

# my ST. JOSEPH'S

SPRING 2023

A publication of  
St. Joseph's Health Care London

## A Space to Call Home

All faiths and spiritual practices are  
welcome in a new multi-faith room at  
Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care.



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A publication of St. Joseph's Health Care London  
Spring 2023 | Issue 07

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## MY ST. JOSEPH'S IS

St. Joseph's Hospital

Parkwood Institute

Mount Hope  
Centre for  
Long Term Care

Southwest Centre  
for Forensic  
Mental Health Care

Teams, clinics and programs in our  
community and beyond.



## Proud to be an anchor organization

During the past few arduous years, you may have heard the term "anchor organization" – but just what is such an entity?

Anchor organizations are mission-driven, large, often not-for profit employers that leverage their economic, human and intellectual resources to improve the health and social welfare of the community. The Sisters of St. Joseph were vanguards in creating healthier communities by building partnerships and developing solutions to the most pressing issues facing our community. St. Joseph's today continues this legacy.

This past year, St. Joseph's was a sponsor organization of the Health and Homelessness summits attended by representatives from numerous sectors, all with a shared commitment to better serve and support the homeless in our community. The summits resulted in a proposed, far-reaching system solution co-designed with those who have lived experience with homelessness. This "whole-of-community system response" has since received unanimous support from London city council members. We look forward to supporting and leading as this person-centred plan takes shape.

On all issues impacting the physical, mental and social well-being of our society, St. Joseph's is committed to working with, learning from, and supporting our community partners to address disparities and break down barriers. This is what it means to be an anchor organization. This is what it means to be St. Joseph's Health Care London.

Roy Butler  
President and CEO  
St. Joseph's Health Care London





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# A SPACE TO Call Home

All faiths and spiritual practices are welcome in a new multi-faith room at Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care.

**A**mid a busy and bustling day, personal support worker Fely Hassib is grateful to have a quiet place to pause, reflect and, most importantly, to pray. In the new multi-faith room at Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care (Mount Hope), the dedicated clinician feels a sense of belonging.

“For me and many others, prayer is part of my daily routine.”

The multi-faith room, which opened in spring 2023, is a first at Mount Hope – home to 394 residents representing a variety of cultures, beliefs and ages, along with staff and physicians. With construction funded by donations to St. Joseph’s Health Care Foundation, the space is welcoming to all who wish to use it.

“The multi-faith room was designed to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for people to engage in spiritual practices or meditation,” explains Dale Nikkel, Coordinator of

Spiritual Care at St. Joseph’s Health Care London (St. Joseph’s). “We hope this becomes a well-used and respected room for residents, families and staff of all backgrounds to nurture their spiritual and mental well-being.”

Out of respect for people practicing different faiths, spiritual practices, or none at all, no symbols adorn the room and warm colors create an ambiance that feels comfortable and inviting.

Residents, caregivers and staff gathered to celebrate the grand opening of the multi-faith space on March 20 during which stained glass artwork specially designed for the room was unveiled. Created by Roger Chapman of Sunrise Stained Glass Inc., the piece was inspired by a photograph taken at Gibbons Park, which is in close proximity to Mount Hope and often used by residents, family members and staff. Mount Hope residents were also involved with the creation and helped choose the design.





**Fely Hassib,**  
a personal support worker at Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care, stands in front of a beautiful piece of stained glass, welcoming staff, residents and physicians to a new multi-faith space that embraces all faiths and spiritual practices.



**Roger Chapman,**  
of Sunrise Stained Glass Inc. hand cuts glass for a custom-made piece of artwork that now hangs in the new multi-faith room at Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care.

“Before I would find corners or stairwells to pray, I now have a place that is comfortable and where it feels like home.

– FELY HASSIB

Roger is well acquainted with the spiritual spaces at Mount Hope.

“Years ago, I refurbished the stained glass in the Mount Hope chapel across from this new space,” he says. “I am thrilled to be able to create a new and unique piece of work for the multi-faith room in appreciation of the staff and physicians who work there. I hope the piece provides a sense of peace and hope for those who use this new room.”

Both residents and staff have expressed deep appreciation for the new space. Fely, who is of the Islamic faith, is delighted that the room is conveniently located as she often prays quickly between breaks during her shift.

“Before I would find corners or stairwells to pray,” says Fely. “I now have a place that is comfortable and where it feels like home.”

Paying attention to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging is a priority across St. Joseph’s and the new, quiet space at Mount Hope is a tangible reflection of that effort, explains Dale.

“Inclusion and diversity are key principles we uphold at St. Joseph’s. This room will be open to anyone who wishes to use it and represents a quiet space in which everyone can feel welcome.”



# No fuss MRI upgrade

A creative solution to upgrade MRI machines has made continued, world-class care possible at St. Joseph's Health Care London.

**I**t was an uplift without the lift. At a time of extremely high patient volumes and backlogs across the province, St. Joseph's Health Care London (St. Joseph's) upgraded its two magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units without having to replace the large, powerful machines, saving months of downtime for patients waiting for care.

Unlike any previous MRI upgrade at St. Joseph's, it was achieved with little fuss and upheaval. Thanks to a creative solution, the core magnet component of the units could remain in place, avoiding the time-consuming, complex process of switching out the machines and months of downtime. The upgrade of one unit was completed in September 2022 and the second in December 2022 to provide St. Joseph's with the latest and best in MRI technology, and the ability to serve hundreds of additional patients each year.

"At St. Joseph's Hospital, both MRI machines were aging having been installed 10 years ago," explains Howard Hansford, Director of Medical Imaging. "A solution was needed to keep technology up to date yet minimized downtime for patients."

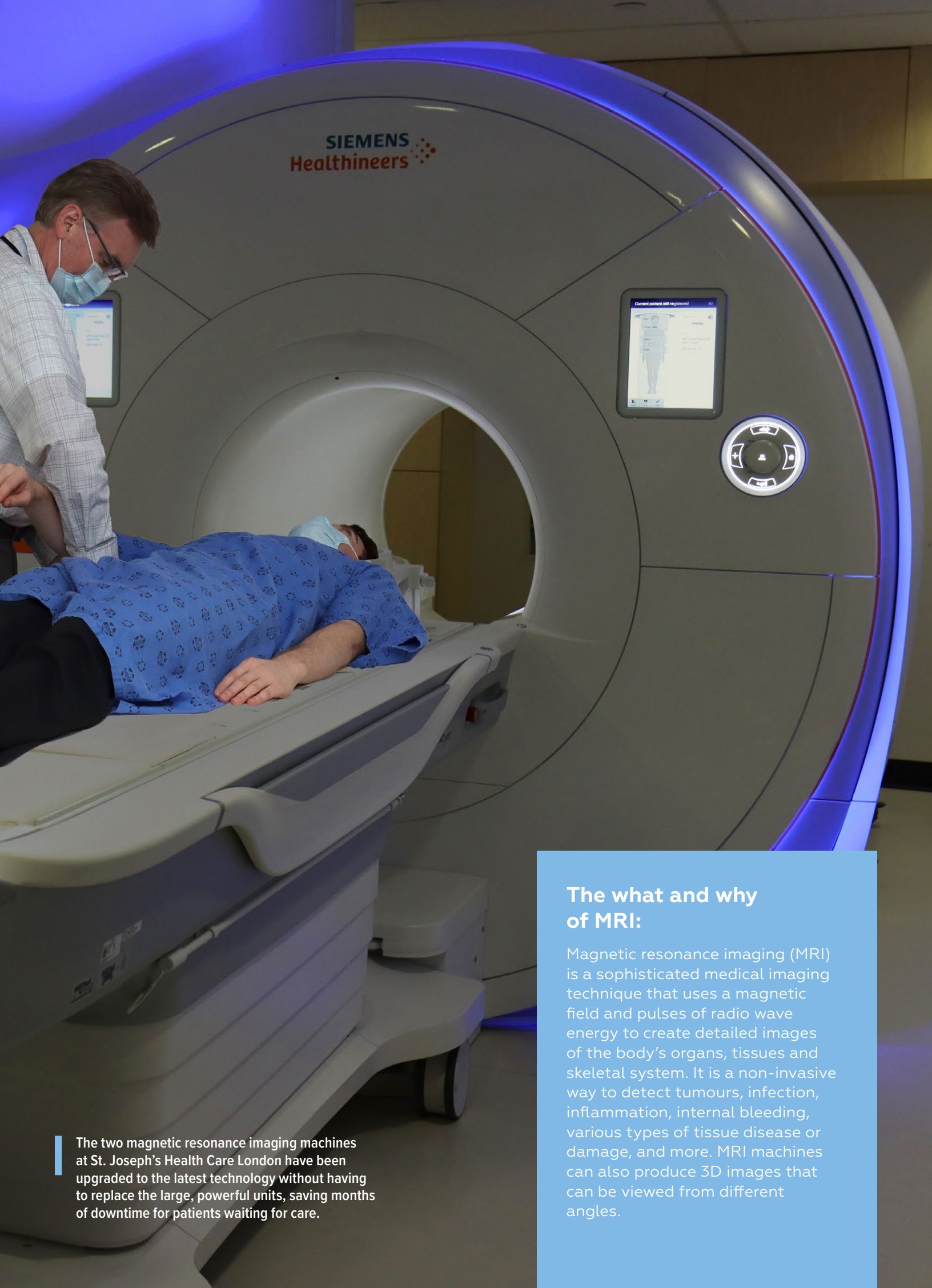
Working collaboratively with Siemens Healthineers, a solution was found. The MAGNETOM Sola Fit from Siemens allowed for a full upgrade of all MRI sub-systems such as computer, radiofrequency coils, the imaging chain and patient table, yet leaves the core magnet in place. This retrofit was accomplished in about four weeks per machine while a full replacement – which requires a crane lift through the roof on Level 5 of the hospital – would have taken about three months for each machine. Cost is also significantly reduced with the upgrade about 60 per cent of the cost of a new unit.

"Most important, at a time of significant patient backlogs due to the pandemic, downtime was minimized and patients served by St. Joseph's continued to receive the latest and best in MRI imaging," says Howard.

Radiologist Dr. Zahra Kassam says imaging quality and diagnostic abilities are significantly enhanced with the upgraded MRIs. As just one example, a new software solution acquired with the upgrade allows radiologists to see and assess liver disease in such detail that the need for a liver biopsy may be avoided.

The upgraded MRI units are also faster, allowing seven per cent more patients to be scanned per year. This means 728 more patients can be served annually – 3,640 additional patients over five years.





**SIEMENS**  
**Healthineers**



## The what and why of MRI:

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a sophisticated medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and pulses of radio wave energy to create detailed images of the body's organs, tissues and skeletal system. It is a non-invasive way to detect tumours, infection, inflammation, internal bleeding, various types of tissue disease or damage, and more. MRI machines can also produce 3D images that can be viewed from different angles.

The two magnetic resonance imaging machines at St. Joseph's Health Care London have been upgraded to the latest technology without having to replace the large, powerful units, saving months of downtime for patients waiting for care.



# EYES ON UKRAINE

From St. Joseph's Health Care London and across Canada, a compassionate band of specialists is helping Ukrainian ophthalmologists treat war-related eye trauma.

**W**hen a young ophthalmology resident approached Dr. Cindy Hutnik with an idea, neither could have predicted the profound personal and global impact it would have.

Within one year, this humanitarian duo, along with ophthalmologists from across Canada – all sharing a Ukrainian background – raised nearly a million dollars and coordinated shipments of desperately needed medicine and equipment to the frontlines of war-torn Ukraine in response to the Russian invasion.

For both Dr. Hutnik, a renowned ophthalmologist at the Ivey Eye Institute of St. Joseph's Health Care London (St. Joseph's), and Dr. Michael Kryshchalskyj, a specialist-to-be, the experience has been a swift and gratifying lesson in the colossal difference a small, passionate group of individuals can make. The two have been collaborating on research since Dr. Kryshchalskyj was a fourth-year medical student and Dr. Hutnik was his advisor. One day after the Ukraine war broke out, Dr. Kryshchalskyj called his mentor.

“When you're in training, it can sometimes feel hard to make a difference,” says Dr. Kryshchalskyj, now a third-year ophthalmology resident in Calgary. “We knew this initiative would be an enormous effort, but we felt behooved to do something given this calamitous situation. And what has impressed me is the power ordinary doctors, even doctors in training, have to make an impact and effect change.”



We've truly been able to use our skills, knowledge and resources to help people and give them hope.

– DR. CINDY HUTNIK



This compassionate mission – called Eyes on Ukraine – has quickly grown into a movement sparking broad international support and accolades far and wide. The goals are lofty – to support the treatment of eye injuries in Ukraine through fundraising, shipping of medical supplies, knowledge sharing and advocacy.

Eye trauma is estimated to account for 20 per cent of all injuries in modern warfare. Due to widespread bombing and shelling in Ukraine, these devastating injuries are being seen in civilians as well as those engaged in battle.

Since the first weeks of the invasion, Eyes on Ukraine has been raising money and sending medicine and surgical equipment to Ukraine ophthalmologists, with numerous reports from clinics and war units close to the front that the shipments are making a widespread difference. Getting supplies into the country, however, has required ingenuity and the forging of a trusted network of individuals, including European ophthalmologists and Polish and Ukrainian mountain guards, to ensure safe passage of the goods through Poland to Western Ukraine. There, they are distributed by the Ukrainian Vitreoretinal Society to where they are needed most. The initiative is believed to be the most active and organized humanitarian aid effort supporting eye trauma in the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

With the initiative rapidly gaining traction, Dr. Hutnik reached out to the Canadian Ophthalmological Society (COS) and Eyes on Ukraine is now the flagship initiative of the COS Foundation.

Beyond fundraising and gathering supplies, Eyes on Ukraine connected with Canadian ophthalmic surgical subspecialists to build a panel of experts who can answer questions from Ukrainian ophthalmologists on complex cases as they arise.

“Through conversations with Ukrainian ophthalmologists, Canadian physicians have gained an understanding of how severe these injuries are,” says Dr. Hutnik.

An ongoing series of open forums, hosted by the American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and supported by Eyes on Ukraine, is another new opportunity for Ukrainian ophthalmologists and experts in the west to share experiences in managing complex trauma cases. In addition, the forums are consolidating a new body of knowledge in ocular trauma, says Dr. Kryshchuk.

Eyes on Ukraine also led the translation of the U.S. Department of Defense’s Joint Trauma System Clinical Practice Guidelines on the management of wartime ophthalmic trauma into Ukrainian for widespread distribution to frontline doctors and medics.

Children are among those suffering devastating injuries in war-torn Ukraine, where there is a high incidence of eye trauma due to widespread bombing and shelling.



**Eye trauma** is estimated to account for **20 per cent of all injuries in modern warfare.**

Due to widespread bombing and shelling in Ukraine, these devastating injuries are being seen in civilians as well as those engaged in battle.

### Dr. Cindy Hutnik,

a renowned ophthalmologist at St. Joseph's Health Care London, says being part of Eyes on Ukraine has been one of the most rewarding and gratifying experiences of her career.







Numerous shipments of much-needed medical supplies to treat eye injuries have been sent by Eyes on Ukraine to the frontlines of war-torn Ukraine in response to the Russian invasion.

Most recently, Eyes on Ukraine was awarded the Secretariat Award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Global Alliances Secretariat, which honours special contributions to ophthalmology. It has also been recognized by the Ukrainian Vitreoretinal Society and its partner clinics in Poland.

"It's been humbling to work with inspirational people from around the world – government officials, leading ophthalmologists and others," says Dr. Kryshchalskyj. "It has solidified my dream of specializing in oculofacial plastic surgery."

The initiative recently earned Dr. Kryshchalskyj the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal from Alberta's Minister of Health for his own outstanding and inspirational work.

For Dr. Hutnik, Eyes on Ukraine has been "one of the most rewarding and gratifying experiences" of her illustrious career.

"It's an example of what a small group of passionate people can do. It takes you beyond yourself. We've truly been able to use our skills, knowledge and resources to help people and give them hope. And it continues to grow."



## Eyes on Ukraine

Dr. Cindy Hutnik, left, an ophthalmologist at the Ivey Eye Institute of St. Joseph's Health Care London, and Dr. Michael Kryshchalskyj, third from left, an ophthalmology resident in Calgary, spearheaded Eyes on Ukraine with ophthalmologists from across Canada to support the care of war-related eye injuries. All have a Ukrainian background.



# Real world, real success

In collaboration with Hutton House and Thames Valley District School Board, St. Joseph's Health Care London is providing valuable work experience to students with disabilities.

Twenty-year-old high school student Jeuel Alpuerto prepares a load of dishes to be sanitized in the kitchen area of St. Joseph's Health Care London's Parkwood Institute. He has a passion for both helping and cooking.

"I make a great omelet," says Jeuel with a smile.

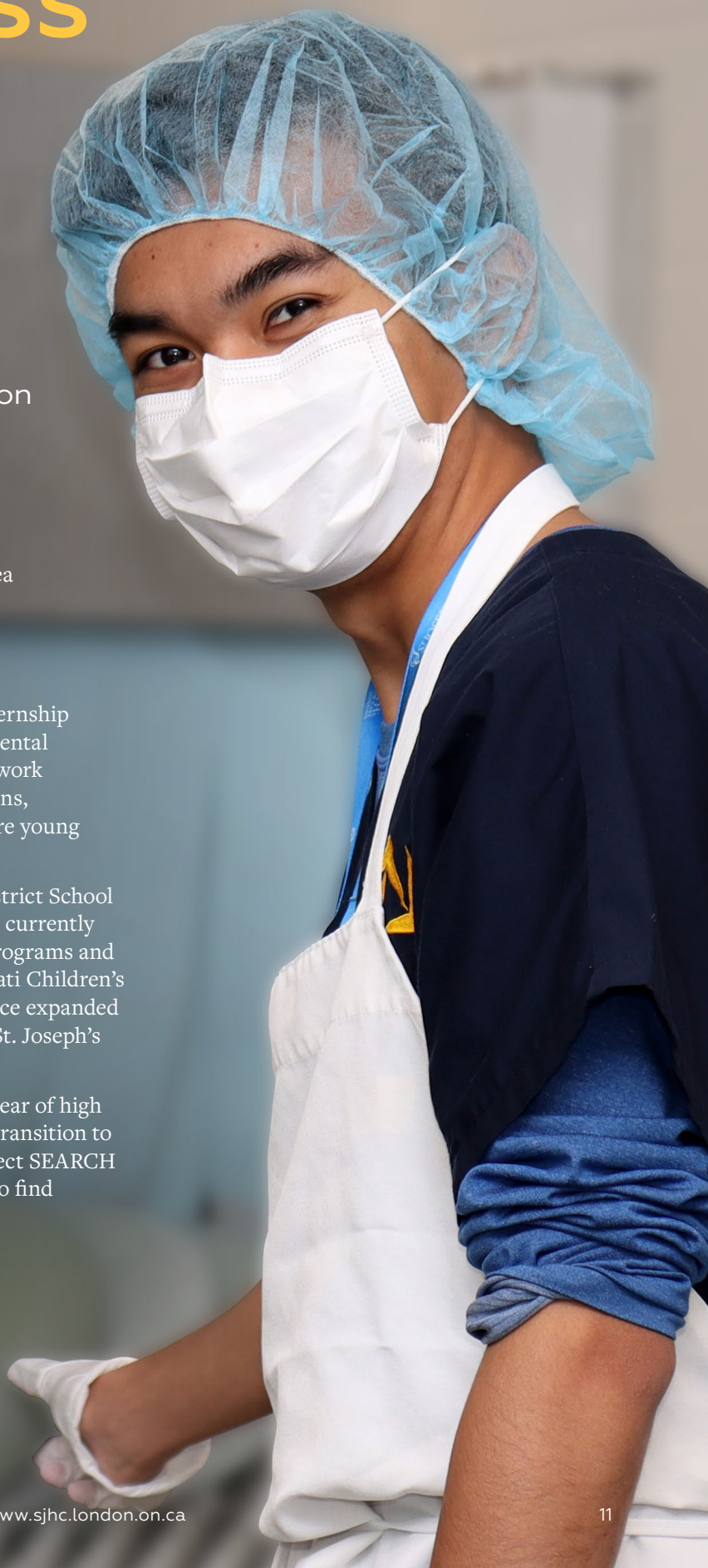
Jeuel is participating in Project SEARCH, a 10-month internship program that helps youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities find meaningful employment. The school-to-work training program involves collaboration with organizations, including health care, to establish internships that prepare young adults for the working world.

In partnership with Hutton House and Thames Valley District School Board, St. Joseph's is a host organization for the program, currently providing seven individuals with internships in various programs and services at Parkwood Institute. Developed at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 1996, Project SEARCH has since expanded worldwide and has several participating sites in Canada. St. Joseph's launched its first year of the project in September 2022.

"The students who intern at St. Joseph's are in their last year of high school and are using this time to gain skills necessary to transition to employment," explains Susan Vuylsteke, St. Joseph's Project SEARCH business liaison. "The goal for the students is ultimately to find competitive employment after graduation."

## Jeuel Alpuerto

is one of seven interns taking part in Project SEARCH at Parkwood Institute. This innovative program helps students with disabilities in their last year of high school eligibility transition into the workforce.







## Billy

spends his day doing hands-on training, which will help him be successful in his post-graduation search for competitive employment.

Each intern completes a series of three, 10-week internships that provide an opportunity to explore career options and develop a variety of job skills. Hutton House, a registered charity that helps individuals with disabilities, provides employment planning and support to the interns. A skills trainer from the organization also helps the students at Parkwood Institute as they learn new tasks and routines.



The goal for the students is ultimately to find competitive employment after graduation.

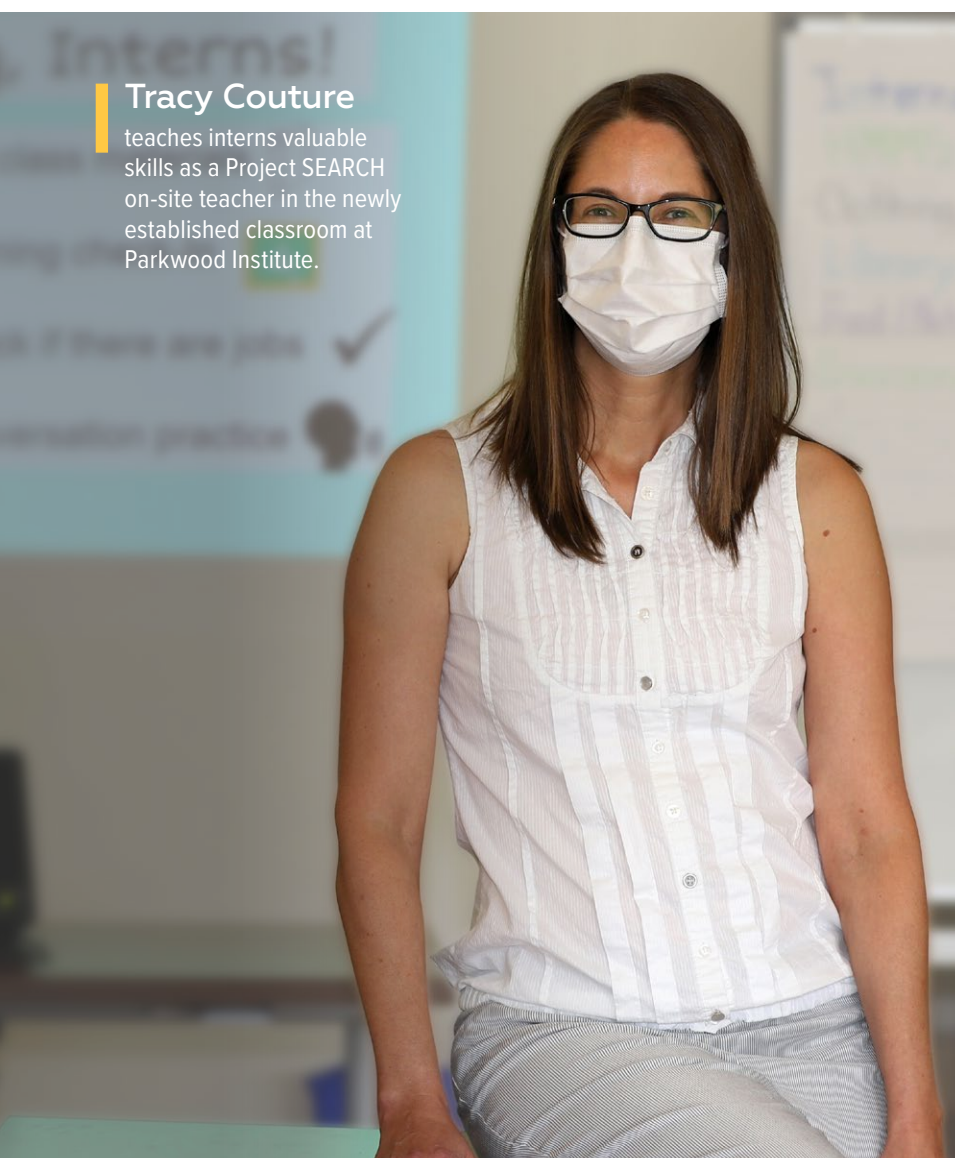
– SUSAN VUYLSTEKE

Jeuel completed his first internship in Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) at St. Joseph's. From sanitizing dishes, loading carts and preparing meal trays, he is learning valuable skills that will help with job employment in the future.

"It's been great to have Jeuel intern in our programs," says Barb Adams, FNS Coordinator, "The experience also gives our staff an opportunity to serve as mentors, think outside the box and embrace inclusivity. All staff involved have welcomed this new partnership."

Tracy Couture, Project Search instructor with Thames Valley District School Board, also works with the students at St. Joseph's, providing orientation and hands-on learning in a classroom setting that includes resume writing, interview tips and communication skills.

"The interns begin their day learning employability skills in a classroom," says Tracy. "They then spend time within St. Joseph's programs where they learn practical and social skills such as teamwork, following instructions and time management."



## Tracy Couture

teaches interns valuable skills as a Project SEARCH on-site teacher in the newly established classroom at Parkwood Institute.





## A Project SEARCH intern,

Billy organizes clothing on a rack at Parkwood Institute. He is learning valuable skills that will help him garner employment after graduation.

In the clothing store at Parkwood Institute Mental Health Care Building, Billy, who chose not to use his last name, is learning the ropes of a retail outlet. The shop acquires donated clothing, footwear and other items from the community, which are then made available to inpatients of the mental health programs. From washing clothing, sorting inventory and helping patients choose their items, Billy is immersed in hands-on experience that is setting him up for success upon graduation.

“I like helping people find their clothing size,” says the 18-year-old. “It’s nice to talk with people and there is always a lot of work to do here.”

After their internships, Jeuel and Billy will graduate high school and begin their job search. Staff at Hutton House work with the students to craft resumes, prepare for job interviews and find meaningful employment.

Billy hopes to one day work at Budweiser Gardens but is keeping his options open. Jeuel is dreaming of a future working in a restaurant or as a chef in a kitchen.

“It’s hard work, but it’s really exciting,” says Jeuel.

For St. Joseph’s staff, it’s gratifying to watch the students grow and learn, says Susan.

“It’s an honour to be involved in a program that has such a positive impact on the interns’ lives and to raise awareness of the value they bring to workplaces.”



As a Project SEARCH intern, Jeuel Alpuerto gains valuable employment skills through a combination of classroom learning and on-the-job training at Parkwood Institute.



A portrait of Dr. Ivanka Nebor, a woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a white lab coat over blue scrubs. She has her arms crossed and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. A small Ukrainian flag pin is visible on her lab coat.

# *The power of* **Razom**

While completing a donor-funded surgical fellowship, Dr. Ivanka Nebor rallied surgeons to help victims of war in her homeland of Ukraine.

**W**hen news of the hostile Russian invasion into Ukraine first broke in February 2022, Ukrainian surgeon Dr. Ivanka Nebor was in Canada completing a surgical fellowship at St. Joseph's Health Care London (St. Joseph's). But her heart was never far from home, and lessons learned at St. Joseph's is equipping her with new skills to help her country.

Compelled to do what she could, the head and neck surgeon rallied an elite, global group of surgeons with the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery to mobilize a compassionate medical mission.

That summer, with a vehicle loaded full of supplies, Dr. Nebor and her colleagues crossed the border into the western part of war-torn Ukraine. In five, grueling 15-hour days, the team would complete 31 surgeries giving back victims of civilian combat their ability to eat, talk and breath.

"One man thanked us for our service and, with the stitches still on his face, returned to the fighting," she recalls.

From a young age, Dr. Nebor was driven to take on challenges with the hope of making a difference. That drive and passion led her to medical school, following in the footsteps of both parents and her older brother, all of whom are practicing in Kyiv.

## **You can support the next generation of surgical leaders**

Fellowships embody every aspect of St. Joseph's Health Care London's mission to pursue excellence in care, research and education. Thanks to generous donor support, St. Joseph's is training emerging surgical leaders from around the world. St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation is working with donors interested in supporting surgical fellowships.

For more information, please contact:

**519-646-6085** or email [sjhcfoundation@sjhc.london.on.ca](mailto:sjhcfoundation@sjhc.london.on.ca)

**Dr. Ivanka Nebor,**  
is completing a surgical fellowship at St. Joseph's Hospital thanks to donor support through St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation.



After completing her education at the Kolomiychenko Institute of Otolaryngology in Kyiv, Dr. Nebor pursued a research fellowship at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. She then learned about the work of highly-esteemed St. Joseph's otolaryngologists, Dr. Brian Rotenberg and Dr. Leigh Sowerby. The program quickly became her top choice. Particularly gratifying, she says, was to hear that the position was donor funded and made possible through St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation.

"I feel very lucky to be here. The team has a very academic approach, and I'm refining my surgical techniques, doing research and learning to mentor residents," Dr. Nebor says of her St. Joseph's fellowship experience. "The entire team has been incredible and great to work with. I feel like I am part of the family."

Despite a busy fellowship, memories of her summer in Ukraine during the war remain vivid for Dr. Nebor. To date, reports indicate more than 8,000 civilians have been killed and more than 13,000 have been injured. The dedicated physician still pictures one man, a 68-year-old shot at close range and unable to speak until the team operated. Another memory is of a young fighter, his face severely damaged by a landmine. Incredibly, the team was able to reconstruct his missing nose, sinus, cheekbone and eye socket.

Although the memories are harrowing, Dr. Nebor is thankful for the surgeons who donated their time, medical companies who donated supplies and technology, and

the committed Ukrainian health professionals working alongside the team to heal, learn and deliver hope.

"This isn't my last mission of this kind before I return home," she promises. "This project is about hope and the power of 'razom' – a word that means 'together' in Ukrainian. The war can't last forever – together, we can fix what is broken and work for a better future."



Dr. Ivanka Nebor, left, performs surgery on a patient with American surgeon Dr. Sherard Tatum during a medical mission in Ukraine.

## A Healthy Dose of Expert Advice

Hear the latest on common health conditions from expert physicians. Listen to the DocTalks Podcast, free wherever you get your podcasts.



Scan to find episodes on topics such as dementia, urinary incontinence, erectile dysfunction and more.  
[sjhc.london.on.ca /doctalks-podcast](http://sjhc.london.on.ca/doctalks-podcast)





# Families Within a Family

Dating back to the earliest days of St. Joseph's Health Care London, generations of families have worked and contributed to the legacy of the organization. Today, family trees continue to take root at St. Joseph's across all sites. Not only do they carry on proud traditions within their own families, but also that of an organization – the St. Joseph's family. Read about some of these dedicated families – past and present.

## *Families through the ages*

### SHAPING CULTURE, LORE AND EXPERTISE

American author Alex Haley famously wrote “in every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future.” This is true both figuratively and literally at St. Joseph's Hospital, where generations within families have made their mark.

“It's not unusual to hear St. Joseph's employees refer to each other as family, but as it turns out, many of them actually are,” says Noelle Tangredi, keeper of the St. Joseph's Hospital and Nursing School Artifact Collection and curator of the latest exhibit that provides a glimpse of proud family stories at St. Joseph's Hospital dating back to the early 1900s.

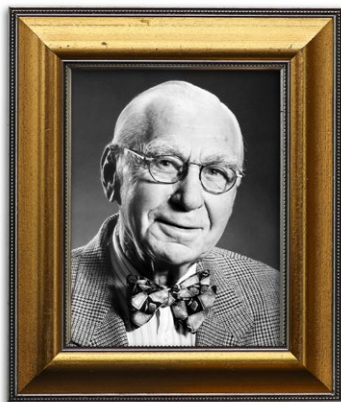
One particularly leafy family tree is that of the Woolson family. It begins when two sisters, Helen and Margaret, graduated from St. Joseph's Nursing

School - Helen in 1904 and Margaret in 1908. Margaret's daughter, Mary, followed in her mother's footsteps, graduating in 1931, and would marry a young intern at St. Joseph's, Dr. Evarist Durocher. Their daughter, Margaret, would also don a nursing cap at St. Joseph's and marry a physician - otolaryngologist Dr. Gordon LeBoldus, who retired in 2020 after 60 years of practice.

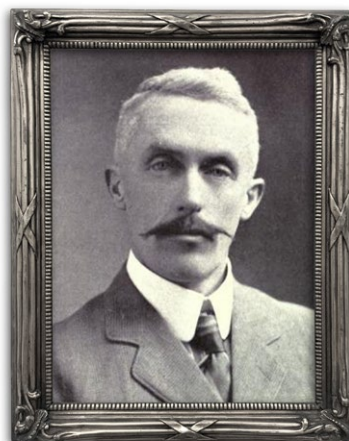
The Woolson ties go on to yet another generation for a total of four generations over 90 years.



Dr. Septimus Thompson  
1876 – 1956



Dr. Charles Thompson  
1908 - 2004



Dr. Hugh Allen Stevenson  
1870 - 1942



Dr. William James  
Stevenson 1872 – 1947



The illustrious Thompson family tree is also woven into the history of St. Joseph's Hospital. Eye, ear, nose and throat specialist Dr. Septimus Thompson practiced at St. Joseph's Hospital for 50 years before retiring as a highly respected physician and leader in 1946, just as his son Dr. Charles Thompson was beginning his career in the same specialty. Charles later confined his practice to ophthalmology and would see patients at St. Joseph's until he retired at age 90. For many years, he also provided expert eye care, often at his own expense, to Indigenous people in distant Arctic communities and remote parts of Newfoundland, Labrador and Northern Ontario.

The Stevenson doctor brothers, meanwhile, were notable beyond patient care. Both Hugh, an anesthesiologist, and William, a surgeon, were generous benefactors to St. Joseph's Hospital and active in city politics with Hugh the Mayor of London from 1915 to 1917.

Father and sons of the Tillmann family would also contribute to the development of St. Joseph's in more than patient care, teaching and research. Quite literally, the building blocks of St. Joseph's are cemented in the Tillmann legacy.

Dr. William Joseph Tillmann was renown in the field of paediatrics while his son, Dr. William Anthony Tillmann, founded the Department of Psychiatry at St. Joseph's Hospital in 1952, which became a model of general hospital psychiatry adopted across the country.



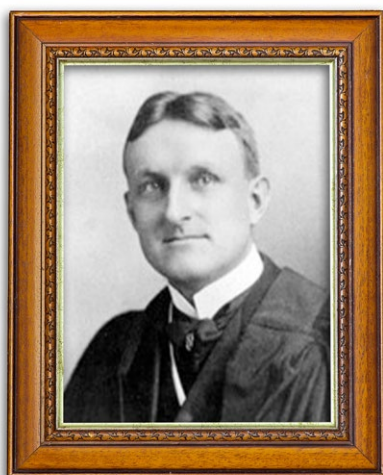
Sisters Helen and Margaret Woolson would be the start of four generations who worked at St. Joseph's Hospital over 90 years.

Cherie Lind Woolson Fry, a niece of Helen Woolson, kept a letter of encouragement she received from her aunt in 1957, just as Cherie was to begin her own training at St. Joseph's School of Nursing.



Another son, Peter, was an architect who designed two new wings and several additions and changes to the hospital that were completed in 1954. Continuing in Peter's footsteps is his son Tom Tillmann – architect and partner with Architects Tillmann Ruth Robinson. Tom and his team designed the latest renovations and new builds at St. Joseph's Hospital, the Mental Health Care Building at Parkwood Institute and Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care – winning design awards and accolades for St. Joseph's of today.

These family stories and many more have shaped the culture, lore and expertise of St. Joseph's Hospital, firmly entrenching physicians and staff and among the city's most dedicated pioneers.



Dr. William Joseph Tillmann  
1876 - 1957



Dr. William Anthony Tillmann  
1919 - 1998



Tom Tillmann



# Families of today

## THE GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANNY CONNECTION

**N**ot many people can say they share a workplace with their great great great grandmother. But Kendal Cushman can.

Kendal, a personal support worker (PSW) at Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care for the past 15 years “and counting”, was long preceded at St. Joseph’s by his triple G grandmother, Katherine Galloway, who was the head of housekeeping in her day.

“She was my grandmother’s grandmother on my father’s side,” explains Kendal. “She had emigrated to Canada shortly after 1923 from Patrick in Glasgow, Scotland, and took up housekeeping for a few wealthy families in London while also overseeing the housekeeping department at St. Joseph’s.”

Kendal estimates that Katherine would have been employed at St. Joseph’s in the 1930s and early 1940s before passing away in 1944 at age 66.

Another Cushman clan member was Kendal’s sister, Nancy McFadden, who worked in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at St. Joseph’s Hospital for many years, providing administrative support to several neonatologists. As an NICU staff member and mom to a premature newborn who received care in the NICU, Nancy was an enthusiastic champion of the program. She was on staff when the perinatal program moved to London Health Sciences Centre in 2011. On the last



### Kendal Cushman

a personal support worker, was long preceded at St. Joseph’s Health Care London by his great great great grandmother.

day before the move, staff lined the hallways starting at 6:30 am for an emotional salute to the shift leaving the hospital for the last time and those arriving for their final shift. Nancy brought her toddler, still in his pyjamas, to join the crowd. With a giant thank-you sign, his presence was one of the most heart-warming moments of that last day.

Nancy moved to LHSC with the program but sadly passed away in 2012. Her son, Xander, is now a healthy 16-year-old who is doing well in high school.

With Nancy being nine years older than Kendal, he has fond memories volunteering in her office while in high school doing mail runs and other tasks.

“When I graduated from the PSW program at Fanshawe College and was looking to start my career, Nancy told me to apply to Mount Hope. My first day on a unit, I felt I was at home.”



## THE TANGREDI TIES

**N**oelle Tangredi’s family ties run deep at St. Joseph’s – nearly 70 years deep.

With her mom, sister, two nieces and husband all with connections – “St. Joseph’s has always felt like home,” says Noelle, an E-learning developer now in her 35th year with the organization.

### Peter and Noelle Tangredi,

both currently employed at St. Joseph’s Health Care London, can boast 70 years of family ties with organization.

It all started with Noelle's mom, Johanna Prins, who began working in the blood bank at St. Joseph's Hospital in 1956 under then supervisor Sister St. William Ford. When Sister St. William created room in the blood bank for a cytology lab, Johanna was encouraged to learn the technique. She would work at St. Joseph's for more than 30 years and eventually become a registered cytologist before retiring in 1987.

Noelle spent a lot of time at the hospital as a child waiting for her mom after school so they could walk or drive home together.

"I remember her letting me put the mail in the pneumatic tubes that sucked the mail down to the mail room and using the scary elevator with a gate that had to be closed first and then the buttons pushed."

Noelle's sister, Johanna Heard, joined St. Joseph's as a registered practical nurse in 1969, which would lead to a 23-year career at St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital and Marian Villa. Then came niece Louise Heard in 1987, who worked in Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)

at Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care for about a decade. The FNS tradition continued with niece Jennifer Heard, and also by Noelle's husband, Peter Tangredi, who has had several roles within FNS since 1989 and continues to work in the department.

Since starting at St. Joseph's, Noelle has worn several hats. She began in switchboard/reception at St. Mary's Hospital and Marian Villa, became "secretary of special projects", and later moved to her current role in Organizational Development and Learning Services.

"Although people in my 'work family' come and go, I'm so grateful for the incredible people I've met over the years."

## **A FAMILY LEGACY IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE**

**T**he Pressey family is St. Joseph's proud. Four family members – three of them currently on staff – have made the organization the focus of their work and passion in mental health care.

"I started working for Parkwood Hospital when it was governed by the Women's Christian Association and my sister Marsha worked at St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital. We were both amalgamated under the St. Joseph's umbrella," explains Paul Pressey, now a registered nurse at Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care. "We influenced our family to take on their roles at St. Joseph's."

Other family members who joined the St. Joseph's fold include Paul's wife, Barbara Pressey, and niece Ashley – Marsha's daughter.

Fresh out of high school, Paul was encouraged by Marsha to enrol in the former Regional School for Nursing Assistants in London and they attended together. He would further his nursing career in 2002, becoming a registered nurse.

Paul spent his first 20 years in nursing looking after the veterans at the now Parkwood Institute Main Building. But again, Marsha led him in a new direction. As a registered practical nurse, Marsha's career took her from the St. Thomas Psychiatric



### **Paul Pressey and wife Barbara**

are part of a family tradition in mental health care at St. Joseph's Health Care London that includes Paul's sister and niece.

Hospital to Regional Mental Health Care London, and then to Southwest Centre before retiring.

"I was encouraged by my sister to come to work at Southwest Centre and in a different type of nursing - forensic mental health care," says Paul. "So here I am."

Ashley, meanwhile, is also a registered nurse at Southwest Centre, and Barbara is with housekeeping within St. Joseph's mental health care programs.

For Paul, the close-knit work environment sets St. Joseph's apart.

"I've enjoyed working at St. Joseph's for the family atmosphere and the many friendships made over the years."



# wrapped in a Hug

Handmade 'hug blankets' offer a warm and comforting touch for palliative care patients at St. Joseph's Health Care London.

**S**ydney Vickers is no stranger to giving people hope and comfort. In fact, it's in her name. "I have always had an interest in volunteering and helping people," Sydney says with a smile. "Hope is actually my middle name."

And help she does. The 18-year-old founded Hopes Hugs Inc. when she was just 15, an endeavour to provide homemade blankets to people in need of a little extra comfort and caring.

'Hug blankets', as Sydney calls them, are cut and tied in a shawl like manner, mimicking the feeling of a warm hug wrapped around your shoulders. Tucked in with each carefully crafted blanket is a poem providing a message of hope and love, written and signed by Sydney.

What started as a class project to support the community has grown into a full-time operation for Sydney. Family and friends have rallied behind the effort too, often volunteering their time to meet a growing demand for the cozy blankets.

Now, the 'hug blankets' are making their way into the Palliative Care Unit at St. Joseph's Health Care London's Parkwood Institute. The collaboration was spearheaded by social worker Anne Marie Wallace Phillips, who learned about Sydney's heartfelt philanthropic efforts and reached out.



No matter what time of day it is – it's a "hug" that will always be there for them when they need it.

– SYDNEY VICKERS



"We began handing out blankets over the holiday period this past December," Anne Marie shares. "They are very meaningful for patients and caregivers - some patients tear up when receiving them."

Palliative care provides pain management and relief of symptoms to those experiencing life-threatening, progressive or terminal illness. The care team at St. Joseph's also focuses on the physical, social and spiritual needs of the patient while recognizing each patient's individual needs and wishes.

Each 'hug blanket' is accompanied by a poem written by Sydney Vickers as a way to provide a little extra comfort for patients.





**Ursula Krahn,**

a palliative care patient at St. Joseph's Health Care London, is thrilled to receive a "hug blanket" from Sydney Vickers, who created Hope's Hugs to provide comfort – and a warm hug – to those who need it.

For some patients, the 'hug blanket' acts as a conduit to talk with staff about their care and various kinds of support that would be meaningful to them.

"Palliative care is about treating the person as a whole," Anne Marie explains. "This means caring for a patient physically, emotionally and spiritually. The blankets provide emotional support to patients in a gentle way. This can sometimes spark a conversation with the individual about other types of care, such as music therapy or spiritual services."

As added comfort, tassels hang from each blanket, giving patients – especially those living with dementia – a way to relieve frustration or restlessness, says Anne Marie.

"We see patients pull at the tassels instead of their catheters or other cords when anxious."

The blankets also provide comfort for family and/or caregivers who, when ready, can take it home as a legacy gift or reminder of their loved one.

"In palliative care there is a lot of sadness, but there is also a lot of joy and hope – hope in what you wish your end of life to be," explains Anne Marie.

For Sydney, the blankets are a hug she plans to keep on giving.

"I want people who are going through a hard time or transition to know that someone is thinking about them. No matter what time of day it is – it's a "hug" that will always be there for them when they need it."

Sydney Vickers, right, and social worker Anne Marie Wallace Phillips partnered to distribute homemade blankets, made by Sydney, to more than 50 palliative care patients at St. Joseph's Health Care London.







# Where there's a *Will*, there's a way

Inspired by steadfast family values and the world-class care they received at St. Joseph's Health Care London, siblings Chris and Danny are giving back.

**F**amily means everything to Chris Porter and Danny DePrest. The siblings are among the youngest of 11 children in the DePrest family who immigrated to Canada from Belgium in 1954 after hearing friends and family boast of 'roads paved with gold and money everywhere'.

But the reality of what the family found didn't quite measure up to the stories they were told. The DePrests settled in a home in Strathroy – a small house with no heat, hydro or running water and a broken-down truck.

It may not have been the lavish life they were promised, but the family was rich with resilience and determination, their hard work holding them in good stead as they embraced a new life and all that came with it – supporting each other every step of the way.

Years later, the DePrest family values remain strong and have carried both Danny and Chris through trials of their own, including serious health issues.

Chris remains resilient in the face of an eye disease called age-related macular degeneration. The disease, which can

“

What they have done for me, especially with my eyes, I felt it was important to give back.

– CHRIS PORTER

blur central vision, has required her to undergo cataract surgery and receive periodic injections at the Ivey Eye Institute of St. Joseph's Health Care London (St. Joseph's) to slow the progress. Danny, meanwhile, has had several urological operations at St. Joseph's, including the surgical removal of two large kidney stones,

Inspired by the quality of their care, the siblings decided to make a legacy gift to St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation through their wills.

"What they have done for me, especially with my eyes, I felt it was important to give back," says Chris. "I just hope that St. Joseph's can stay as good as it is now well into the future. And I believe the more I can give, the better the health care system will be."





Siblings Chris Porter and Danny DePrest were inspired by the excellent care they received at St. Joseph's Health Care London to leave a gift in their wills to St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation.

"No one likes going to the hospital," adds Danny, "but if you've got to go, you want to know that you're going to be well taken care of. It's why I made my gift."

Danny also volunteers his time – another way he gives back – as part of a study at St. Joseph's Parkwood Institute led by geriatrician Dr. Michael Borrie.

Legacy giving and the value of generosity isn't new to the DePrest family. The siblings' father made a legacy gift in his will many years ago, and the pair are happy to carry on the family tradition. The combined generosity of Danny and Chris will help ensure the cutting-edge technology and medical research that enabled their care is sustained for future generations of their family and the community.

"It feels good to leave something behind," says Danny humbly. "It's like leaving something for your own family – you just know so many other people will benefit from it."

## Will building healthier communities be your legacy?

You don't have to choose between loved ones and supporting health care when planning your will. Even a small portion of your estate has the power to improve or even save someone's life.

By leaving a legacy gift in your will to St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation, you can enhance care for family, friends and community for years to come. Whether it's state-of-the-art imaging equipment that detects cancer at an early stage, training the next generation of surgical leaders, or medical research that pushes the boundaries of what's possible, your future gift will make a meaningful difference.

Facts about legacy giving in Canada:

- One in two Canadians say they have a will but only one in three Canadians say it is up to date.
- Legacy giving accounts for approximately 20 per cent of philanthropic contributions to St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation.
- If only 3.5 per cent more Canadians included a gift in their will in the coming decade, \$40 billion would be directed to charitable causes.



For more information about leaving a legacy at St. Joseph's, visit: [sjhc.london.on.ca/ways-to-give/leave-legacy](https://sjhc.london.on.ca/ways-to-give/leave-legacy)



# Championing inclusive classrooms

A pilot project called Queer in the Classroom strives to help schools create nurturing environments where all students feel they belong.

Creating safe and inclusive schools, where students can celebrate their individuality, is part of a new, local research project called Queer in the Classroom.

The project focuses on professional development for teachers and staff to assist them in creating an environment tailored to best support 2SLGBTQIA+ students through the additional stress they face as a minority group.

“This project is about connecting with school boards and teachers to help develop the knowledge and skills to create spaces that go beyond tolerating differences,” explains Dr. Arlene MacDougall, scientist with Lawson Health Research Institute (Lawson). “The focus is to create an environment that is more affirming, more responsive and more proactive rather than reactive.”

Researchers at Lawson are examining the benefits of this type of approach within the education system for those who are part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ student community.

“The Queer in the Classroom initiative is so important because, when we look at the data, youth in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community are 14 times more likely to die by suicide,” says Dr. MacDougall, who in addition to her Lawson role, is also a psychiatrist at St. Joseph’s Health Care London and Director of the Mental Health INCubator for Disruptive Solutions (MINDS). “We need to be focusing

on this population who are also experiencing a higher degree of isolation, stigma and substance use.”

The basis for the pilot project stems from a review of existing research on this topic conducted by the research team through MINDS.

“We then conducted our own research based on a series of interviews of 2SLGBTQIA+ students at both elementary and secondary schools in Ontario, and their parents and teachers,” explains Lawson research assistant Iylah Neves. “We focused not only on their safety in school, but also being celebrated for who they are. We drew on all of this research to best inform the practices we are using with the Queer in the Classroom initiative.”

Currently the Queer in the Classroom project is being rolled out on a ‘by-request’ basis. However, Iylah says the research team is working with a couple of school boards in Ontario to discuss the possibility of wider implementation.

“It is our responsibility to make those changes so that students can access a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment.”

“We focused not only on their safety in school, but also being celebrated for who they are.

– IYLAH NEVES



## What is MINDS?

The **Mental Health INCubator for Disruptive Solutions** (MINDS) is a social innovation lab engaged in youth-participatory action research with a mission to tackle the growing problem of mental illness among transitional-aged youth (aged 16-25) in our local community and beyond.



Iylah Neves, left, and Dr. Arlene MacDougall, researchers with Lawson Health Research Institute, are leading a pilot project called Queer in the Classroom to make schools more inclusive.



The team engages a network of community members, organizations and institutions to come together to learn and integrate these learnings into real change at a systems' level.

A framework called Youth Participatory Action Research is used, which is based in social justice principles and puts the power into the hands of young people who have been trained in systematic research.



# STEPPING UP for the planet

St. Joseph's Health Care London was the first Ontario hospital to switch to an eco-friendly mask.

**W**hen the COVID-19 pandemic swept in, so did a global surge of microplastic waste with burgeoning use of medical masks. In fact, face mask litter is considered one of the most damaging fallouts of the pandemic worldwide.

Wanting to address this environmental toll, St. Joseph's Health Care London (St. Joseph's) became the first hospital in Ontario to switch to a medical mask that protects more than staff, physicians, patients and visitors. It's also safe for the planet.

The new green alternative mask is medical grade and certified while also biodegradable and compostable. Made from plant-based biopolymers from renewable crop resources, the mask not only meets the gold standard for protection, it boasts an impressive carbon offset – producing 65 per cent less CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions over its life cycle than a synthetic mask.

“As a long-time leader in environmental stewardship, St. Joseph's is always seeking solutions and making changes to reduce our impact on the environment,” says Lori Higgs, Vice President Clinical Support and Chief Financial Officer at St. Joseph's. “We were pleased to lead the way in the province with a switch to a green mask that is a healthy solution for the environment and our care teams.”

The environmentally-friendly mask is the VIRALOC eco™ mask produced by Precision ADM Medical based in Winnipeg, MB. The selling feature for St. Joseph's was an opportunity to significantly reduce consumption of single-use plastics without compromising on breathability, filtration or splash resistance.



Staff at St. Joseph's Health Care London find comfort in knowing the organization's new, eco-friendly mask protects them as well as the environment.





We were pleased to lead the way in the province with a switch to a green mask that is a healthy solution for the environment and our care teams.

– LORI HIGGS

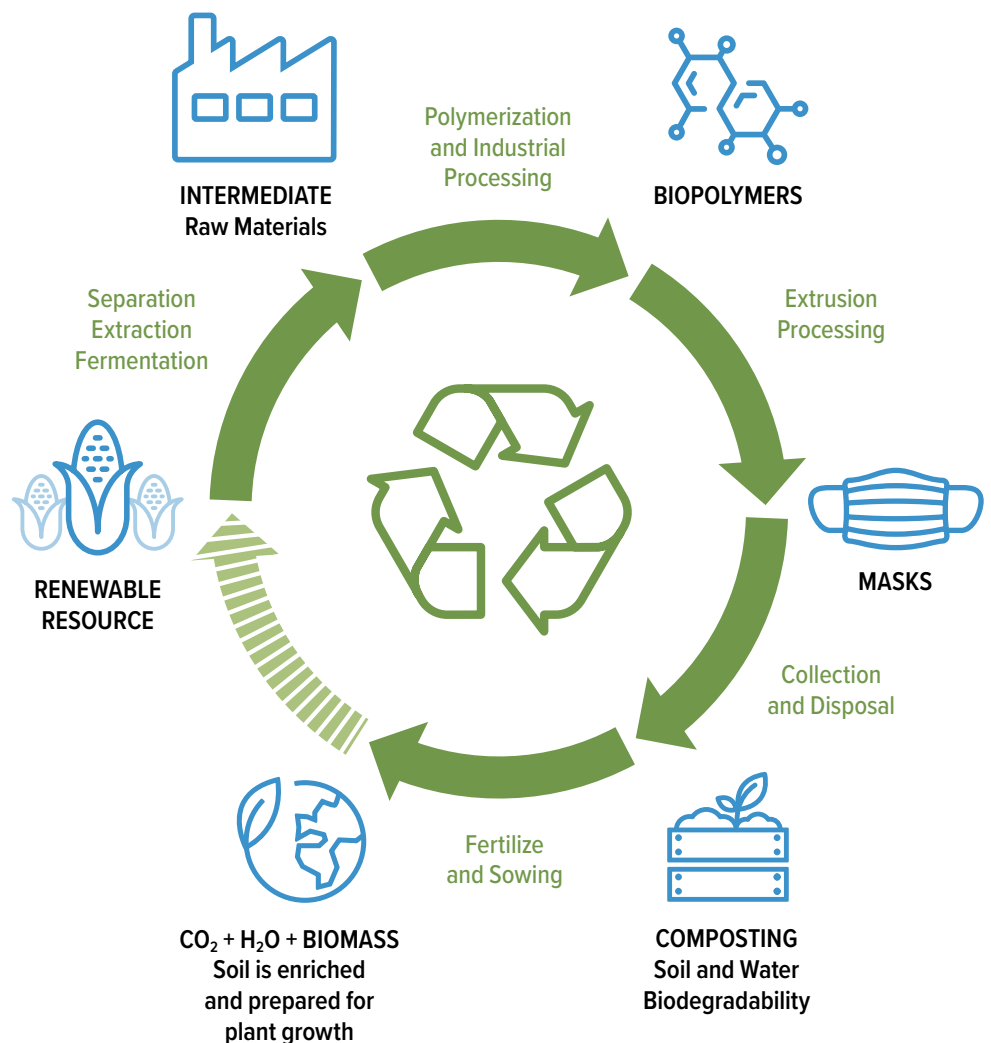
Across the organization, about 1.5 million masks are used per year at the current consumption rate – an increase of more than 800 per cent since the pandemic began. The VIRALOC eco™ mask is an ASTM F2100 Level 3 procedural mask. Its three layers offers maximum barrier protection and is now available to all those working and training at St. Joseph's as well as patients, visitors and volunteers.

“We were pleased to find a mask that not only protects all those who work or receive care at St. Joseph's, but also benefits the environment,” says Toby O'Hara, General Manager of Healthcare Materials Management Services, which consolidates purchasing for St. Joseph's and the region's hospitals.

St. Joseph's followed the lead of major hospitals in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in adopting the eco-friendly mask. Since the organization shared the news, two dozen major hospitals or hospital systems, several retirements homes and other organizations in Ontario were inspired to follow suit.

“We were very excited to work with St. Joseph's Health Care London as the first Ontario hospital to fully integrate VIRALOC eco™ as a sustainable alternative,” says Kyle Fiolka, Chief Innovation Officer with PADM Group. “Our commitment is to create eco-conscious products to support the health and wellness of all individuals and our planet.”

## The Circular Economy



Based on the 3 principles of a Circular Economy, VIRALOC Eco™ masks eliminate waste and pollution and circulate materials back into the earth to regenerate nature.

# my ST. JOSEPH'S

St. Joseph's Health Care London provides care through a unique mix of clinical settings – making us one of the most complex health care organizations in Ontario. In a continual effort to bring the best care possible to those we serve, we constantly engage patients and their families, leaders, physicians, staff, volunteers, donors and many partners to ensure St. Joseph's takes innovative steps in addressing the health care needs of our community, now and in the future.

## MY ST. JOSEPH'S IS

St. Joseph's Hospital

Parkwood Institute

Mount Hope  
Centre for  
Long Term Care

Southwest Centre  
for Forensic  
Mental Health Care

Teams, clinics and programs in our  
community and beyond.

## SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK OR STORY WITH US

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