

Foundation CONNECTION

Newsletter of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute Foundation



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

In the summer of 2020, when COVID-19 dominated the headlines and our daily lives, my husband Tony and I set a plan in motion. To get our daughters (then 12 and 15) out of the house, off their phones, outside, and active, we took up the game of pickleball. The initial “COVID family walks” had lost their appeal, and bribes were running out. There was a collective sense of “throwing in the towel.”

A friend in California kept talking about how pickleball was taking over all the tennis courts, so we investigated a little more. The sport was gaining momentum here in Canada, and we loved that it was becoming increasingly accessible. Very quickly, with the girls desperate for change, they bought in. The games intensified as we got the hang of it, and we did not dare switch up the players or team combos. The family rivalry grew, and we even wagered dinner, cleaning, and chores.

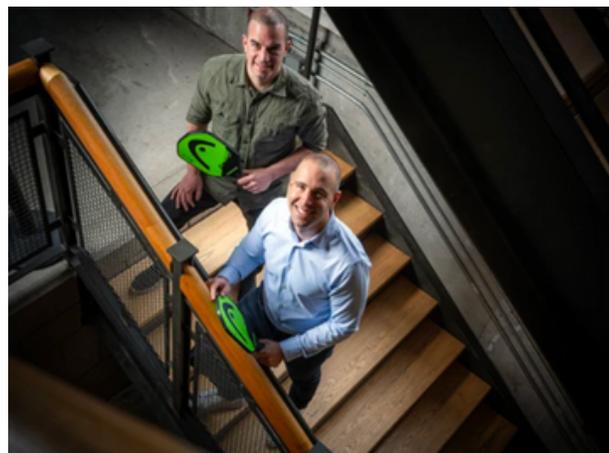
We documented the games, taking album cover-like photos to really capture the moment. When I look back on our pandemic experiences and coping mechanisms, pickleball will always be top of mind for me.



I could talk about all the benefits of pickleball for your heart and lifestyle. Still, it leads into my monthly update because the 2nd Annual Ottawa Pickleball Classic is taking place May 5 at the Aberdeen Pavilion. The Cinco de Mayo theme is helping to create a fun and festive atmosphere while raising funds for the Heart Institute.

All levels are welcome; come to play, learn how to play, dress up in a partner costume, bring friends, and try something new.

You can find a ton of information [here](#) and you can also read this amazing article by Ashley Fraser featured in the [Ottawa Citizen](#).



Board Members: Colin Zappia, Sutton Group Ottawa Realty, Jake Levinson, president of Tillbury Group | PHOTO BY ASHLEY FRASER



Also slated for May is the [Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend](#), celebrating its 50th year. We are so excited for many of you lacing up with [Team Heart](#) and raising funds. Many of our participants are Institute patients and their families. These are individuals who have often gone through our rehab programs and who courageously put one foot in front of the other after a major health crisis. Our Cardiovascular Prevention & Rehabilitation program staff lead these efforts and their work continually inspires us. If you want to register for a race that weekend, please consider running for [Team Heart](#).





As it turns out, Mother's Day and National Nursing Week overlap this year. Once again, thank you to the Grass Family for matching donations. We look forward to sharing stories highlighting the impact of mothers, nurses, and their family connections in healthcare.

On March 28 with standing room only, we celebrated, thanked, and applauded our outgoing president and CEO, Dr. Thierry Mesana, in the Ottawa Heart Institute's auditorium. I gratefully shared the impact of Dr. Mesana in my last newsletter with you. He is a true visionary, and the Heart Institute is in a much better place after his 10-year tenure. He has passed the torch of leadership to Dr. Rob Beanlands, who spoke with such passion and conviction for the Heart Institute that I am not sure there was a dry eye in the house.



I hope many of you have experienced feelings of inspiration and motivation from your leaders. At the Institute, we have incredible vision, projects to build on, accomplished people to get it done right and grateful patients counting on us. Bring it on!

I hope to see many of you on May 5. Let's enjoy the day with refreshing margaritas and plenty of prizes to add to the fun!

Between a snowstorm, record-high temperatures, and intense rain these last few weeks, you never quite know what is coming. So, I hope you can embrace life's challenges and beauty as springtime fully blooms.