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**Honouring the Legacy of
Margaret Juravinski**

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VITAL

 **Hamilton
Health Sciences
Foundation**

**NEWSLETTER
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Bringing Brandon Back

The last thing Brandon remembers from June 19, 2021 was driving an ATV to a friend's house.

While Brandon doesn't remember anything about the crash or its immediate aftermath, the events are still vivid in his wife Alexandra's mind.

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Bringing Back Brandon

Regional Rehabilitation Centre Brings Meaningful Recovery

(Continued from page 1) A nurse herself, Alexandra is no stranger to traumatic injuries. Keeping a level head and dealing with them is literally her job.

"But on this day I was just a wife. I was hysterical," says Alexandra, recounting her state when she arrived at the hospital.

Brandon's collarbone and four ribs were broken, his face was bruised and bloody. He wasn't able to breathe on his own.

But these injuries were "the least of our worries" according to the doctors who met with Alexandra after Brandon's initial assessment in the Intensive Care Unit.

"I had to sign consent for him to get life-saving brain surgery and they weren't even sure if he was going to make it off the table," remembers Alexandra.

"You just never know how these situations are going to turn out when they come in," says Dr. Kachur, the neurosurgeon who operated on Brandon after his accident. "In the immediate period, it was just a matter of doing what we could to keep him alive."

It was a devastating situation for the young couple. They were two years married, ready to start a family and suddenly all their hopes and plans seemed to be crashing down. For 13 days following his surgery Brandon was on a ventilator and his condition remained stubbornly touch and go.

"They weren't sure if he would wake up or what his function would be because the brain injuries were so extensive," explains Alexandra.

Fortunately, he had the best possible partner to walk with him on his journey to recovery.

Recovery and Rehabilitation

Because Brandon and Alexandra lived beyond the normal catchment area for the Regional Rehabilitation Centre (RRC), Brandon was supposed to return to his local hospital system for rehabilitation.

While Alexandra works as a nurse in her region's hospital and is quick to assert that it's fantastic with excellent facilities and brilliant staff, Brandon, she felt, needed much more than what her local hospital could provide to have a shot at a meaningful recovery.

So Alexandra advocated to get Brandon into the RRC. She put every ounce of her formidable

intelligence, time, effort and determination towards Brandon's recovery.

At the RRC's Acquired Brain Injury Unit, Brandon re-learned how to walk, how to chew and swallow. The therapy team helped him to get his strength and memory back, all while dealing with the emotional fallout and trauma from the accident.

"They were amazing," says Alexandra. "Especially his rehab assistant, Diana. She worked with him every day: going to the gym, helping him out, putting him in his place if he was getting a little saucy. She was fantastic."

"They brought him back," Alexandra continues. "Dr. Kachur saved his life but the rehab team gave me my husband back. I think I'd have to visit him at a cemetery or at a long term care facility if they didn't work so diligently with him."

Through the combined efforts of the neurosurgeons, rehabilitation specialists, and Alexandra's unwavering support, Brandon defied the odds. He celebrated his first Father's Day a year after the accident, cherishing the joys of family life that he nearly lost.



Many essential pieces of equipment in the Acquired Brain Injury Clinic, where Brandon did much of his rehabilitation, were purchased through donations from generous people in our community like you!

Reclaiming Independence with Restorative Care

Jacquie's Journey

Once a dedicated health care provider herself, 79-year-old Jacqueline ('Jacquie') found herself on the recipient end of the health care experience when an unfortunate fall on a crisp February day resulted in a broken hip.

After receiving initial care at Juravinski Hospital, Jacquie was transferred to St. Peter's Hospital for therapy and recuperation.

Restorative Care is a specialized inpatient program at the hospital that focuses on the rehabilitation needs of adult patients with complex illnesses, strokes, or orthopedic conditions through low-intensity, long-duration interventions. Its interdisciplinary team aims to help patients like Jacquie achieve their maximum level of functioning, independence, and comfort.

Throughout her time at St. Peter's Hospital, Jacquie experienced ups and downs, as anyone on a healing path would. But the team was unwavering in their commitment to her well-being. The therapists, in particular, earned her praise, as they went above and beyond to ensure her recovery journey was both effective and personalized.

"I feel that they not only care about their work, they care about me personally," says Jacquie.

With every therapist-guided session in the Restorative Care Gym, Jacquie's strength, balance, and coordination steadily improved. She went from relying entirely on a wheelchair, to using a walker, to now mostly managing with a four-pointed cane.

With newfound strength and gratitude in her heart, Jacquie bid farewell to St. Peter's Hospital this summer, acknowledging the tremendous progress she had achieved and the incredible people who helped her along the way.



The Restorative Care Gym underwent a much-needed renovation in 2016 thanks to donor support. The renovation transformed the outdated gym into a safer, brighter, and more inspiring healing space for patients like Jacquie.



Keep the love going for what matters.

Support Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation and the ones you love in your Will.

Find out how at willpower.ca/hamilton-health-sciences-foundation



Did you know?... There are significant proposed changes to tax legislation coming in 2024 that may impact your charitable giving and tax planning strategies. We encourage you to speak to your tax professional regarding the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) updates. For more information, please reach out to **William Yu**, Manager of Legacy Giving, at 365-324-7627 or yuyo@hhsc.ca.

A Philanthropic Champion

Honouring the Legacy of Margaret Juravinski

Margaret Juravinski's life was marked by a deep sense of compassion and a burning desire to make a difference. Growing up in Hamilton during the Great Depression, she witnessed firsthand the power of community support. With her humble upbringing, Margaret developed an unwavering commitment to giving back.

A Philanthropic Vision

Her philanthropic endeavors encompassed a wide range of causes, but it was in health care that her passion and impact truly shone. Margaret and her husband, Charles', philanthropy began in earnest in 2002, and since then, they donated over \$60 million towards health care in addition to a \$100 million endowment to establish the Juravinski Research Institute. To learn more, visit juravinskiresearchinstitute.ca

Through her visionary leadership and unwavering support, Margaret empowered health care professionals to push boundaries, explore new treatments, and save lives – particularly in the field of cancer care. Their gifts have contributed to groundbreaking discoveries, enhanced patient experiences, and the creation of innovative programs that continue to shape the landscape of health care in our community.

A Lasting Legacy

Margaret Juravinski's legacy lives on in the hearts of those she has touched, and her impact will be felt for generations to come. Her commitment to philanthropy serves as an inspiration to us all, reminding us of the power of compassion, generosity, and the profound difference that individuals can make in the lives of others.



"Margaret and Charles' generosity has been nothing short of transformational," says Pearl Veenema, Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation CEO. "She desired that through their generosity, others would be inspired to give back to the best of their ability."

"It brings us great pleasure to think that when we are gone, our legacy to this community may be measured in the good health of those who come after us."

— Margaret & Charles Juravinski

Your support upholds a profound philanthropic legacy. With a gift to Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation, you are helping realize Margaret's dream for our community's health care to flourish.

Give today!





A Gift That Keeps Giving

Donor generosity sparks a cycle of giving

Persistent fatigue. That's how Theresa describes what she would later recognize as the first signs of a rapid health decline. When she started having trouble getting up the stairs she decided it was time to go to the hospital.

After a battery of tests, Theresa received the heart-wrenching news that she had acute myelogenous leukemia, a type of blood cancer. However, her doctors assured her that there were treatment options available.

Theresa began a grueling regimen of chemotherapy, accompanied by a variety of other cancer-fighting drugs – all to little avail. Her physician, Dr. Walker, recommended a stem cell transplant. After a months-long search for a donor, a match was found and the stem cells were grafted.

Despite some initial setbacks in her recovery, with the prescription of an oral cancer medication, the donor stem cells became fully grafted and Theresa eventually achieved remission.

"It's been wonderful. I have more energy. I've been feeling really good. For now, everything's good," says Theresa.

The care and compassion she received from her health care team in the Stem Cell Unit left an indelible mark on Theresa's heart. In gratitude for her exceptional care, Theresa and her husband, Mauro, decided to pay it forward. In the past year alone, they have generously donated \$10,000 to support ongoing research and ensure others have access to the same world class services that saved Theresa's life.

The Ron and Nancy Clark Stem Cell Transplantation and Cellular Therapies Unit, where Theresa received her transplant and care, is one of only three centres in Ontario that provides all forms of stem cell transplants as a direct result of generous donor funding.

It's Vital to Care



The pandemic really shifted my perspective and it changed my priorities. It gave me a greater appreciation for the incredible efforts of front line workers and the health care community. I wanted to be part of it. In 2022, I joined Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation.

Every day, I'm inspired by patient stories, the resilience of friends and family that come together to support each other through life-altering and difficult journeys. I love that the work we do here is transformative and I'm inspired by the goodness in humankind: how grateful patients want to pay it forward for the next generation and how our medical community works harder to keep finding new ways to improve people's lives.

Alya Shah

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One Tough Cookie

Jonah Leads the Way



"You'll never meet somebody who asks more question than Jonah does," says the eight-year-old's mother, Sohela, in the patient tone of a parent who has indulged a whole lot of *whys* in her life. But her voice is also laced with pride for her son's unquenchable thirst for knowledge.

A Difficult Start

Within hours of his birth, Jonah was rushed to McMaster Children's Hospital. He had low muscle tone and had been resuscitated five times shortly after his birth.

"It was a really intense 14 days of care at McMaster," says Sohela, remembering the first two weeks of Jonah's life in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

During this time, Jonah was diagnosed with congenital myopathic scoliosis and Ulrich congenital muscular dystrophy. This combination of a spinal curvature as well as muscle weakness and contractures affects Jonah's overall mobility.

Complex Care and Curiosity

Treating and managing these conditions has required a multidisciplinary team at McMaster Children's Hospital including orthopedic surgeons, neuromuscular specialists, neurologists, physical therapists and developmental specialists.

And Jonah has had a litany of questions for them all.

"His inquisitive and insightful nature never fails to entertain his health care workers!" says Kristine Tomczyk, a nurse practitioner who is part of Jonah's care team. "He asks excellent, direct questions – what does that do? Why are you doing that? Is this going to hurt?"

Life-Changing Surgery

Earlier this year, Jonah underwent spinal fusion surgery. During this 12-hour procedure, Dr. Kishta and the orthopedics team used specialized 3D imaging to guide the implantation of metal rods and screws into the back of Jonah's spine.

"I just don't know how he does it. He's such a tough cookie," says Sohela, her voice breaking with emotion. "It's definitely him leading us through it."

Jonah's recovery is ongoing, and many more surgeries and treatments lie ahead as he grows and develops. Donor-funded rehabilitation equipment at Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre, will play a key role in ensuring the best possible outcomes for Jonah.

It's a long and difficult journey, but Jonah's parents have learned to take everything day by day and let their son, with his inquisitive spirit and resilient light, guide the way.



A Grateful Farewell

HHSF CEO Pearl Veenema to Retire

After 16 incredible years leading Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation, it is with mixed emotions that we announce the upcoming retirement of our esteemed CEO, Pearl Veenema. Pearl will be bidding farewell in December, leaving behind an unforgettable mark on our organization and the community we serve.

Pearl's departure leaves us with a bittersweet feeling. On one hand, we are truly sad to see her go. Her talent, wisdom, and heart have been the guiding light behind our success and growth. Under her guidance, Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation has flourished, bringing hope and healing to those in need. Pearl's impact will forever remain a part of our foundation's legacy.

Her dedication to nurturing relationships, empowering donors, advancing health care and improving lives has left an immeasurable impact that will resonate for years to come. From the bedside as a nurse to the boardroom, for over forty years Pearl has exemplified the true essence of servant leadership, tirelessly working towards a world of better care.

Her compassion, dedication and leadership has improved health care for hundreds of thousands of people. Her designation as a Fellow of the Association of Healthcare Philanthropy, written contributions to the canon of fundraising literature and being responsible for \$1 billion raised for Canadian health care are all testaments to Pearl's influence on health care philanthropy and impact on the lives of people in our region.

As we bid farewell, we are filled with excitement for Pearl. We know this is the beginning of an exciting new chapter, and her legacy will endure through the



leaders she has nurtured and the profound impact she has made on our community.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Pearl for her exemplary leadership, empathy, inclusivity and unwavering commitment to our community.

Please join us in celebrating Pearl Veenema's remarkable contributions and wishing her all the best as she embraces new adventures. We are grateful for her tireless efforts and the immeasurable impact she has made on our organization and the community at large.

"Throughout the years, I have been so fortunate to work with truly dedicated individuals and I am tremendously grateful for the teams I've been honoured to work with. To all of you who have supported me, my heartfelt thanks!" — Pearl Veenema

Your Opinion Matters!

Help shape a more inclusive future.

As a valued supporter of Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation, your feedback is important to us.

We would appreciate you sharing your ideas on how we can improve our communications to align with our values of equity, diversity, and inclusion so that everyone can genuinely and fully participate without barriers or exclusion.

We appreciate your time and commitment to our cause and your input will help us build a stronger, more inclusive Foundation.

Your responses will be kept confidential, and we assure you of your anonymity. Thank you for your ongoing dedication.



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