

Foundation CONNECTION

Newsletter of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute Foundation



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DONATIONS MATCHED ALL MONTH LONG

FebruaryisHEARTMONTH.ca



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

Your gift will be matched by our generous Heart Month sponsors until February 29th, 2024! Please don't delay.

DONATIONS MATCHED



Award-winning journalist Joel Haslam shares Cheryl's inspiring story of survival. Exactly one year ago, Cheryl faced a health crisis. Now, she shares her journey of overcoming a strep infection with life-saving heart surgery. [Unfold her story here.](#)

FOUNDATION CONNECTION: HEART MONTH EDITION

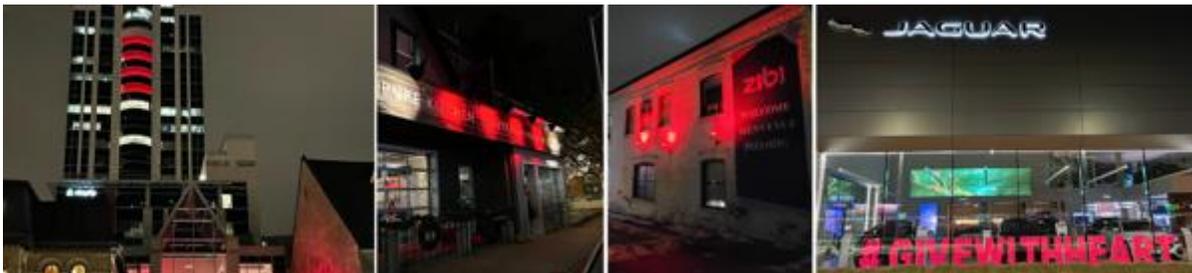
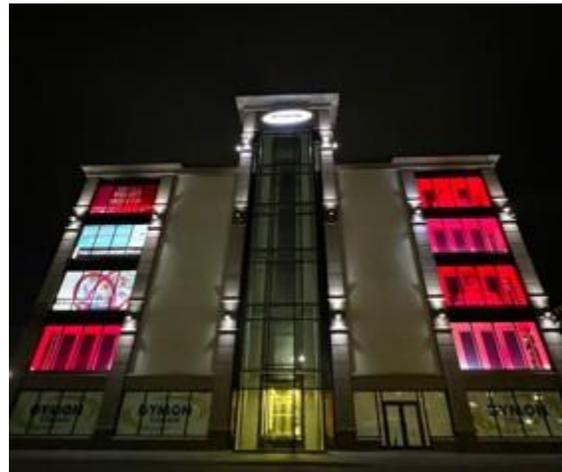
I would like to start this letter simply by saying that I am truly touched that many of you read these monthly updates. I love taking the time to write them, and they are written with heart, without the use of chat GPT or AI 🤗.

We are in the midst of our biggest fundraising campaign, known to many as **February is Heart Month**. It's a beast of a month with over 100 third-party fundraisers and our own Light the Capital Red initiative. Over 30 businesses offer the purchase of paper hearts, and donations are matched thanks to our generous corporate partners. We hope to surpass last year's total of raising 1.2 million dollars to benefit the Heart Institute.

As a child growing up in the early eighties, car rides and road trips had their challenges. For example, seatbelts back then were optional, and many of our parents still smoked. There was no in-car entertainment, movies, playlists, or the ability to call or text a friend. The main objective was to survive the ride without killing your siblings and falling victim to pure boredom. The most creative we could do was a game of "I spy with my little eye," counting the weeping willows or the ongoing game of "punch-buggy-no-punch-backs."

I mention this because the nostalgia of "I spy" has returned as I make my way through the city, spotting landmarks, buildings, businesses, and homes lit up in red in honour of our incredible doctors, nurses and staff members.

The Light the Capital Red initiative continues to build with expanded locations around the city that support the work of the Heart Institute. Without requesting donations, this opportunity creates a dialogue around and highlights the Heart Institute's work and general heart disease awareness. We aim to celebrate the work of our world-renowned Institute and the people inside. Staff often tell me how they feel a great sense of pride when they see the red lights.



Preston Hardware, a new matching gift sponsor, also has a special inventory of red-light bulbs and flood lights for people who would like to be part of the movement. It is not too late!



As I mentioned, we have been incredibly encouraged and motivated by the new partners, Light the Capital Red participants and all the original fundraisers that are underway. It's a pretty diverse and exciting collection of events that keep getting added to **the calendar**. Please check out the links and the socials so you can get in on the fun. We are so grateful for everyone's passion, time, and energy in supporting the Heart Institute.

A big part of Heart Month is sharing personal stories of courage and survival that often pull at the heartstrings (and wallets). We appreciate our patients for opening up their lives and experiences with us, and for how Joel Haslam, the brilliant, award-winning storyteller, brings them to life.

I met Joel more than 25 years ago in the newsroom we shared between what was then A-Channel and CTV. Many of you may remember a fire that burned down the CJOH building on Merivale Rd., and it was decided then that these two competing companies (now owned by Bell Media) would work under one roof. While I was no longer a rookie in the business, there was still a sense of intimidation as the veterans manoeuvred their way through the shared newsroom.



Joel was different; I observed how he exuded a sense of calm and warmth as he worked and edited his pieces. As layoffs and cutbacks began, I watched him transition from hosting Regional Contact to becoming a one-person show. With a sense of grace, his stories kept getting better and better, and his impact on the city was deeply rooted. I feel privileged to be able to call him a friend. Having Joel continue to tell our patients' stories despite leaving CTV is an absolute honour and a gift that keeps giving.

Last week, Joel brought you the Viau family story; this week, you will **meet Cheryl**.

Exactly one year ago this February, Cheryl was admitted to the Institute in a full-blown health crisis. This year, she gets to tell her heart story. Untreated streptococcus, most

likely contracted from her work as an early childhood educator, weakened her heart. With rheumatic heart disease, she needed significant rehabilitation to heal but is now back at work.

Life has returned to a regular rhythm—much like her heart. She jokes that, one day, she will be so accustomed to the ticking of her pacemaker that it will lull her to sleep like a metronome. Cheryl is forever grateful for the care she received.



[HAVE YOUR GIFT MATCHED](#)

I know there is a lot of information to pass on to you, but I also want to thank Algonquin College for their awesome kick-off to the month and our Mayor Mark Sutcliffe for proclaiming that February is Heart Month. The energy and love we felt from their students and faculty was remarkable. I learned that the College has two cardiac programs and that the Heart Institute benefits greatly from these graduates. A fitting example of this partnership is a recent profile of our staff member, Fernando. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Honestly, this email could go on another few pages, so you should check out [our website](#) and our [calendar of events](#) for something that might pique your interest. Check your inboxes as well for lots of upcoming information.

Thank you again for your continued support. If you made it this far into the email, you rock!

As always, wishing you continued health, happiness, love, and laughter. Oh, and how amazing is it that you can feel the days getting longer!!!

Much Love,
Lianne



[DONATE TODAY](#)

Please give today. Together we give the gift of time. Your donation will be matched all month long!

To make a charitable gift and staying up-to-date with Heart Month community events and activities please visit: FebruaryisHeartMonth.ca

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Your donation will be matched by our Community Match Partners all month long!

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