

Connections

A newsletter for donors and friends of **niagarahealth**
foundation





Krystyna

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but the staff, nurses
and doctors were like
family.”**

When Fort Erie resident, Krystyna, called Niagara Health Foundation to make a donation, she was overwhelmed with gratitude.

“I had just had cataract surgery, performed by Niagara Health physician, Dr. Adnan Pirbhai,” she said, adding that she was touched by his kindness and professionalism.

“He is a very good doctor.”

Today, a few months later, she can see everything again, which has been an amazing change for her.

“I don’t even need glasses,” she chuckles.

It wasn’t the first time Krystyna needed Niagara Health.

“About a year ago, I felt pain in my chest,” Krystyna recalls. “It went on for hours. I couldn’t sleep because it was so bad.”

After a while, the pain eased enough for her to fall asleep.

“It came back the next morning,” Krystyna remembers. “I didn’t think I could have any cardiac issues because I have a pacemaker.”

When she received a phone call from a good friend that morning, she told her she couldn’t talk.

“I said to her: I’ve had chest pain for hours. I think I have to call 911.” Worried about Krystyna, her friend called 911 as soon as they hung up.

“Before I could even call for help, they were already outside my door,” Krystyna laughs, grateful for her friend.

“They rushed me to the Niagara Falls hospital,” she says.

"I had had a major heart attack."

Krystyna stayed at the hospital for about a week to recover. "I am grateful for the care I received. I am very lucky."

"I just want to help because I know this is a very hard job, and I know the system is struggling."

- Krystyna

"It was quite scary, but the staff, nurses and doctors were like family. They were so good and kind and helpful. I really appreciated them."

Krystyna is also grateful for her family doctor, who has been instrumental in connecting her with a cardiologist and the resources she needs.

"My family doctor and cardiologist are amazing."

Grateful for the kindness of her healthcare team, Krystyna recently decided to make an even greater impact by joining Niagara Health Foundation's community of Monthly Donors.

"I just want to help because I know that this is a very hard job, and I know the system is struggling. It may not be much, but when somebody helps me, I have to help them. That's what I think."

For Krystyna, expressing gratitude to everyone involved in her care is just as important as giving back.

"Please thank everyone who took care of me," she says. "I am so appreciative."

We would like to thank Krystyna for sharing her experience and words of gratitude.

The equipment used in her care – from the monitors that tracked her vitals in the aftermath of her heart attack to the lights in the operating room during her cataract surgery – was there thanks to the generosity of community donors.

Monthly donors help the Foundation plan the support we can provide to Niagara Health to purchase life-saving equipment.

Join our amazing community of Monthly Donors today!



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Foundation@NiagaraHealth.on.ca



**Sherman Zavitz & Niagara Health Foundation's
Senior Development Officer, Matt Harris**

**“Giving to healthcare is
an honour.”**

Through a generous \$100,000 gift to the Niagara Health Foundation, renowned local historian, educator, author and speaker, Sherman Zavitz, is helping ensure the next chapter of Niagara's story includes exceptional care for local seniors.

Best known for preserving and sharing the rich history of Niagara as the former Official Historian for the City of Niagara Falls and the Niagara Parks Commission, Sherman has spent decades documenting the people, places and events that have shaped the region.

Today, his generosity is helping shape its future.

During a recent tour of the new South Niagara Hospital, Sherman stood on the top floor overlooking the construction site.

In the distance, the mist from Niagara Falls rose above the landscape, offering a powerful reminder of the community he has spent his life celebrating.

When asked why he chose to support Niagara Health Foundation, his answer was simple.

“Look at that. How could you not want to give back to this beautiful place?” said Sherman.

“I feel so lucky to live in a community where we have one of the wonders of the world right in our backyard.”

“We are surrounded by nature, history and incredible people.”

“I'm finally at a point in my life where I have the means to give, and there was no hesitation.”

“Giving to this place and to healthcare is an honour.”

Sherman's gift will support the Complex Care Unit at the new South Niagara Hospital, which will benefit all residents, and especially seniors in our region.

"I'm finally at a point in my life where I have the means to give, and there was no hesitation. Giving to this place and to healthcare is an honour."

- Sherman

During the hospital tour, Sherman searched for the right words to describe what he was seeing. As someone who has spent a lifetime telling stories, even he found himself momentarily speechless.

Later that evening, after reflecting on the experience, he sent an email to Niagara Health Foundation with two words:

"Spectacular."

"Exceptional."

Those words, he said, captured not only the scale of the new hospital, but also its significance for future generations of Niagara residents.

"Sherman has spent a lifetime preserving Niagara's history and sharing the stories that make this region so special," said Andrea Scott, Niagara Health Foundation President & CEO.

"His generosity will have a lasting impact on the lives of local seniors and their families, ensuring they receive the exceptional care they deserve close to home."

More than an investment in a building, Sherman's gift is an investment in the health, well-being and future of the community he loves.

By supporting the Critical Care Unit, Sherman is helping write the next chapter of Niagara's story; one focused on compassion, dignity and care for the seniors who helped build this community.



New Vein Viewer for the Oncology Unit

Thanks to the incredible generosity of Niagara Health Foundation donors, a new Vein Finder was recently purchased for the Oncology Department.

"Vein finders are incredibly helpful for long-time and new nurses alike when inserting IVs," says Andy Johnson, Oncology Nurse.



\$7,458 Raised by Foundation Donors

"Veins can be difficult to see or access, especially in palliative care."

The new device has a number of settings to help clinicians see the veins and use green or black light at different intensities to brighten the veins under the skin.

"Being able to clearly see the veins helps ensure easy access, every time," explains Andy.

"Making a potentially scary experience quick and easy, creates a level of trust between the practitioner and patient, which is so important." Getting IVs can be extremely intimidating and uncomfortable for some patients, Andy adds.

Vein finders provide clarity for patients by helping them physically see their veins and understand what is going on throughout the entire experience.

"We are so grateful for Niagara Health Foundation donors who made the purchase of this device happen," says Andy.

"We always strive to make patients and clinicians as comfortable as possible, and this new device helps us provide that here in Oncology. Thank you!"



Oncology Nurse Andy is grateful for the new vein viewer & the support from donors

Sandra Schmirler Foundation supports Niagara's NICU

The Niagara Health Foundation is grateful to the Sandra Schmirler Foundation for its generous gift of \$7,198 in support of Niagara Health's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Founded in memory of Olympic curling champion Sandra Schmirler, the Foundation has spent more than two decades supporting premature and critically ill babies across Canada by funding life-saving equipment for neonatal intensive care units.

Sandra Schmirler Foundation Board Member, Peter McKinley, remembers experiencing the NICU as a parent.

"When you're in a hospital, and find yourself surrounded by uncertainty, one thing becomes incredibly clear," he said. "Perspective."

"As parents, your entire world narrows to your child," he reflected.

"You look around the NICU and see babies who are healthier than yours, and others who are facing even greater challenges. It reminds you to hold gratitude alongside your worry."

That perspective stayed with Peter long after his family left the NICU.



Sandra Schmirler Foundation Board Member, Peter McKinley, presents the Niagara Health Foundation team with a donation towards the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Today, through the work of the Sandra Schmirler Foundation and its donors, he has the opportunity to help other families facing similar journeys.

His family's story is a powerful reminder that philanthropy is often deeply personal.

Niagara Health Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to the Sandra Schmirler Foundation for their donation, which funded the purchase of a new specialized crib for the NICU, helping ensure Niagara's tiniest patients can receive extraordinary care, close to home.



Niagara Health Foundation Legacy Society

St. Catharines residents Bob and Donna have been monthly donors to the Niagara Health Foundation for many years. We recently met with them to learn why their local hospitals are a cause close to their hearts.



"We're originally from Toronto," Bob begins. "For many years, we only ever experienced those big city hospitals, and while the teams were competent and did their best, it just never felt very personal."

Almost 40 years ago, he says, they made a decision that changed their lives: they moved to Niagara. "It really improved our quality of life."

Both of Donna's parents needed care at the former Hotel Dieu Hospital, and she was amazed by the kindness and thoughtfulness of the staff.

"My dad did eventually die at the old hospital."

"It was a sad time for our family, but the care the team provided at the end of his life was excellent."

While they were sad to see the old hospital close, Bob and Donna are grateful for the new Marotta Family Hospital, and for the care they have both received at Niagara Health over the years.

"We have had cataract surgery at the St. Catharines hospital and knee surgery at the Welland Hospital," Bob says.

"The surgeries as well as the recovery went very well."

"It was really quite amazing," Donna agrees. "The staff were great. They are very special people."

Grateful for the excellent care they have received over the years, Bob and Donna decided to become monthly donors to the Niagara Health Foundation.

"We are on a fixed income," Bob says, "so a monthly donation is a format that works best for us."

The couple has also left a gift in their will to the Foundation. "Both the Niagara Health Foundation and our Church will receive a bequest, which we have arranged for with our lawyer," Bob says.

"We could not think of two more worthy causes."

"It's important to us to give back to a community that has always been so good to us," Donna adds.

We thank Bob and Donna for sharing their story of gratitude – for the hospital, the Niagara community, and for each other.

Join us for *Light of Day* Concert!

Tickets are now on sale for Niagara's *Light of Day* concert on November 7th at the Meridian Centre in St. Catharines. It is a night of incredible music and one that makes a difference in the lives of people living with cancer and Parkinson's disease in our region.

The event first started in 1998 in New Jersey, and Bruce Springsteen has always been a huge supporter, which is how Niagara Falls resident Dave Rotella first heard about it.

"I am a huge Bruce Springsteen fan," he laughs. "So when the opportunity presented itself to bring this concert to Canada, it just felt right."

What started as a small concert in a Niagara Falls high school gym has grown into a much-anticipated event that has showcased artists such as Blue Rodeo and Ron Sexsmith over the years.

"This year, the amazing country star Tim Hicks is our headliner," says Dave, adding that other special guests include Steven Page, Teenage Head and Miss Emily Band.

For artist Tim Hicks, *Light of Day* is close to his heart.

"Two things I love: hometown shows and helping my community," he says. "The *Light of Day* show hits both of those nails right on the head. I'm very excited to take part in this important event."

Dave and his family experienced the importance of local healthcare first-hand when his father was diagnosed with cancer and lost his battle with the disease in 2018.

"It was tough on all of us, but the team at the Walker Family Cancer Centre was amazing. They gave so much to us. When my dad passed away, I knew I wanted to give something back to them."

Tickets for the all-ages event can now be purchased at the Meridian Centre box office and on their website.

As a Niagara Health Foundation supporter, you can use promo code 2026LOD to receive \$10 off on ticket purchases.

"It really is a night you will leave feeling good."



Record-Breaking Kids Ultimate Challenge

Our 14th annual Kids Ultimate Challenge event raised a record-breaking total of \$173,000 in support of Niagara Health's Children's Health Unit this summer.

Over 900 kids from across Niagara participated in this year's event, which was held at Firemen's Park in Niagara Falls.

Kids aged 4-12 completed an obstacle course filled with slime, mud, jumps and crawls while raising funds to support the Children's Health Unit.

We want to thank all the kids and families who participated.

"The Kids Ultimate Challenge helps shape the care we provide to Niagara's youngest patients," says Natalie Doucet, Director of Women and Babies & Children's Health.

"The funds that were raised at this year's event support the purchase of 25 bassinets, helping ensure that nearly every baby born in Niagara has a safe and healthy start."

A special thank you goes to our title sponsor, Desjardins, for their continued, generous support. We also thank all other sponsors who supported the event. **Because of you, this event was made possible.**



Each of the new bassinets for the Women & Babies Unit costs \$3,840

KIDS
Ultimate Challenge

Celebrate the new addition to your family with a spot on the Baby Wall

We are pleased to launch the Niagara Health Foundation "Baby Wall." This beautiful new recognition space celebrates the arrival of newborns while supporting care for women, babies, and families across Niagara.

Located on the 4th floor of Marotta Family Hospital Women's & Baby Unit, the Baby Wall is a vibrant and welcoming display where families can honour a newborn or loved one by making a donation and adding their name, and even a photo, to the installation.

Each baby's story will become part of the tree.

"This is a joyful way for families to celebrate one of life's most special milestones while making a real difference," says Andrea Scott, President & CEO of the Niagara Health Foundation.

"For many families, Niagara Health is where their story begins. The Baby Wall offers a meaningful way to honour that experience while helping support care for others."

To learn more or donate today, visit:

www.NiagaraBabyWall.ca



Niagara's

Baby
Wall

Thank you for your generous support!

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