

# Inspire

SPRING 2019

STORIES FROM OUR COMMUNITY



*Danielle and the triplets*

## *Three times the reasons* to be thankful

Thankful. That's how Danielle Johnston feels after 2018, an emotional rollercoaster of a year.

In July, her triplets came early. Danielle had just put her three younger kids to bed when labour pains started. Her oldest child called an ambulance to their farm, located roughly an hour and 45 minutes from Regina. But the first baby wasn't waiting.

"The baby wanted out," Danielle says. "I pulled her out and she wasn't breathing."

Danielle sprang into action, performing CPR on her newborn daughter before the ambulance arrived. Danielle, her husband Trevor and the baby, named Karlee, were taken to the hospital in

Weyburn. But Danielle knew she needed to be taken to Regina, as the other babies were in breach.

The other two triplets were born shortly after arriving in Regina. They each weighed 4.5 pounds and were placed in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). The two boys, Liam and Jack, each had bradycardia episodes, meaning their heart rates were too slow.

"The babies were so early, they weren't developed all the way," Danielle explains. "The medical team doesn't want you to go home when the babies aren't ready and I'm so glad, because I didn't know what I'd do if something happened at home."

To stay close to her babies, Danielle parked her family's camper trailer at a campground just outside of Regina. She stayed there with her four other children, going back and forth to Regina General Hospital.

In late August, Karlee was released from the NICU. The following day, Danielle received devastating news: her family's house had burned down.

"There was nothing left of the house," recalls Danielle. "It was probably a blessing in disguise we weren't home, because it could have happened when we had to get seven kids out of there."

A week later, Liam and Jack were released from the NICU. The family continued to live in their camper trailer until early November.

Today, the family is in a brand new home on their farm. Danielle says everyone is happy, healthy and grateful for the outpouring of support they received.

"Regina's NICU remains an immensely important facility for families across southern Saskatchewan," says Dino Sophocleous, president and CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. "It's imperative we equip the unit with the technology needed to save the lives of hundreds of babies every year."



HOSPITALS OF REGINA  
FOUNDATION

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# Better lives. Made possible by you.

IN 2018:



**416**

OPEN HEART  
SURGERIES  
PERFORMED  
AT MOSAIC  
HEART CENTRE



**26,350**

PATIENTS AT THE  
EYE CENTRE



**475**

BABIES NEEDED  
REGINA'S NICU



**26,705**

SURGERIES  
PERFORMED IN  
REGINA'S HOSPITALS



**19,208**

VISITS TO THE CHILDREN'S  
PROGRAM AT WASCANA  
REHABILITATION CENTRE

# An Evening in Greece supports local causes for a quarter century



Front row: Spiro Bonis (Co-Chair), Areti Athanasopoulos, Jim Kolitsas  
 Middle: Dino Sophocleous, Fotini Gargatzidis, Crystal Barlas,  
 Thomas Siarkos (Chair), Candace Williamson  
 Back: Taya Christidis, Gerri Mouyios, Jeff Christiansen

The traditional smashing of the plates

It's an event to remember. For the past 25 years, Regina's Greek Community, consisting of St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Community and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), has held *An Evening in Greece* – a fundraising gala in support of several Regina-based organizations, including Hospitals of Regina Foundation. The event has raised more than \$2.2 million (including more than \$600,000 for Regina's hospitals) over the past quarter century.

"Our first fundraising initiative sprang from our local community church needing funds to build an elevator for handicapped church attendees," says Thomas Siarkos, chair of *An Evening in Greece* organizing committee. "It was

successful, and helped kick-start other fundraising efforts."

The committee eventually decided to partner with Hospitals of Regina Foundation to raise funds for Regina's hospitals. More than two decades later, the Greek community continues to rally together to help support local health care through their gala.

Every year, the event showcases the best in Greek fare, spirited dance performances, and a signature Greek plate smash that leaves guests thrilled. As organizers love to say, "you can't spend an evening in Greece without smashing a few plates!"

"It all started because we wanted to give back to the community we call home,"

said Spiro Bonis, event co-chair. "Great local health care is essential for our people; we will all need it at some point in life. So it is our duty to ensure that we continue to support Regina's hospitals in whatever way we can."

"The Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to the organizing committee for their dedication to creating a fabulous event in support of Regina's hospitals," said Dino Sophocleous, president & CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. "To the Greek community of Regina, and everyone who supports this event year after year, thank you for making a significant, positive difference to our local health care, and helping people in our community live better lives."

## *Giving back and* looking forward



*Jim Schneider unwinds at home*

After working in the insurance industry for 40 years, Jim Schneider knows a thing or two about looking after his future. That's why he's been a Hospitals of Regina Foundation donor for the past 22 years.

Jim started supporting the Foundation well before he experienced health challenges.

"I thought I should help ensure our hospitals have the resources they need to look after us," Jim said. "If we don't make that investment, who will? Also, being on a monthly donation plan (since 2014) makes it easy and affordable."

Jim is thankful for the care he received in Regina's hospitals. Between 2009 and

2013, he had prostate cancer surgery, triple hernia surgery and heart surgery (five bypasses) to repair a blocked artery.

"It was an emotional time," Jim confides. "I was just getting used to being retired, and then it was literally one health issue after another."

Despite his challenges, he's maintained a busy lifestyle, including playing an active role in his church, senior's group and he plays bingo regularly.

"The Foundation is grateful for the support of regular donors like Jim," said Lisa Green, vice-president, development. "He's living proof of the better lives that people can live when we invest in local health care."



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## Four Seasons Ball

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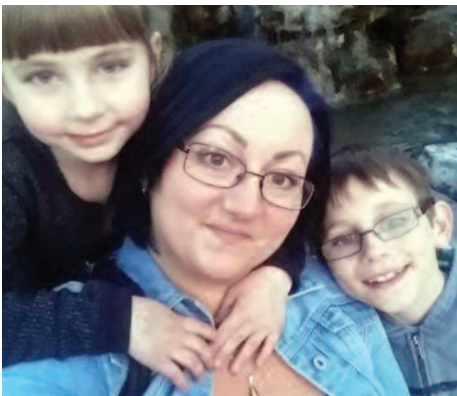
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## Successful surgery leads to a better life



*Amanda enjoying some quality time with her children*

If you've recently had surgery at Regina General Hospital, there's a chance you received a call from Amanda Chase, a scheduler at the hospital.

When Amanda calls to prepare you for surgery, she's speaking from experience. At just 33 years old, she has had more surgeries than most people twice her age, 101 surgical staples and more stitches than doctors can count.

In August 2012, Amanda was driving home from Katepwa Beach with her two kids when another vehicle slammed into her driver's side at an intersection. She was airlifted to Regina General Hospital where, the next day, she had reconstructive surgery to repair her left elbow. She would require two additional surgeries to remove glass from her hand.

"They told me I was only going to get 30 per cent of the use of my arm back when I went into surgery because of how much damage there was," Amanda recalls. "After surgery and physiotherapy at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, I'm now only 30 per cent shy of being 100 per cent normal."

Doctors will never know if the trauma of Amanda's accident led to the rare condition she was diagnosed with four years later. It started with a sneeze that hurt her finger. A second sneeze rendered Amanda's arm unmovable, prompting her to go to Regina General Hospital's emergency room. Initially, staff thought she was having a stroke. The doctor suspected something was wrong with her spine and sent Amanda for medical resonance imaging (MRI), which led to a life-saving diagnosis.

"I went from thinking I had a dislocated finger to finding out I needed brain and spinal surgery," says Amanda. "It could have been a really bad experience, where I was waiting to find out what was wrong and having it be too late and having permanent damage to my spinal cord."

Amanda was diagnosed with Chiari 1 malformation causing syringomyelia. Her brain is too large, putting pressure on her spine. She says doctors were amazed she wasn't paralyzed, given how advanced the condition was. She adds it is more common than multiple sclerosis. There is no cure, only temporary fixes, like painkillers and surgeries. Amanda has had a partial craniotomy, which was the removal of part of her skull, and a muscle graft, which meant skin from another part of her body was used to cover her skull.

"I cannot speak highly enough about the medical teams I've had. I'm able to run and play with my kids and my dog," Amanda says. "Looking at me, you'd never know I had a problem unless you saw my scars."

**"I cannot speak highly enough about the medical teams I've had. Thanks to them, I'm able to run and play with my kids and my dog."**

Amanda Chase

"More than 26,000 surgeries take place in Regina's hospitals every year," says Dino Sophocleous, president and CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. "When hospitals are equipped with the best technology available, from medical imaging to surgical technologies, people experience the best outcomes possible and go on to live better lives."

## An oasis of calm for mental health patients



(L-R): Jonathan Watchman, Maureen Lang; Human Resource Manager, Lowe's Regina #3208 & #3329, Lisa Green; VP, Development, Hospitals of Regina Foundation, Jamie Ash; past Director, Inpatient Mental Health Services, Regina General Hospital, Janice Hamann, Cheryl Ginter, Julia Wyeth.

One in five Canadians will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives. In Regina, the inpatient mental health unit (Unit 1D) at the General Hospital (RGH) sees approximately 1,400 patients a year, with an average stay of 15-17 days.

The patients on Unit 1D include adults experiencing severe mental health and/or addiction issues which cannot be managed in a community setting. This can include, but is not limited to, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety and addictions.

In 2018 more than 7,500 clients took part in mental health programming at the RGH on an outpatient basis. Outpatient programming at RGH includes the mental health day program.

Inpatients and community clients, including those in the outpatient programs, often visit the courtyard of the RGH for some fresh air, to relax and to enjoy a beautiful setting. Patients and clients also have an opportunity to learn about gardening and healthy eating options, under the direction of staff at the hospital. During the summer months, barbeques are held in the courtyard, providing patients with an opportunity to interact with RGH staff and each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

Staff at the RGH have commented on the many positive impacts on patients, including increases in confidence and engagement, development of social skills and a sense of ownership of an inviting space that encourages relaxation and stress release.

The project received a major boost in September 2018, when Lowe's Regina chose to support mental health services at Regina General Hospital through Hospitals of Regina Foundation. Staff at the two Lowe's stores in Regina collected donations from customers at their tills. The proceeds will support improvements to the existing courtyard.

Thanks to Lowe's and their customers, a new composting bin and planters will be built and used to help patients learn to grow their own vegetables. As well, future improvements will be made in order to make the space even more welcoming.

"Watching patients grow as a result of this experience has been truly amazing," said Angie Tangjerd, director, inpatient mental health services at RGH. "I think that we sometimes take the simple things in life for granted, but when you can offer this to those who don't have the same opportunities, it's fantastic."

"The Foundation is so grateful for the support of our community partners like Lowe's Regina," said Lisa Green, vice-president, development, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. "The courtyard project is an example of people working together on solutions that make lives better for people in our community with mental health challenges."

# She's a miracle girl

## *thanks to Regina General Hospital*



*Ruby Werrett – healthy and happy*

To say Ruby Werrett is a miracle child is not an overstatement.

It was made possible by Regina's health-care system, starting with the maternal fetal medicine unit in Regina's General Hospital, where doctors helped her parents get pregnant after years of trying.

"Once we realized this is not going to happen naturally for us, we were able to find some great solutions in Regina," says Rachel Werrett, Ruby's mom.

Rachel and her husband's dream of becoming parents came true after Ruby was conceived through intrauterine insemination, a relatively inexpensive option available in Regina. As Rachel's pregnancy progressed, so did her relationship with the hospital. She received support for gestational diabetes

and visited labour and delivery almost every day for a week before being induced.

Ruby was born via C-section in June 2014, just one day before her due date. At first, everything seemed normal. Relatives came to visit the happy new family as they recovered in hospital. But Ruby had been choking regularly since birth. A nurse took Ruby to the special care nursery to suction her, leaving the first-time parents to rest. When the nurse attempted to insert the tube all the way into Ruby's stomach, it wouldn't go down.

"She called a code in the nursery and Ruby was swept to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)," Rachel remembers. "We were waiting for her to come back and we suddenly had a team of doctors in our room saying, 'Your baby has been admitted to NICU and she needs an operation.'"

It turned out Ruby had been born with a defect where her esophagus was not attached correctly to her stomach and she was unable to swallow.

"It was pure shock," recalls Rachel. "It didn't make any sense. She looked perfectly healthy on the outside."

Ruby needed surgery to attach her esophagus properly. Following the surgery, she was put into a medically-induced coma so she could heal.

"It was tough because she was a full-term baby – huge compared to other

NICU babies. The entire time we were on the critical side of the NICU, we weren't allowed to touch her," explained Rachel.

After 17 days, Ruby was released from the NICU. But her need for care didn't end. She received treatment for two years at the development assessment clinic, a program at RGH for NICU graduates. Ruby's development was monitored at the pediatric outpatient clinic, where she received care from nutritionists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

"We were able to meet with that entire team of specialists who were dedicated and truly cared about how Ruby was surviving and thriving," says Rachel. "Our family is forever grateful to all those services and all the care that Regina General Hospital provided for us. We wouldn't be a family if it wasn't for them, plain and simple."

"It is so important that Regina's hospitals have the best resources available to support babies, children and their families through the most unimaginable battles," said Dino Sophocleous, president and CEO, Hospitals of Regina Foundation. "It is vital we invest in quality care and the best technology available for children in southern Saskatchewan, today and in the future."

## Our Community: Caring, Committed, Inspiring.

Our great community has once again shown its dedication to making health care in Regina and southern Saskatchewan a priority. Thank you to the organizers, participants and sponsors of these great community events. Funds raised are invested in many areas of Regina's hospitals to help our medical teams deliver the best care possible. Because of you, lives are made better!

Here are some of the events that took place between November 2018 and March 2019 in support of the Foundation.

- Lowe's Heroes - \$9,454.26
- Long & McQuade Music Therapy Fundraising Drive - \$2,450
- Regina Lakeside Lions Club - \$2,000
- Chinese New Year - \$10,110
- High Noon Optimist Club Magic Variety Show - \$10,000
- Music Heals Fundraising Concert - \$755
- An Evening in Greece - \$90,000
- Z99 Radiothon - \$643,144



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