

# Inspire

SPRING 2025

STORIES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

## Life-saving breathing equipment *gives Regina woman second chance*



Tammy and Ron Pool

Tammy Pool is grateful to her medical team after spending four days in the intensive care unit (ICU) at Regina's General Hospital when her husband, Ron, could not wake her one morning.

For years, Tammy had not felt well but she attributed her low energy, shortness of breath and dizziness to aging. Her vision was also affected and she often had severe headaches.

In August 2023, an exhausted Tammy asked her husband, Ron, to wake her the next morning and went to bed early. "Going to bed at 8 p.m. was unheard of for me, but walking from my kitchen to the bedroom, I had to stop because I was so tired," says Tammy.

Ron was going fishing the next morning, but decided at the last minute to stay at home. When he tried to wake Tammy, she would not respond so he

called 911. "Had he not been home, I would not be here," says Tammy.

Unconscious, she was taken by ambulance to the emergency room where a bi-level positive airway pressure (BiPAP) machine helped her breathe. Tammy's carbon dioxide levels were more than two-and-a-half times what is considered normal, which put her at risk for brain damage. "It was in the extreme of danger. I didn't have much time left," shares Tammy.

When Tammy finally regained consciousness, things were foggy. "I saw a bright light and several people looking at me. I thought maybe I had been in a car accident."

It was not initially clear what was causing her condition. While in the intensive care unit (ICU), where she needed life-saving breathing equipment, a number of physicians, including respirology, cardiology and neurology specialists, ran several tests to diagnose her. They discovered at least three issues – severe sleep apnea, asthma and atrial fibrillation. Tammy says they all fall under a broader diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD.) "I'm not sure how long I had these issues, but they all peaked at once and that's what happened that night."

She recovered well enough during her 15 days in Regina's General Hospital to

go home. Today, she still sees specialists and her family physician every few months, uses a BiPAP machine at night and checks her oxygen levels regularly.

Tammy wants people to know she got the help she needed when she needed it because of the dedication of her medical team and the technology and equipment they had available at Regina's General Hospital. "I had such amazing treatment, from the emergency room, to the ICU, to the regular ward. Here is the bottom line. If you haven't needed the hospitals so far, just know we all will. Thank you to everyone who supports Hospitals of Regina Foundation."

"The equipment Tammy needed to help her breathe while she was cared for in our ICU was made possible by the generosity of our community," says Lisa Green, senior vice-president, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. "This year, the Foundation is investing more than \$250,000 in our emergency room and ICU to make sure our medical teams have the technology they need to provide life-saving care. We are happy we could provide the care Tammy needed, right here at home."



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## Pasqua Hospital Auxiliary *continues to give to our community*

Almost everyone in Regina and across southern Saskatchewan knows someone who has benefited from the great care provided at Regina's Pasqua Hospital. It is also the place where a dedicated group of committed volunteers give their time to help make the lives of patients and their families better.

**"Volunteering boosts your confidence and makes you feel that even as a senior you are still capable of doing important things in life."**

Alice Johnson,  
Pasqua Hospital Auxiliary volunteer

With a history that dates back to 1907, the Pasqua Hospital Auxiliary plays a key role by raising funds and helping patients to be more comfortable, including lending a kind and sympathetic ear to patients and their families. The Auxiliary operates a gift shop just inside the hospital's main doors, staffed by a team of approximately 40 volunteers. However, the gift shop is not the only way the volunteers raise funds to support the Pasqua Hospital. They also hold raffles and sell gently used books throughout the year. The proceeds support the purchase of new equipment and technology for the hospital, through the Auxiliary's decades long partnership with Hospitals of Regina Foundation.

The Pasqua Hospital Auxiliary has been a tremendous supporter of the

Foundation. Since 1984, they have contributed over \$5.3 million to make the lives of countless patients better. This includes their most recent commitment of \$612,900 in support of palliative care and a new medical imaging suite planned for Pasqua Hospital. The state of the art imaging technology in this suite will provide critical information physicians need to diagnose, treat and monitor injuries and disease.

Alice Johnson first volunteered at the Pasqua Hospital in 1982. She joined the Auxiliary in 1983 and has been co-managing the gift shop with Joy Strong since 2001. She shares that there are many reasons she loves being a volunteer.

"Volunteering gives you a sense of doing something good and contributing

something to your community. You see many patients who come into the hospital, many with serious medical problems, and you realize that your problems aren't nearly as bad as you think," Alice declares.

"Volunteering boosts your confidence and makes you feel that even as a senior you are still capable of doing important things in life," she adds with a smile.

"The generosity of our community is exemplified by the work of the Pasqua Hospital Auxiliary volunteers," says Dino Sophocleous, president and CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. "They are among our most dedicated partners, with a deep passion for helping patients at the Pasqua Hospital. We are blessed to have them as our partners and friends."



Members of the Pasqua Hospital Auxiliary with Hospitals of Regina Foundation President and CEO, Dino Sophocleous

## *Resilient boy home after* 41 days in NICU



*Sean Young with his son, Cameron*

Tianna and Sean Young never imagined their third baby would experience an emergency requiring an early caesarean section and our neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

Tianna was pregnant during the COVID pandemic and was cautious as she had polyhydramnios, a medical condition describing an excess of amniotic fluid in the amniotic sac, which can put a baby at higher risk for health challenges.

When her active baby stopped moving in mid-December 2020, around two months before his due date, Tianna headed to the Regina General Hospital where she was taken to our Labour and Birth Unit, at the Rawlco Centre for Mother Baby Care.

There, a fetal monitor showed the baby's heart rate was unstable. This meant our medical teams needed to closely monitor his heart and check other vital organs with ultrasound, in order to evaluate

his condition. It was at this time her medical team shared unexpected news.

"I still think about the nurse I had. She was so comforting, so caring. She held my hand as the doctor gently explained to us that Cameron likely had Down syndrome," says Tianna.

The next day, on the advice of her medical team, Tianna delivered Cameron by C-section. He was born early at 32 weeks.

Cameron was swiftly moved to our NICU as he struggled with breathing, a common condition with premature babies, and low muscle tone, a common issue in babies with Down syndrome. Our NICU medical team intubated Cameron and then, once he became stable, used a continuous positive airway pressure machine to push air into his little lungs and help them get stronger so he could breathe on his own.

"It was emotional and traumatizing to have all this happen so quickly," Tianna says. "You place your trust in people you've never met, to care for your baby. Then you see how they hold them, how they talk to these tiny newborns, their patience, kindness and the way they nurture and love them and you know you are at the right place."

After 41 days in hospital, the family took Cameron home with a tube under his nose to help increase the amount of oxygen available to him.

"It was a little scary at first," Tianna says. "You don't realize until you're home just how much the nurses and doctors know and how calmly they respond while doing so many things that make such a big difference."

Lisa Green, senior vice-president of Hospitals of Regina Foundation, says Cameron's story illustrates the incredible work of our exceptional NICU team. "The doctors and nurses in our NICU care for 500 vulnerable babies each year. Thanks to our generous donors, our NICU teams have the best technology and equipment possible, so they may provide our tiniest patients with outstanding care."

Today, Tianna and Sean continue to learn about Down syndrome, bringing Cameron to our Children's Program at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, for his current health care needs.

"His care will always be more complex, but everyone has been so lovely, patient and kind," Tianna notes. "We are truly grateful for the tremendous support we received during his care – then and now."

## Cardiac care receives boost from Yara Belle Plaine



One of two catheterization labs at the Regina General Hospital

Yara Belle Plaine is no stranger to supporting our hospitals.

Since their first gift in 1995, Yara Belle Plaine has contributed more than \$1.2 million to the Foundation in support of a variety of priority needs to help make sure the best possible health care is available, right here at home. In 2024, they generously donated \$50,000 in support of our Cardiac Care Campaign.

Hospitals of Regina Foundation committed to raise \$2.5 million to upgrade the second of two cardiac catheterization labs in the Mosaic Heart Centre, at Regina's General Hospital. The \$50,000 donation from Yara Belle Plaine was matched by Municipal Hail Insurance as part of a \$1 million matching gift for donations from our southern Saskatchewan community.

The catheterization labs are used to diagnose and treat critical cardiac problems related to the blockage of blood vessels to the heart. As a result of the blockages, the coronary arteries struggle to send enough blood, oxygen and nutrients to the heart muscle. This reduced blood flow to the heart can cause fatigue, shortness of breath and chest pain. A complete blockage of blood flow can cause a heart attack.

The first catheterization lab was upgraded in 2020 and, with the upgrade of the second one, our medical teams will now have the state of art technology they need to deliver the very best care. The Mosaic Heart Centre is one of only two cardiac centres in the province and approximately 70 per cent of catheterization lab patients travel from outside of Regina. Last year,

over 2,400 procedures took place in our catheterization labs.

"We are grateful for support from long-standing partners like Yara Belle Plaine. The investments made through our Cardiac Care Campaign will provide our medical teams with the tools they need to deliver the best cardiac care, right here at home," President and CEO Dino Sophocleous says. "It is estimated that one in 12 Saskatchewan residents will experience cardiac issues in their lifetime, and we want to ensure the best possible care is available when it's needed most for people across southern Saskatchewan."

Heart disease and stroke accounts for almost 20 per cent of all deaths in Canada. Recently, the Government of Saskatchewan reported approximately 25 per cent of the adult population in our province had high blood pressure. Cardiac health is a significant issue, and a health care priority, for Saskatchewan.



# *A heart condition, a breakthrough and a new purpose*



Barb Hess

For most of her life, Barb Hess was an active, healthy woman. That changed in November 2018, just after her 45th birthday, when what started as an ordinary evening out ended with her experiencing crushing chest pain. What followed was a long, frustrating journey until she found the one person who refused to let her go unheard: cardiologist Dr. Andrea Lavoie, at Regina's General Hospital.

That November night, Barb's husband insisted they go to the emergency room, where doctors performed standard heart tests, all of which came back normal. Barb was told she likely had anxiety and

was sent home with breathing exercises. However, her symptoms persisted. Fatigue and shortness of breath became a daily struggle. Walking mere blocks left her gasping for air. Yet, each time she sought medical help, Barb's diagnoses remained the same. This did not change even when her husband experienced similar symptoms and was promptly scheduled for a stress test.

Months later, she finally had her own stress test, an appointment she nearly cancelled, convinced it was all in her head. However, just four minutes into the test, the doctor shut it down. The base of her heart was not getting enough blood. Within an hour, she was in an ambulance, being rushed to the Mosaic Heart Centre at Regina's General Hospital for an emergency angiogram.

Despite extensive testing, doctors initially found no obvious blockages. The answers to her mysterious condition remained out of reach until she met Dr. Lavoie, cardiologist and cardiology division lead, at Regina's General Hospital. For the first time in Barb's journey, she felt heard. Dr. Lavoie listened to Barb's story and recognized the signs of microvascular disease (also known as small vessel disease) and cardiac vasospasm (coronary artery spasm). These conditions disproportionately affect women and can be missed in traditional cardiac testing.

In March 2020, Barb underwent a specialized coronary reactivity test that confirmed the severity of her condition. The test showed that all her arteries,

*"We are fortunate to have excellent cardiologists, like Dr. Lavoie, in Regina. They provide life-saving, life-changing care every day to the people of southern Saskatchewan, right here at home."*

Dino Sophocleous, president & CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation

including her main coronary artery, were spasming so severely that they disappeared from the screen. It was a turning point in her diagnosis.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for these conditions, so cardiologists can only provide management of the symptoms. Today, Barb continues to live with chest pain, fatigue and shortness of breath. She takes multiple medications and wears a slow-release nitroglycerin patch to manage her condition. As she reflects on her journey, she acknowledges how different things could have been if she had not found a doctor who listened. Dr. Lavoie changed her life, by simply listening and believing in her.

*"We are fortunate to have excellent cardiologists, like Dr. Lavoie, in Regina," says Dino Sophocleous, president & CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. "They provide life-saving, life-changing care every day to the people of southern Saskatchewan, right here at home."*

## Celebrating *our community's giving spirit*



Z99 Radiothon



An Evening in Greece



An Evening in Greece



Z99 Radiothon

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 together 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, our community steps up to 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 some of the fundraising activities that took place between December 2024 and April 2025 in support of Hospitals of Regina Foundation:



Z99 Radiothon

- McDonald's donation at the till – \$30,000
- Long & McQuade donation at the till – \$550
- High Noon Optimist Club Comedy Magic Show – \$10,000
- Great Canadian Oil Change Oil-a-thon – \$23,676
- Local Bands for Tiny Hands – \$20,000
- Pure Country 92.7 Snow Pitch – \$11,939
- An Evening in Greece – \$300,000
- Canadian Western Bank Shaving Heads and Saving Babies – \$17,637
- Z99 Radiothon – \$445,694
- Chinese Spring Festival Celebration – \$12,170
- Litres for Little Ones – \$70,715



*Local Bands for Tiny Hands*



*Pure Country 92.7 Snow Pitch*



*Chinese Spring Festival*

It is going to be a busy spring and summer! 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.

- Cardiac Care Unit 5KM Walk/Run – May 24, 2025
- Four Seasons Ball – May 31, 2025
- Big Foot Trail Run – June 22, 2025
- Motorcycle Ride For The Boys – June 22, 2025
- Teddy Bear Bash – July 5, 2025
- Eric Calibaba Memorial Golf Tournament – July 18, 2025
- The Chick-a-dee Golf Tournament – July 24, 2025
- Ladybug Picnic Festival – August 23, 2025
- Mexican Scramble Golf Tournament – August 29, 2025
- GMS Queen City Marathon – September 5-7, 2025
- Uncover the Cure Cocktail Party – September 18, 2025
- Gift of Giving Gala – September 20, 2025



*Chinese Spring Festival*

## 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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Please consider leaving a legacy gift in your Will today.  
Your gift of any size will make a difference in the future health of our community.

Have you ever wondered how you might make a difference in the future?  
If so, leaving a gift in your Will may be the way to do it!

It was for Mike and Marianne Giesinger:  
"It's a great feeling to know we'll be able to help other people, even after we're gone."

Please join donors like Mike and Marianne and consider leaving a gift in your Will  
to Hospitals of Regina Foundation today, so you can help save lives tomorrow.

## Contact us today

**Crystal Schmalle, Manager, Legacy Programs**

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