

# Inspire

WINTER 2026

STORIES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

## *A life reclaimed and a* legacy of gratitude



*Sandy and her husband Barrie*

In late 2022, long-time Regina business owner and entrepreneur Sandy Archibald went from running her family business to fighting for her life in a matter of weeks.

It started quietly, with what seemed like a stubborn case of pneumonia. It lingered through the holidays, a time that should have been filled with joy, but instead was overshadowed by fatigue, uncertainty, and a growing sense that something was terribly wrong. “I was losing weight, feeling weak and just getting worse,” Sandy recalls. “I knew something wasn’t right. I just didn’t know how bad it really was.”

Navigating a health system that was still overwhelmed by the COVID pandemic, appointments were difficult to come by. But thanks to the persistence of her sons and daughter-in-law, Sandy finally secured an urgent appointment with a respirologist in mid-January 2023 at the Regina General Hospital.

They discovered she was gravely ill and needed immediate care. Doctors diagnosed her with myocarditis, sepsis, and dangerous blood clots in her lungs. Her condition wasn’t just poor, it was critical. “It was a game of whack-a-mole,” Sandy recalls. “Every time doctors would treat one thing, something else would pop up.”

Sandy spent months in the hospital as medical teams worked tirelessly to stabilize her. She says her unstable health was very hard on her family, who almost lost her twice. By May, Sandy was finally well enough to go home. But the woman who walked out of the hospital was not the same. Frail, exhausted, and visibly worn, she faced a long and uncertain road to recovery. When she finally began to find her footing, her health collapsed again.

In July, Sandy went back to the hospital, this time with a failing heart valve. She underwent open-heart surgery, which included a tissue valve repair and a pacemaker implant. Sandy was placed in a medically-induced coma for a week and spent nearly a month recovering in hospital.

“That surgery put me on the road to getting my life back,” she says. “I was able to slowly return to the things I loved, and more importantly, focus on what really matters most to me, which is my family.”

Sandy’s experience left her with a profound sense of gratitude, not just for her survival, but for the care that made it possible. She asked her two doctors,

Dr. Stephen Korkola, a cardiothoracic surgeon, and her respirologist, Dr. Zenon Belak, how she could give back and make an impact. They directed her to Hospitals of Regina Foundation.

Together with her husband, Sandy donated \$30,000 to the Foundation to match community support for cardiac care and respirology, two areas that literally saved her life.

“A week before my surgery, my youngest grandchild was born,” Sandy shares. “That gave me extra motivation to fight for my health. I can’t say thank you enough to the doctors and nurses who cared for me over those many months.”

Today, Sandy is healthy and thriving. “I’m nearly back to where I was before I got sick, and it’s all thanks to the exceptional care I received.”

“We are happy that Sandy is back to feeling like her best self, thanks to the life-saving care she received from the medical teams in our hospitals,” says Lisa Green, Hospitals of Regina Foundation senior vice-president. “Through her generosity, Sandy is helping the Foundation make sure others across southern Saskatchewan have access to the best care possible, right here at home. We are grateful she shared her story and is also supporting the Foundation’s work.”



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## Bringing hope closer to home: A new way forward in breast cancer care



Dr. Marly Tcherni

No one ever wants to hear the words: “you have breast cancer.” For many women across southern Saskatchewan, those words are just the beginning of a journey filled with uncertainty, fear and difficult choices. On average, 84 Canadian women are diagnosed with breast cancer every day, according to the Canadian Cancer Society.

Dr. Marly Tcherni, a general surgeon at our Pasqua Hospital, sees those moments up close every day. One of the most heart-wrenching decisions for her patients? Whether to remove lymph nodes during a mastectomy to reduce

the risk, even when there is no clear sign that cancer has spread.

However, the lymph nodes are the first place that cancer is likely to be found if it has spread beyond the initial tumour identified in a woman’s breast.

“Right now, we often ask women to make life-changing surgical decisions without knowing if their cancer has moved beyond the breast,” says Dr. Tcherni. “They have to decide before surgery, and we don’t have pathology results until after.”

However, that is changing. Thanks to an investment of over \$100,000 by Hospitals of Regina Foundation, a new-to-Saskatchewan diagnostic system called a Magtrace is being introduced right here in Regina. This system uses a non-radioactive iron oxide liquid, called a tracer, which is injected into the breast and a specialized probe system to track the path of the tracer. It is designed to flow through the lymphatic system to precisely locate the areas most likely to contain cancer, if it has spread from a tumour.

“This platform gives us the power to delay the decision on whether or not to remove lymph nodes until after we have pathology results, easing the emotional burden on patients,” says Dr. Tcherni. “Now, we can make decisions based on facts, not fear.”

A simple injection, up to 30 days before surgery, helps doctors determine whether cancer has spread and reached

the lymph nodes. This means patients and their care teams can make better informed decisions about surgery before going into the operating room. It is an important improvement in care, happening right here at home.

“Thanks to our generous donors, we are helping bring the latest breast cancer technology to our hospitals. With the Magtrace, we’re not only supporting improved treatment options for breast cancer patients, we’re also helping our medical teams provide the best care possible for women across southern Saskatchewan.”

Lisa Green, senior vice-president,  
Hospitals of Regina Foundation



Surgical suite at the Pasqua Hospital

# Letters that matter: *A story of survival, compassion and gratitude*

From time to time, Hospitals of Regina Foundation receives a heartfelt message from patients or families whose lives have been forever changed by the care they received at our hospitals. These letters are a powerful reminder of the impact our medical teams have on the people of southern Saskatchewan. They also remind us that our clinical teams rely on the commitment of our donors, volunteers and staff team for the technology and equipment they use to provide the best care possible. The following message from Rikki Hayward of Carnduff, Sask., is one such story. It's a touching reflection of courage, compassion and the life-saving care made possible right here at home.

Dear Hospitals of Regina Foundation Team,

I am writing to express my deepest gratitude to the incredible doctors, nurses, and staff at the Regina General who cared for me and my son, Sonny, during the most difficult and life-changing time of our lives. Our story is one of hope, resilience and unwavering compassion and it would not have been possible without the exceptional care we received.

In 2023, I was considered a high-risk pregnancy and had undergone a

transabdominal cerclage to give my baby the best chance at life. At 24 weeks, over a long weekend, I began bleeding heavily and was rushed to the emergency department. It was there that Dr. Rashmi Bhargava took me under her care, and we spent a week doing everything possible to keep Sonny safe inside me. Despite every effort, Sonny was born at just 25 weeks and four days, weighing only 1lb 11oz. He was immediately taken to the NICU, where he began his fight for life. From the start, Sonny amazed us all. He did incredibly well throughout his 100-day NICU stay, and for that, we are forever thankful to the neonatal team who surrounded him with expertise, technology, and so much love.

While Sonny was thriving, my own journey took a frightening turn. One week after delivering, I was readmitted to the hospital with a severe infection that quickly turned septic. Over the next 36 days, I underwent four CT scans, three major surgeries, and intensive treatment, including a wound vac. Through it all, I witnessed true compassion in action. The staff not only provided extraordinary medical care but also cared for my heart. Being three hours away from home, away from my two-year-old twins, and desperately wanting to see my tiny baby, I was overwhelmed but the nurses and doctors went above and beyond to make it possible for me to be near him whenever I could. Dr. Steve Pooler and the entire team on 6A saved my life.

There are no words big enough to express what that means to me and my

family. Because of them, I am here today to hold my children, to love my family, and to share this story of hope. The Regina hospitals are more than medical facilities, they are places of miracles, staffed by people whose dedication and compassion change lives every single day. I will forever be grateful for everything you have done for us. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for giving us the greatest gift, life and time together.

With heartfelt gratitude, thank you.

Rikki Hayward and family



*The Hayward family*

## Canada Life supports pediatric cancer patients through \$75,000 gift



Luanne Drake, Hospitals of Regina Foundation director, major gifts, Katerina Bletnitsky, Canada Life senior program manager, and Dino Sophocleous, Hospitals of Regina Foundation president and CEO

When a child is diagnosed with cancer, everything changes. The diagnosis impacts their entire family. It is a terrifying moment, made worse when parents are told they must travel hours away to receive the care their child needs.

Thanks in part to Canada Life's latest gift to Hospitals of Regina Foundation, southern Saskatchewan families will have access to specialized treatment for their child, close to home. The long-time Foundation partner committed \$75,000 to support the creation of a pharmacy clean room for our Children's Cancer Clinic at the Regina General Hospital.

"Canada Life has been our partner since 1989, and their continued generosity is helping us change the future of pediatric cancer care in our community," says

Dino Sophocleous, president and CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. "This pharmacy clean room will help our children receive personalized cancer treatments close to their family."

The new pharmacy clean room will allow pharmacists to create personalized chemotherapy treatments based on each child's bloodwork and their unique cancer markers, providing a level of precision that was not possible before. Customizing treatment in this way lessens harmful side effects, reduces damage to healthy cells and gives our kids the greatest chance at the best results possible.

Sterile, isolated and built with specialized filtration systems, the clean room will make it possible to safely prepare highly

effective chemotherapy drugs on-site. It will also keep the chemotherapy treatment sterile, reducing the risk of infection for our young patients, whose immune systems are already weakened by cancer treatment.

More than 135 children currently receive treatment and follow-up care at our Children's Cancer Clinic, including 22 newly diagnosed in the past year. The pharmacy clean room will help our medical teams provide kids with cancer the best possible care, right here at home.

"At Canada Life, we believe that our kids deserve the very best care. We're proud to support a project that helps families stay together, while giving kids in southern Saskatchewan the best chance at recovering from cancer."

Katerina Bletnitsky, senior program manager at Canada Life

Thanks to the generosity of Canada Life and other donors, Hospitals of Regina Foundation is ensuring every child facing cancer in southern Saskatchewan can receive the best care possible, right here at home while surrounded by the people who love them most.



## Family gives back after miracle baby's NICU stay



Eleanor Friesen

Every name is special, but in the case of Eleanor Friesen, her middle name means just that much more. “Her middle name is Mira, which is short for ‘miracle,’” her dad Trevor explains.

Eleanor’s story began in 2022, when her parents received the news that they were having another child. This surprised Eleanor’s mom, Krista Sandercock, who was told years earlier she would be unable to get pregnant again due to a past medical procedure.

From the very beginning, Eleanor’s journey was anything but easy.

“It was considered a high-risk pregnancy,” Krista recalls. “They were concerned about Down syndrome and her overall growth. I was seeing specialists constantly, trying to understand what we might be facing.” Krista and Trevor say they were fortunate to have the guidance of Dr. Ernesto Figueiro, a maternal fetal medicine specialist at the Regina General Hospital, throughout her pregnancy.

Krista’s first major scare took place when she went into labour at 23 weeks. Doctors

at the Rawlco Centre for Mother Baby Care at the Regina General Hospital managed to stop her labour, but it was a warning sign that baby Eleanor may be born early. As a result, Krista was admitted to the hospital and remained there for eight weeks. At 27 weeks, her water broke a second time, but it stopped on its own at the hospital. At just over 31 weeks, Krista went back for a check-up before she planned to attend a wedding that same day, but life had other plans.

Eleanor’s heartbeat was not regular and it was revealed that Krista had an infection. Doctors prepared to deliver Eleanor within 24 hours, but her heartbeat dropped to dangerously low levels. Krista was rushed into surgery and she delivered her baby by C-section.

Because Eleanor was born nine weeks early, at four pounds and four ounces, she was admitted into our neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). While there, further investigation showed a softball-sized mass on her bum, caused by amniotic bands wrapped around her hip, leg and bum, cutting off her circulation. They feared

the bands might sever her leg. Fortunately, once the bands were removed, the growth was absorbed into her body.

Eleanor stayed in our NICU for 28 days. Krista and Trevor credit Eleanor’s round-the-clock care from her medical team in the NICU, as the reason she is here with them today.

“Now she’s happy and healthy, she jumps on the bed, and lives a life any little girl would want to live,” says Trevor. “She always has a smile or a giggle, and it’s infectious to be around her.”

Krista recalls donating to the Z99 Radiothon with Eleanor for the first time in 2024 and feeling like it wasn’t enough, given their experience at Regina’s NICU. “We know what it took to keep Eleanor alive,” she says. “And I remember thinking ‘we can do more. We have to do more.’” They launched their own fundraiser called Local Bands for Tiny Hands in 2024, which to-date has raised nearly \$40,000 for our NICU.

“We need to nurture our small humans, and this is how we do that,” Krista says. “We have these hospitals because of amazing donors, so I thank every person who chooses to put their heart and their donations into building something better for our children.”

“It’s truly inspiring to see people like Krista and Trevor give back after their experience with our NICU,” says Dino Sophocleous, president and CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. “Approximately 500 babies are cared for in our NICU every year, and go on to live better lives because of the generous giving spirit of our southern Saskatchewan community.”

## *Pediatrician grateful for* Foundation support



*Dr. Basmah Ishteivi*

Some stories unfold exactly as planned. Others take a few unexpected turns before landing somewhere that just feels right.

For Dr. Basmah Ishteivi, joining the pediatric team at Regina General Hospital was one of those unexpected turns.

Originally from Jordan, Dr. Ishteivi completed her medical training at the University of Jordan in 2010. Being a pediatrician was what she has always wanted to do. “I felt so comfortable working in pediatric care and got such positive feedback that it seemed natural to specialize in pediatrics,” she shares.

She and her husband first moved to Canada in 2010, yet over the next several years, her career would take her to the United Kingdom and then to the children’s hospital in Dublin, Ireland. She was preparing to return to Canada in 2022 to pursue her Canadian medical

licensing when a chance connection changed everything.

“I wasn’t looking for a job,” Dr. Ishteivi says, “but I was introduced to the pediatric team in Regina through Dr. Abid Lodhi, who was the head of pediatrics at the time. It felt like an opportunity that was meant to be.”

Dr. Ishteivi came to Regina to prepare for her Canadian exams and work under the supervision of Dr. Lodhi, supported by a grant from Hospitals of Regina Foundation intended to help non-Canadian doctors, with much needed specializations, while they get licensed. Part of the grant agreement included a commitment to stay and practice in Regina for a minimum of five years, a commitment she was happy to make.

On July 2, 2023, she passed her licensing exam, a milestone she calls unforgettable.

Today, Dr. Ishteivi is a key member of our pediatric team at the Regina General Hospital, providing care to children and their families both in the hospital and in a community based medical clinic. She is passionate about helping families feel supported during uncertain times, bringing medical care and empathy to every patient interaction.

Dr. Ishteivi also teaches medical students and residents, something she takes great pride in. She is helping to grow the next generation of pediatricians and strengthen the future of health care in Regina and across southern Saskatchewan.

She has also found a sense of belonging in Regina. “It’s been so welcoming, not just professionally but as a place for my family. We feel at home here. I am grateful to Hospitals of Regina Foundation for helping me achieve my Canadian licensing and make my career in Regina possible.”

“Dr. Ishteivi’s story is a powerful example of how donor support helps us bring dedicated, skilled physicians to Regina. Our community’s support allows us to not only improve pediatric care today, but also build a brighter future for children across southern Saskatchewan.”

Lisa Green, senior vice-president,  
Hospitals of Regina Foundation

# Meet our 2025 Fall Home Lottery winners

Thanks to the continued generosity of our southern Saskatchewan community, the 2025 Fall Home Lottery was another outstanding success. We are grateful for everyone who supported this year's campaign, helping us invest in the best health care possible for patients right here at home.

All funds raised stay in southern Saskatchewan and are directed toward the most urgent needs in our hospitals and health care facilities. Whether it is advanced equipment in

our NICU or life-saving technology in our cardiac and cancer care centres, your support helps create better lives for patients and their families across the region.

We're pleased to announce the top winners of the 2025 Fall Home Lottery:

Christian Flaman of Regina was the winner of the Ripplinger-built \$1.7 million Grand Prize Showhome and \$50,000! Also winning big was Gerald Mydan of Regina who

took home an amazing \$535,375 in another \$1 million plus 50/50 Add-on, and Dorianne Piller of Balgonie was our Early Bird Winner of the Audi & Australia Vacation Package or \$110,000.

Congratulations to all our winners. Your support allows Hospitals of Regina Foundation to continue funding critical care, as close to home as possible, for the people of Regina and southern Saskatchewan.



*Christian Flaman, winner of the \$1.7 million Grand Prize Showhome and \$50,000 with Dino Sophocleous, president and CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation.*



*Dorianne Piller, winner of the Early Bird Audi & Australia Vacation Package or \$110,000 with Dino Sophocleous.*



*Gerald Mydan, winner of the 50/50 Add-on draw who took home \$535,375, pictured with Janet Bzdel and Dino Sophocleous.*

## Celebrating *our community's giving spirit*



*The Flats Summer Act of Giving*



*Superhero Rappel*



*Ride For The Boys*



*Teddy Bear Bash*

The giving spirit of the individuals, organizations and businesses that support Hospitals of Regina Foundation is outstanding. Time and time again, these caring and generous partners gather to raise funds for Regina's hospitals and health care facilities in new and exciting ways! Whether a gala event, a donation at the till campaign, a golf tournament or a marathon, people step up and support health care for those who need it most. The Foundation is so grateful for our community's support because nothing we do happens without you.

Thanks to many amazing volunteer organizers and their supporters, here are the fundraising activities that took place between July and October 2025 in support of Hospitals of Regina Foundation:

- The Flats Eatery & Drink – \$1,712
- Indian Head Bakery BBQ – \$2,300
- Teddy Bear Bash – \$2,113
- Eric Calibaba Memorial Gold Tournament – \$29,789
- Motorcycle Ride for the Boys – \$34,393
- Mexican Scramble Golf Tournament – \$3,835
- BOMA Golf Classic – \$3,120
- Clay Catley Memorial Rodeo – \$1,240
- GMS Queen City Marathon – \$3,463
- SWAT Superhero Rappel – \$16,063
- Uncover the Cure Cocktail Party – \$51,856
- Gift of Giving Gala – \$17,756
- McDonald's in Yorkton and Melville donation at the till – \$2,000

Winter weather may be cold but there are lots of great events to warm up your heart. Please join in the fun at these upcoming events! Follow our social media pages to keep up to date on how to get involved by purchasing tickets or supporting our efforts through donations.

- Local Bands for Tiny Hands (benefitting the Z99 Radiothon) – February 28, 2026
- Regina Slopitch Snowpitch – February 28 - March 1, 2026
- An Evening in Greece Gala – March 7, 2026
- Z99 Radiothon – March 26, 2026
- Chinese Spring Festival – April 18, 2026
- Litres for Little Ones – April 2026
- Cardiac Care Unit 5KM Walk/Run – May 23, 2026

### CONNECT

To learn how you can host your own fundraiser, visit our website [hrf.sk.ca/Events/Host-An-Event](http://hrf.sk.ca/Events/Host-An-Event), or contact Melanie Metcalf, development officer, at (306) 781-7501 or by email at [melanie.metcalf@hrf.sk.ca](mailto:melanie.metcalf@hrf.sk.ca).

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