute, a patient who has inspired them, being a nurse during the pandemic and to share thoughts with you, our donor family.

Here's what they had to say.



KATHRYN EASTWOOD RN

Kathryn has been with UOHI for 29 years with experience across multiple units. She is currently Nursing Care Coordinator with Cardiac Virtual Care/Telehealth.

“Nursing is not just a job; it is a career, and it is a calling. Prior to working in the Heart Institute,

I questioned whether I had made the right decision but immediately after starting here, I recognized I was where I belonged. I am proud to tell people that I work at the Heart Institute and always want to live up to the amazing reputation of the care provided here. The Heart Institute inspires its staff to be better and strive for excellence because we are valued for our knowledge, skill, and compassion.

Our department was built for a pandemic! One of the main objectives of our program is to provide specialized care to patients in their home and that is exactly where we wanted them to be during the pandemic. Our automated telephone follow-up helped to confirm that each patient had a smooth transition home after a hospital visit. Our already busy Telehome monitoring program expanded. We were instrumental in keeping patients out of the emergency departments and hospitals, and able to assist with medication adjustments. We had to adapt, but overall, it was an easy transition for our department. It felt good knowing that we were doing our part!

Donations to the Foundation purchase a lot of the Telehome monitoring equipment. Each of our patients are provided with a tablet that has a weight scale, blood pressure cuff and oxygen saturation device. The patient's vital signs are sent to our department daily for us to help them with their care. The equipment is simple to use. Not only do the patients feel more secure knowing that someone is watching over them but because of our expert knowledge, we are able to adjust their medications to help prevent emergency room visits and hospital admissions.

Currently I care for a 93-year-old women who remains independent in her own home. This lady continues to have high expectations of life despite her advanced age! She is inspiring because she continues to do whatever it takes to live a high quality, rewarding life. Age is no longer a barrier.”

We are here for you.
On-site and Online.



The University of Ottawa Heart Institute's Prevention and Wellness Centre provides patients, families, providers, and the public with education, programs and services for the prevention and management of cardiovascular disease risk factors.

Learn more at pwc.ottawaheart.ca



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BEROLY MATHEW RN

Beroly has been with the Heart Institute for 24 years, most of them on H4 and then moving to H5 in 2017 when she took on the role of Care Facilitator (CF). As a CF, Beroly is involved in discharge planning which can include transfers to other facilities and arranging home care for IV antibiotics.

“I am proud to be a nurse and proud to be a member of the Heart Institute family. Time and time again we demonstrate teamwork and professionalism to care for patients. The institute is our community's biggest pride. The new tower which opened in 2018 with modern technology is further ensuring high quality advanced cardiovascular care to our patients and to our community. Having our own MRI machine in the Heart Institute has cut down the waiting period and significantly improved our transportation challenges. This is all thanks to generous donations, which helps us provide quality care to our patients.

One of the biggest challenges during the pandemic was the "No Visitors" or "Restricted Visitors" policy. It weighed heavily on all the

nurses and was very distressing. We felt terrible for our patients and their family members and did everything we possibly could do so it didn't impact the healing process.

Several years ago, I met one of my youngest and most inspiring patients. She was very sick and was wait listed for a heart transplant. She always has this beautiful smile on her face even when she was facing the biggest challenges in her life. Her positive energy and her contagious smiles were a true inspiration for all of us. She had her transplant in 2019 and since then is doing amazingly well. She started a new journey by initiating an organ donation awareness campaign. Hats off to her and her family!”



JULIE MCKECHNIE RN

Clinical Director Critical Care/Cardiac Procedures. Julie has held a variety of positions in the past 16 years including her role as the manager for the CATH/EP Lab (Catheterization/ Electrophysiology.) She recently stepped into her new position and oversees areas that manage patients in critical care in the Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care Unit and Intensive Cardiac Care Unit (CSICU, ICCU.)

“In my first year of nursing I was working at the Civic Campus on a medicine ward. Very early in the morning my patient began having chest pain and was found to be having a heart attack known

as a STEMI (ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction.) I recall running through the basement tunnel between the Civic and UOHI pushing my patient in a stretcher with the cardiology resident to bring them to the Cath Lab for an angiogram, a test which looks at the blood vessels in the heart for abnormalities. I stayed to watch the angiogram and was so amazed by the process. This was my first introduction to the Heart Institute and what inspired me to work in cardiology and eventually the Cath Lab.

With huge appreciation to our donor community, I believe the new Critical Care Tower and equipment and renovations to the main building directly impacted the way we were able to provide care during the pandemic in the Cath/EP and Cardiac Day Unit. One of the main requirements caring for COVID suspect and positive patients in these areas was space. We needed additional space and distance for these patients to ensure we were able to provide care while protecting other patients and staff. The increased space in the Cath and EP Labs - and the additional space that the new Day Unit A provided us was instrumental in our success. It allowed us to safely care for COVID suspect/positive patients in these areas while maintaining the number of procedures, ensuring our patients received timely care.

During most of the two years of the pandemic I was the Clinical Manager of the Cath/EP Lab. The most frustrating challenge was trying to provide a clear and consistent message to staff. As we moved through the pandemic and learned more about the virus, the direction from the Ministry of Health and Infection Control would frequently shift. It often felt like just when we got into a groove - the game would change, and we would have to readjust our workflows and procedures. I drew strength from the Cath/EP team and their resilience during this time, their ability to adapt to changing workflows and procedures and the way they worked together to ensure both patient and staff safety.



AMY CHARLEBOIS RN

Amy has been at UOHI since 2007 and is an Advanced Practice Nurse in Cardiac Surgery. Her priority is both pre-operative and post-operative care of patients undergoing cardiac surgery. Amy was part of a team that organized a wedding in the hospital back in 2019. The ceremony included a performance by surgeon Dr. Fraser Rubens and the story may be familiar to Foundation Connection readers from the Winter 2020 edition.

“Since I was young, I was always interested in the medical field, it fascinated me. I had the opportunity to gain some experience when I was in high school and working at a medical centre. This opportunity also helped me confirm a passion for helping people and caring for them. And so began my journey to nursing school and becoming a nurse at UOHI. The experience here has been incredible. Our team, the patients, the caregivers - I am truly thankful and indebted to be a part of this organization. The new tower provides amazing services to our surgical patient population including the Cardiac Hybrid Operating Room and the CSICU. It has provided a state-of-the-art environment for patient care and for staff. Thank you to all our supporters!

I will never forget caring for a young patient just around my age when I first started nursing. She was going through unexpected cardiac surgery, had an LVAD (left ventricular assist device) and then, a heart transplant. She was in hospital for quite awhile. She had so many hurdles at such a young age yet had so much strength. With grace and positivity, she went through her cardiac journey, which always made me feel in awe. She also helped me learn a lot about the importance of being a nurse and about the significance and importance a nurse's care for patients can have for a patient and their family.

It has been hard to work through this pandemic - especially at the beginning when things were unknown, new and a little scary for us, our families, our colleagues and of course our patients and their caregivers. We wanted to make sure our patients were well taken care of, and it was hard to not have family/visitors regularly with our patients pre and post surgery to help support this. We had to cancel or "put-on-hold inevitably" our in-person classes that were designed to help prepare patients and their caregivers pre and post surgery. This was an essential aspect of our patient care and inspired the team to develop virtual options for both our post-operative and pre-operative or "PreHab" classes! This one change turned into a strength and has blossomed into many other innovative surgical program initiatives including our Surgical Telehome Monitoring Program. Together, they are all strengthening our patient and caregiver care and overall quality of care at UOHI. In the end, our challenge became our strength."



JULIE SAWYER RN

After 13 years on H4, Julie joined the Cardiac Prevention and Rehabilitation Team in 2021.

"When I started my career in 2008, I worked on the post-op cardiac surgery ward (H3) which moved to H4 when the new tower opened. The opening of the tower allowed for direct access from H4 to the CSICU for our surgical patients which was a better experience if a patient needed to be transferred back for urgent care. The cardiac surgery ward both prepares the patient for surgery and receives them up to 24 hours after surgery. These patients range from complex and acutely ill, to those who were well enough to go home within a week after their open-heart surgery. As a nurse, it is truly remarkable to be a part of these recoveries. The best part of my work was seeing a patient at their worst and helping them to get well enough to go home. One thing that stands out in my mind, is how our H4 team would always gather and sing happy birthday to our patients to make them feel a little special while being in hospital, which always got a good laugh or smile!

Along with the new tower and the Cardiac Diagnostic Centre on the new S-Level, the equipment that donations purchase has been invaluable. Having the electronic BP/ vital machine at each patient bedside has been a wonderful upgrade to how I delivered care more efficiently. Compared to the one thermometer or O2 -Sat monitor (oxygen saturation monitor) I used to have to bring with me to each patient room as I carried out assessments. Keeping this equipment in good working order is crucial for patient care, as there is nothing more frustrating than malfunctioning equipment. Without the help of our donors, we would not be able to deliver the exceptional care that we provide each day.

Working through the pandemic was stressful. The uncertainty, the lockdown, and the thought of infecting our family members was an ever-present worry. We were definitely scared, but we balanced the need to protect ourselves and our families. We discovered new ways to return

home each day (like disrobing in our garages,) sanitizing our clothing, cleaning door handles, and delaying hugs to family members and pets until we showered. We developed countless ways to cope with our emotions through self-care measures. I personally drew strength from the support of my coworkers, I am so fortunate to have a wonderful team to work with.

One patient who really inspired me was a post-op patient I looked after who couldn't wait to travel again. We bonded over our love of travel and exchanged many trip stories over the course of the days I looked after him. The one thing he told me that really stuck was 'keep a small home and travel more! You are never going to talk about that kitchen you remodeled in 25 years, but you will always have the memories you created on the trip you took!' I took his advice, since then I have always tried to travel as much as possible and even downsized to a small condo!

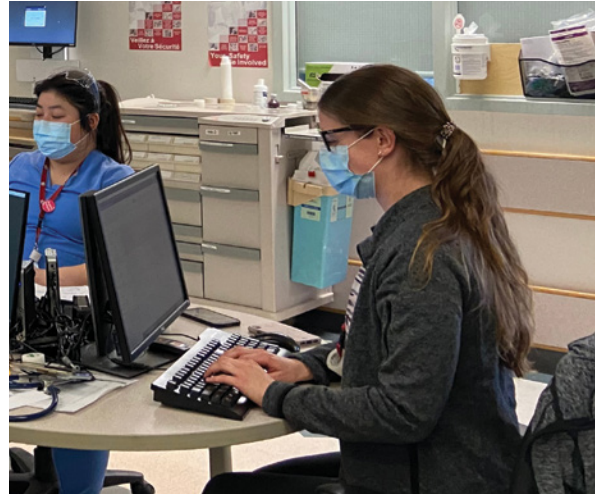
In April 2021, I decided to leave bedside nursing and successfully became the Care Facilitator at the Cardiac Prevention and Rehabilitation Centre on H2. With my new role I am now assisting patients with cardiac prevention and wellness! It is so rewarding to see patients come to the H2 track to gain their confidence and starting to exercise after their cardiac event.

Nursing isn't only a career; it's calling to help others. Being a nurse has been passed on through generations in my family, five great-aunts and three aunts were all in the nursing profession. It felt natural to follow in the footsteps of those before me. I look forward to the day when the masks come off and we can offer a smile along with our heartfelt care to our patients."

LINDSAY LOVENUK RN

Lindsay started her career at UOHI seven years ago and is currently Care Facilitator on H4, a recovery unit for individuals who have

undergone Cardiac Surgery and are able to leave the Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care Unit (CSICU.) The multidisciplinary team on H4 works closely with each patient to teach them the necessary skills to help them prepare for recovery at home.



"I chose nursing as a career because it gives me the opportunity to help people in their most vulnerable and unexpected moments. I strive to make patients feel safe, comfortable, and cared for during their hospital stay. I hope that I'm able to bring a smile to my patients faces during such a difficult time and that patient's families know their loved ones are well cared for.

The opening of the new tower is a great addition to the Heart Institute. The hybrid operating room, new equipment and updated CSICU has made a huge impact on patient care and much easier for us to transfer patients to and from intensive care when required. We are now all on the same floor level which has eliminated the need to take an elevator when transferring patients. This has made a huge difference in critical situations. The most useful piece of equipment that is used in my care area are the blood pressure machines, telemetry monitors and patient weight scales. These three pieces of equipment are necessary for us to be able to provide day to day care to our patients. They help us monitor patient vital signs,

monitor heart rhythms, and keep track of weights after surgery. Without these pieces of equipment, doing our job would be next to impossible. Thank you so much to all who have made donations over the years to purchase specialized equipment.

There have been many patients who have made an impact thus far in my nursing career. The patient who stands out the most is a patient who underwent a heart transplant who was younger than me. The road to recovery after a transplant for some patients can take some time which means many weeks spent in hospital. This patient inspired me with their strength, positive attitude and determination. I could not imagine being so young and having to go through a life changing event like a heart transplant. This individual helped put a smile on nurse's faces everyday, and, since meeting this patient, I have been inspired to put a smile on my patient's faces each and everyday. I know the road to recovery is not easy.

Working through the pandemic has had its challenges and has been difficult on many nurses in the profession. It has been both mentally and physically exhausting. We faced many obstacles such as nursing shortages, lack of essential items, unit outbreaks and increased workload demands. One of the biggest fears for me during this

pandemic was the fear of bringing home the virus to loved ones. Throughout this whole pandemic I have drawn strength from my fellow nursing colleagues. We are more than just colleagues; we truly are a family on H4 and support one another in any way that we can. This sense of family and teamwork has truly made a difference throughout this pandemic.

The team on H4 always tries to go above and beyond for the patients we care for. There is one special moment so far that stands out in my nursing career. There was a young patient who was transitioned to palliative care and all they wanted was to see a newly released Marvel Movie that was only playing in theatres. The patient was not well enough to leave the hospital so the only thing we could do was bring the movie to the patient! This idea was brought to his doctor's attention and with outreach led by the Foundation, we were able to make this happen. It was so amazing that we were able to fulfill a patients wish!

DESEREH SILVA RN

Regional Referral Centre (RRC).

“The RRC is a Cardiac Inpatient and Structural Heart Unit. Patients arrive here from all



Desereh Silva (second from left, back row) with Regional Reference Centre Team

over the region to be treated for various cardiac conditions. We are also responsible to accommodate structural heart recoveries such as TAVI procedures (Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implant.) The RRC is a fast-paced and dynamic area and is well known for its strong teamwork and great patient care. Our patients are often transferred to and from the Cardiac Cath & Electrophysiology Labs and Hybrid Operating Rooms. The new tower has greatly improved quick and safe accessibility to these areas, especially in urgent situations.

In order to safely operate our units, every piece of equipment is vital. One piece of specialized equipment that we utilize often throughout the hospital is the Bladder Scanner. The Bladder Scanner is used for many reasons, but more specifically in our area due to complications such as post-operative urinary retention. Many patients receiving sedation and/or full general anesthetic are at risk of developing urinary retention which can be very uncomfortable for the patients. To assess the severity and reduce the risks of any further complications, a Bladder Scanner is necessary to scan the volume of urine trapped in the bladder and act accordingly. It is an extremely important piece of equipment that helps us manage the comfort and recovery of our patients.

All our cardiac patients inspire us in different ways. Receiving a new and sudden diagnosis of cardiac disease can be shocking and life changing. Our patients demonstrate resilience and perseverance when facing some of life's most challenging moments. They often must process a lot of information while feeling unwell, and still remain very receptive to our care, education and rehabilitation processes.

Our team enjoys decorating the unit for different holidays and seasonal celebrations. It brings a

touch of the festivities into the hospital, and it is admired by our patients and staff. Whether it's pumpkins and spooky ghost cut-outs or a holiday tree and hanging snowflakes, it brings a little fun for all.

The most difficult part of the pandemic for me was the fear of the "unknown". Often the news, information, data, and policies kept evolving. It became increasingly difficult for staff to keep up with the constant changes in directives. This, along with the stress and worry of protecting yourself and your family while being an essential worker was extremely challenging. I believe we drew strength when communities worldwide came together and demonstrated their respect and words of appreciation towards frontline staff. But most importantly, our teamwork and friendships amongst colleagues was invaluable in getting through the many challenges of this pandemic

I'd like to thank the Heart Institute donors on behalf of all RRC staff. We appreciate all your involvement and efforts in developing our hospital and allowing us to provide the world class cardiac care that we strive for our patients.”

Thank you, Kathryn, Beroly, Julie M, Julie S, Amy, Lindsay and Desereh. Together, you and your colleagues are giving the gift of time and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

If you would like to make a donation to support resources and education for the nursing teams at the Heart Institute, you can make a donation online at donate.ottawaheart.ca/nursingweek or call us at 613.696.7030

COMMUNITY HEARTBEAT

The Mews Family. Taking care of business and community.

In the mid 1970's, when Heart Institute founder Dr. Wilbert Keon was watching his dream of an institute dedicated to cardiac care in Ottawa come to life. Hank Mews was taking the wheel of the Myers Auto Dealership as the newest owner. Hank would be continuing the brand and reputation that began with Gordon Myers back in 1942 on Slater Street. Myers is now owned by Hank's two sons, Harry and Rob Mews, and has expanded to include 16 dealerships.



Hank and Phyllis Mews with their grandchildren.

Hand-in-hand with building their business, the Mew's family are building communities. Thousands of young athletes throughout the region have sported the Myers logo on team shirts and jerseys, and charitable organizations including foodbanks, community centres and social services have benefitted immeasurably from the generosity of the Mews family and the staff at the dealerships. Hank and his wife Phyllis

were very active in the community including Hank's role as chair of the Queensway-Carleton Hospital Foundation Board of Directors. When he saw the growing need for acute care facilities for our aging population, the Mews family and their business made a \$1-million donation to the hospital in 2015. The Myers Automotive Acute Care of the Elderly or ACE Unit is the first of its kind in Eastern Ontario.

Hank grew up in St. John's, Newfoundland, where his father, in addition to his full-time job, served as the mayor. That was when Hank got his first look at the importance of community building. He met Phyllis during a high school basketball game. He was playing and Phyllis was watching. The family story is that Hank did a layup shot and fell into her lap, underneath the basket. His son Harry says, "He turned to his friend and said, 'I'm going to marry that girl.'" And they did marry and raised four children, two girls, followed by two boys.

Over the years Hank worked as a bush pilot and spent time in both the insurance and advertising sectors. He settled on a career with General Motors at a time when GM held nearly 60 per cent of the market and in 1975, he bought the Myers dealership. Both his boys got their start cleaning cars when they were teenagers, while their older sisters pursued careers outside the family business. Harry began a career in hockey that saw him move from the Nepean Raiders through to a university team and into the

American Hockey League. When he returned to Ottawa after hanging up his skates in the early 1990's, the two brothers focused on the business and began to drive the growth that hasn't stopped, adding new brands and expanding into new communities.

"Dad was a true-blue GM guy, so when we came into the business — not to toot our own horn — we had an impact and we grew the business right away," said Harry, before adding with a chuckle: "There were a couple of times my dad fired me and a couple of times I quit."

"I remember spending time with my dad, and he was scared. He was nervous and thought that this was the end. His surgery and follow-up care turned out really well and it hit home with me, with our family, just how important the institute was to his survival, and to our entire city."

Rob Mews

For the Mews family, a growing business also means a growing sense of obligation to give back to the community. Harry says "The community's been good to us. It's all about 'we work-live -play' here. I grew up here. Our kids have grown up here. It's important as a community member, a community business to give back. Our Myers employees are part of the community as well." His brother Rob adds, "It's an honor to do it, really,

we are proud that we can. Together, we've done very well. We've got wonderful people working for us and as a collective group, we want to represent the company properly in the community and acknowledge how good the community has been to us."



Hank Mews, UOHI, 2017

Hank became a patient at the Heart Institute for a valve replacement in 2017. All around him he saw the construction underway for the new Critical Care Tower, the excited anticipation of new procedure suites and operating rooms and the need for new, specialized equipment. Once again, he was struck by how important it is to have the best healthcare facilities available in Ottawa for his family, his employees and the community that supported the business. His son Rob talks about what that experience was like for Hank, "I remember spending time with my dad, and he was scared. He was nervous and thought that this was the end. His surgery and follow-up care turned out really well and it hit home with me, with our family, just how important the institute was to his survival and to the entire city."

Always a man of action when he saw a chance to make a difference, Hank brought the family together to talk about what he wanted to do. He asked that the family and the business consider making another transformational change for healthcare in Ottawa. Rob shares what happened, “Dad wanted to make a \$1-million-dollar donation to the Heart Institute building campaign that would bring it to a successful completion. It would secure the best in equipment, updated resources, extensive renovations and a brand-new addition. It was important to him, and we all agreed.” Rob adds, “He was really moved by the experience there and how caring everybody was and professional. We all went in for a tour of the facility to see the work they do there and the impact they have on the community, it was a wonderful tour, really moving.”

"It's an honour to be able to make a donation, but what's really important to us and our business is family. Just knowing that thousands of other families will benefit the way we did, the gift of time with someone they love, is something we can all be very proud of."

Rob Mews

With the completion of that campaign in 2020, the clinicians, scientists and researchers have the tools they need to take on the biggest challenge

yet, the ground-breaking research required to change the face of heart disease. The impact of the Myers donation will be felt for generations to come.



Family celebration with Hank, Phyllis and their four children.

Hank and Phyllis are both 85 now and live in a retirement home. Phyllis has been living for years with Alzheimer's disease, while Hank has been experiencing a decline in his physical health and cognitive functions. “Mom and Dad have faced some serious health challenges in recent years,” Harry shares. “Health is everything. We're seeing it directly in our family. And, you know, the hospitals, our health care system, we're so lucky to have the system we have in Canada, but it does need help. And so, when we can help, we should” he adds emphatically. Rob agrees, “In our business, we talk about building capacity and it's the same with our healthcare system. Our population that relies on this facility is growing and if we can give back a little bit of money so a place like the Heart Institute can stay ahead, be ready, I think it's important. It's an honour to be able to make a donation, but what's really important to us and our business is family. Just knowing that thousands of other families will benefit the way we did, the gift of time with someone they love, is something we can all be very proud of.”



Over \$1,072,000 raised during Heart Month 2022



On behalf of everyone at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, thank you for your exceptional support of **Heart Month 2022**. The Heart Institute is a world-renowned research centre, and our success is tied directly to our local story. There is a culture of excellence at the institute and staff morale is very high for many reasons. One of the reasons is because the community supports us so well. We are here because of you, and you make us better everyday.

Your generosity will fund groundbreaking research, helping us to take the first steps to find solutions, changing lives today and for generations to come.

Thank you for giving the gift of time."

Dr. David Birnie

2022 Heart Month Ambassador
 Chief, Division of Cardiology University of Ottawa Heart Institute
 Clinical Research Chair in Cardiac Electrophysiology

Heart Month saw windows decorated with paper hearts, amazing community events and *Love* cards everywhere!



Thank you for **Lighting the Town Red!**
 The city was glowing with heart health awareness.

The generosity of the business community in our region is outstanding. So many companies offer their support to February is Heart Month and the University of Ottawa Heart Institute.





On behalf of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute Foundation and our volunteer planning team, I wish to thank the Ottawa community for their overwhelming kindness and support. The generosity of our sponsors and participants was once again demonstrated as we celebrate the legacy of the institute's visionary founder, Dr. Wilbert Keon at the inaugural Wilbert Keon Memorial Golf Tournament. With your support, the Wilbert Keon Memorial Golf Tournament will help ensure that the Heart Institute remains true to Dr. Keon's legacy and spirit, and will always be a special place for healing, learning and caring.

Leslie Mise, Chair – Wilbert Keon Memorial Golf Tournament

\$190,235 RAISED! THANK YOU!

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

THANK YOU to our dedicated and creative volunteers and community-led organizations supporting ground-breaking research at the Heart Institute.

SUMMER 2022

Upcoming Events

Check our website frequently for the most up-to-date list of events!

www.foundation.ottawaheart.ca/upcoming-events/

- Meat and Grease Car Show: Derand Motorsports
- DMAC Dangler Golf Tournament: Manderley on the Green
- Meech Lake: Triathlon Meech Lake
- Play For Your Heart Golf Tournament: Canadian Golf & Country Club

Have YOU considered hosting your very own fundraiser for the Heart Institute Foundation?

Perhaps to celebrate your special milestone or in honor of someone you love? There are so many great ways to get involved and so many easy-to-use fundraising

platforms. Don't forget to let us know if you're planning to fundraise. We are here to help you every step of the way. Here are a few fun and easy online tools that can help get you started.

Reach out to your friends and family! We can help you create your own personal fundraising page to support the Heart Institute. Details on our website or contact specialevents@ottawaheart.ca



Visit our GiveShop Marketplace and turn your unwanted items into cash donations for the Heart Institute.

<https://www.giveshop.ca/home>



Tiltify has everything you need to engage your friends and family and help you become a fundraiser for cardiac care! <https://tiltify.com>



Engage your Facebook connections and bring awareness and support to the Heart Institute. Learn how you can create a Facebook fundraiser at <https://www.facebook.com/fundraisers/>

Are you planning an event? We would love to help in any way we can, promote on our social media and add your event to our upcoming events list. Contact us at specialevents@ottawaheart.ca or 613.696.7258

Word Search

R Z I R D E Y T A T K J Y X G
 S E U S T Y R E I H T T E O S
 H O D A F O T L B E V V L L B
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 N S N R R O T A T I L I C A F
 K N I G H T I N G A L E J J K

Find the word in the puzzle.

Words can go in any direction. Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

WORDS:

- BOLDER
- CHEMISTRY
- ESTATE
- FACILITATOR
- FAMILY
- GOLD
- INTERVENTION
- KNOWLEDGE
- MATCH
- NIGHTINGALE
- NANOMATERIALS
- NERVOUS
- OXYGEN
- REVERSE
- RHYTHM
- STRENGTH
- TELEHOME
- THERAPEUTIC
- VIRTUAL

PM: 40014881



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