

Foundation CONNECTION

Newsletter of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute Foundation



**A message from Lianne Laing,
VP Philanthropy UOHI, President UOHIF**

When I first started writing this month's update, my mind was flooded with words like thankful, grateful, appreciative, and overwhelmed. However, these words felt repetitive, and I didn't want my message to you to sound insincere or overdone.

At the end of the day, what we experienced here at the Foundation and the success of February is Heart Month are not about how we feel but rather it's about YOU and how this community stepped up.

I came across a quote that I felt expressed it best:

"Giving is an expression of our gratitude for our blessings."

Whether you have been a patient of the Heart Institute and blessed with the gift of time, a friend or family member of a patient, a generous community member, a business giving back, or just an awesome donor who made a donation because it was Heart Month, thank you. The act of giving carries emotion, and I truly hope you felt good when you donated to us.

It was a resounding success, raising over 1.25 million for the University of Ottawa Heart Institute.





In case you missed it during Heart Month, we brought you four heart-felt patient stories by award winning storyteller, Joel Haslam. If you haven't already seen them, please go and watch them and learn more about the life-saving care at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. [Watch here.](#)

Now, we quickly pivot to plan our pickleball tournament with registration now underway. The Ottawa Pickleball Classic presented by CHG-Meridian, is slated for May 5, 2024. Yes, it falls on Cinco de Mayo, so food trucks and umbrella drinks will likely be on the menu at our new venue, the Lansdowne Aberdeen Pavilion. Come dressed up if you like, try out one of the quickest-growing sports in North America, and get in on the fun. All levels are welcome! Visit ottawapickleballclassic.ca to learn more!



Let's fast-forward a couple weekends later, as we will be out supporting Team Heart on May 25-26, as part of the Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend. We love how our patients, and their families lace up to raise money for the Heart Institute, no matter the distance. Join [Team Heart](#) here!



There is no slowing down as the summer kicks off with the third annual Wilbert Keon Memorial Golf Tournament. A few spots remain for the Half 9 at the legendary Royal Ottawa Golf Club. [Click here to register!](#)



We are also in a time of transition here at the Institute as we say goodbye to our longtime C.E.O, Dr. Thierry Mesana, whose tenure is up and who will be 'retiring' at the end of the month. Many events are planned to celebrate his 45 years in cardiac surgery, his decade as the Chief of Cardiac Surgery and his ten years as our C.E.O. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had Dr. Mesana as my mentor over the last four years.



The foundation's team members: Jessica Roback, Jessie-Lee Wallace, Matt Harris, Lianne Laing, Elizabeth Rodgers, Lindsay Firestone with Dr. Thierry Mesana at his farewell brunch.

Always a visionary, he saw the opportunity to bring an "outsider" into this role at the Foundation, and I will forever be grateful. I will always cherish the time spent in his office in the early years, learning the intricacies of the Heart Institute and what makes it so special. I inhaled his passion for the work and began to understand why we are amongst the best in the world. Dr. Mesana encouraged me to think outside the box, colour outside the lines, and shape this role into what I trusted I could do with it. He was fearless in the operating room, establishing himself as a world leader in valve repair. He presided over



the boardroom with his leadership and execution.

I feel so fortunate to have been able to learn from him. Wishing him good health and wonderful adventures in the years ahead.

As many of you know me by now, I am loving these longer days of sunshine, the melting of snow and the return of the birds chirping at my window. Bring on Spring. "Where flowers bloom, so does hope."

Much Love,
Lianne

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lianne", with a stylized flourish at the end.

© 2024 UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA HEART INSTITUTE FOUNDATION

Charitable Registration No. 140813452RR0001