



Jenna Dunt,  
Registered Nurse,  
Inpatient Cardiology

# RESILIENCE RECOVERY TRANSFORMATION

Community Update 2021





On behalf of St. Mary's General Hospital staff, physicians, volunteers, and—most importantly—our patients, thank you to everyone in the community who supported the hospital in the past year.

You showered the St. Mary's team with an abundance of coffee, food, sweet treats, face masks, and notes of encouragement. These gestures of kindness lifted spirits and fueled the perseverance needed to keep providing high-quality and compassionate healthcare.

Your generous investment is doing more than purchasing equipment; it's making a real difference in the lives of loved ones, friends, and neighbours.

**THANK YOU!**



Resilience, recovery, and transformation—these words epitomize how the talented and dedicated team at St. Mary’s navigated an evolving pandemic response while at that same time envisioning the future of healthcare in the region.

St. Mary’s stood ready, prepared to support its community, and the community reciprocated with its generosity and encouragement.

Resilience was necessary to carry on, and could be witnessed everywhere. Healthcare teams showed up each day to provide compassionate care to patients and their colleagues. Patients understood it was necessary when the tough decision was made to limit care partner visits. Donors, like you, extended financial support, offered nourishment, shared messages of encouragement, and called to ask what more you could do. These acts of kindness and generosity demonstrated that we are in this together.

While the pandemic was top of mind, essential projects and services progressed. The Heart Rhythm Program came to fruition, critical surgeries continued,

new formats of care delivery developed, and patient capacity increased.

Looking to the future, the lessons learned, relationships built, and collaborations forged during the pandemic informed the development of St. Mary’s new five-year strategic plan, “Inspiring Excellence. Healthier Together.” Guided by a new vision, mission, and values, this plan elevates the hospital’s commitment to safe, high-quality, compassionate care that is equitable and empowering to those it serves.

Compassion is what St. Mary’s is celebrated for, and as the hospital works to achieve the goals of the new strategic plan, this will always be at the forefront. As a donor, you have shown an abundance of kindness to St. Mary’s this past year, thank you. We are truly grateful for your partnership.



Lee Fairclough  
*President, St. Mary's General Hospital*

Susan Dusick  
*President and CEO, St. Mary's General Hospital Foundation*



Over a year and a half into the pandemic, a few members of St. Mary's care team provide their reflections.

Dr. Mary Jackson, Respiriologist, Chief of Pulmonary Medicine, shares her thoughts on the past year.

One of the biggest challenges we faced in waves two and three was the fear of being overwhelmed. That we were going to run out of beds and staff. Fortunately, we didn't get to that point.

With waves two and three, we had younger people that were sicker. In addition, we had a disproportionate number of ethnicities affected by the virus. On top of that, the restrictive visitor policy needed to curb the spread meant profound patient isolation.

However, I think that we have become increasingly confident about how to manage these patients. Not that we have a magic bullet to cure it, but the rapidity with which science has pushed out evidence and articles about treatment has been so helpful.

There's no question that we will be more resilient having worked through COVID, but what has impressed me is how resilient people were. Healthcare workers, frontline workers and administrators have continued to come to work day after day, doing their jobs, not just competently, but with a smile on their face and with the same kind of compassionate care they have always provided.

It was great to see people back in my office, who had recovered from COVID, and to take their stories back to the staff that had looked after them in the hospital.



It was the little things, like hearing “Here Comes The Sun” by The Beatles being played in the hospital when a COVID patient was sent home symptom-free. These moments of hope helped buoy our spirits.

To our donors, many, many thank yous. Our donors are so loyal. We had very generous donations during the pandemic that really helped us to fight. As a result, we could replace some of our critical care and respiratory equipment, which allowed us to be ready to treat patients.

Looking forward, we have a significant backlog of surgeries, and we have folks with non-COVID problems who really need our attention, and we're going to require the support of donors. So, I would like to say thank you, not only from the bottom of our hearts but from the top of our lungs.

To see their full interviews, visit [supportstmarys.ca/update2021](https://supportstmarys.ca/update2021)

“I love my job. I feel very fortunate. I have a unique role in assisting in the operating room with cancer cases and care for the patients afterward. It is a pure joy to do surgery, take cancer out of somebody, and tell the patient the surgery was a success. When they were terrified to come into the hospital because of COVID, I felt privileged to help them through that part of their cancer journey to make sure they got out safely. The patients knew they were being cared for during a time when they’re not able to have their family members here with them.”

Heather-Lynne Goody, Nurse Practitioner, Surgery Program



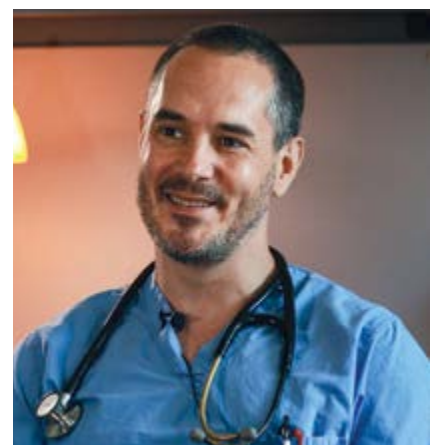
“We were very fearful, but you had an obligation. You’re a nurse, right? I learned that courage is not the absence of fear. It’s walking through it and just doing it. You have to be there for your patients and colleagues.”

Terese Fournier, Registered Nurse, Respiratory Thoracics



“I had very mixed feelings when I got my vaccine. The first dose that I got, I was excited. There was certainly a significant amount of fear in the early stages, working with many COVID patients and not being vaccinated. So it was a relief to get it. But there was an undercurrent of guilt in terms of wondering if other people were more in need, like friends or colleagues who hadn’t got the vaccine yet. Our colleagues were very gracious. They told me they were so relieved and glad that I could get vaccinated. But you want them to be protected as well.”

Sean Winter, Nurse Practitioner, Respiriology



To see their full interviews, visit [supportstmarys.ca/update2021](https://supportstmarys.ca/update2021)

# EXPANDED CARDIAC SERVICES

St. Mary's ambitious and much-needed cardiac expansion project reached its final milestone this year. This project ensures a fulsome range of cardiac services are always available at the Regional Cardiac Care Centre and ready for when you need them.

In early May, the opening of the new recovery space in the Catheterization Lab was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, the final stage of the cardiac expansion project.

**The project came together in four phases:**

- **The Device and Arrhythmia Clinic, November 2020**
- **The Electrophysiology Lab, January 2021**
- **The Pre/Post-Heart Investigation Unit, March 2021**
- **The Catheterization Lab recliner and clerical space, May 2021**

Before the cardiac expansion project, patients were treated for issues related to the cardiovascular system but then had to be referred outside of the region for care related to heart rhythm. As a result, patients had to travel to Hamilton or London to receive the care they needed leading to extended wait times, unnecessary stress, and disjointed cardiac care.

Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, the Waterloo Region now has holistic cardiac services with state-of-the-art technology under one roof. The addition of the Heart Rhythm Program and the cardiac expansion project is transformational for the 28 referring hospitals St. Mary's serves, ensuring equitable access to high-quality cardiac care.



The Device and Arrhythmia clinic had more than



**7,300**  
**patient visits**  
in 2019-2020

“We thank thousands of community members whose generosity enabled the purchase of all equipment and a significant portion of construction costs. Every donor shares in celebrating this long-awaited milestone.”

Susan Dusick, President and CEO,  
St. Mary's General Hospital Foundation

# HEART RHYTHM PROGRAM

## The Electrophysiology (EP) Lab opened January 4th, 2021

The EP Lab precisely identifies the electrical areas of the heart responsible for abnormal heart rhythms by performing diagnostic testing on the heart's electrical system. Once identified, the abnormality can be treated by ablation therapy – applying intense heat or cold to the affected area of the heart – or by implanting an internal cardiac defibrillator (ICD) to help resolve the issue.

Beth Wolf was the first scheduled EP patient. At age 53, she had a heart that would frequently race, sometimes for up to 20 minutes at a time. It would start with a flutter, she'd feel she might blackout, and after it was over, she would need to sleep for two hours. "It was quite debilitating," said Beth. A week after her procedure, she was symptom-free and back to work—a testament to the effectiveness of the EP team and the high-tech facilities.



**"It was a great experience. Dr. Jolly and the team were all fantastic. Everyone was very helpful and efficient. We are so fortunate to have these services available in our community."**

Beth Wolf, EP Patient



**The cardiac expansion project could not have happened without the generous community, who contributed \$5.6 million of the \$13 million needed, including all equipment costs funded by local donors.**



"The fact that St. Mary's was able to achieve this huge milestone during a pandemic speaks to its commitment to improve local access to patient care. Being able to offer this service is a game-changer for patients. Prior to the Heart Rhythm Program opening, a patient had to be referred to an outside facility and travel there. There was a large, sometimes unpassable barrier to care in our region. Now, we can fill that care gap and decrease wait times by several months, if not longer. It provides equitable access to what I think is the most up-to-date and best heart rhythm facilities in the country."

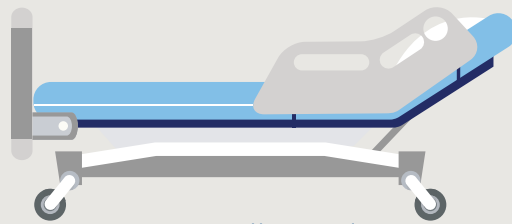
Dr. Umjeet Jolly, Cardiac Electrophysiologist and Lead for the Heart Rhythm Program



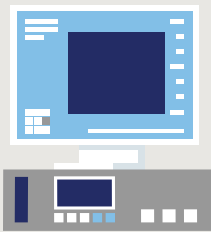
# 2020/2021 FUNDED EQUIPMENT

St. Mary's is continually humbled by the community's generosity. Thanks to thousands of donors more than **\$4.5 million** in funds were invested in new and replacement equipment, over the past year.

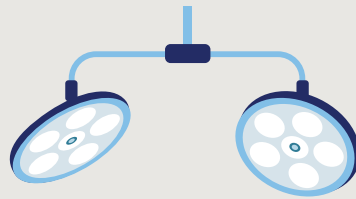
Examples of recent equipment purchases made possible by your donations include:



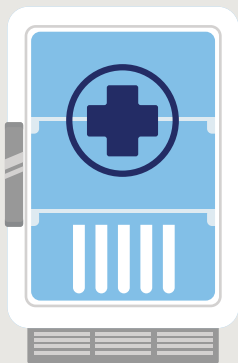
Centrella Beds



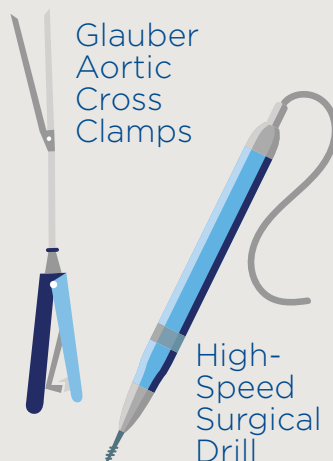
Intravascular Ultrasound



Light Source & Camera Heads



Covid Research Freezer



Glauber Aortic Cross Clamps

High-Speed Surgical Drill



"I just want to say thank you for giving to St. Mary's. It's such an admirable thing to donate to the hospital, and it is always appreciated. You can't understand how blessed we feel to have new equipment that makes our lives and the patient's lives easier and better"

Denise Kowtusi,  
Radiation Technologist



# 2020/2021 FUNDED EQUIPMENT



## Third cardiac catheterization lab for the Cardiac Care Centre

In 2019, the community was asked to help raise \$3.2 million to equip the Regional Cardiac Care Centre with a much-needed third cardiac catheterization suite.

Since then, over 3,490 generous donors answered the call, many more than once. St. Mary's is forever grateful for this outpouring of support.

Thanks to the community's generosity, a third cardiac catheterization lab will allow for more procedures, reduce wait times and ensure timely access to life-saving services.

The hospital is currently working with the Ministry of Health to finalize a construction date and looks forward to keeping you informed of construction milestones as the third cardiac catheterization lab comes to life.



## Fluoroscopy machine for the Digital Imaging Department

Fluoroscopy is an essential diagnostic tool that benefits patients in several ways. It has a lower radiation dose, provides real-time insight into internal functions, and helps doctors safely and accurately perform internal procedures.

After 18 years in service, St. Mary's needed to replace its ailing fluoroscopy machine with a new state-of-the-art unit and renovations priced at \$1.2 million.

Thanks to the generosity of over 1,190 donors, a new fluoroscope is now in service at St. Mary's.

The new machine provides patients with a better exam experience, reduced wait times, improved diagnostic accuracy, and eases the process of transferring patients onto the exam table.



"Whenever we've gone out to the community, they've been extremely generous, and they recognize that their contributions to St. Mary's affects their own family, their neighbours, people they work and go to school with. The community repeatedly steps up when St. Mary's asks."

Dr. Brian McNamara, Chief of Cardiovascular Services

# 2020/2021 FUNDED EQUIPMENT



She Shares is a circle of like-minded women who together are making a tangible impact on the community's health by directly investing in healthcare at St. Mary's. Annually, members vote on what hospital priority need they will direct their contributions.

**In 2020, She Shares members donated \$32,720 to purchase essential equipment.**

## Gynecological Stretcher for the Emergency Department

Thanks to the She Shares Giving Circle, St. Mary's could replace the outdated genealogical exam stretcher. Now, when women arrive at St. Mary's Emergency Department with genealogical or obstetrics concerns, they will be assessed on a fully functioning stretcher designed for women's health needs.



**"The She Shares Giving Circle allows members to direct our contribution in ways that are meaningful to us. Personally, it is my way of returning the favour of life-saving care from St. Mary's."**

Louise Leonard, She Shares Member

## Three Clarke40 Stand on Scrubbers for Environmental Services

The housekeeping team doubled in size this past year, employing over 120 cleaners to address the infection control cleaning needs of the pandemic. Thanks to the She Shares Giving Circle's support, three additional ride-on floor cleaners were purchased, ensuring St. Mary's can continue to achieve the same high-quality cleaning standards.



Since 2018, the She Shares Giving Circle has contributed over \$98,000 to St. Mary's General Hospital. To learn more, visit: [supportstmarys.ca/she-shares](https://supportstmarys.ca/she-shares).



September 13, 2020  
 Laurel Creek  
 Conservation Area  
 \$55,070 Raised!

An annual celebration of recovery for those touched by heart disease, their families, and St. Mary's caregivers. Modified to adhere to COVID-19 public health measures, 150 hikers arrived at scheduled hikes throughout the day. More than 60 volunteers provided valuable support to this event, helping with registration, t-shirt distribution, route marshaling, and cheering on the hikers. Over 120 years of saved life was represented at the event thanks to the cardiac care provided by St. Mary's General Hospital.

September 22, 2020  
 Rebel Creek Golf Course  
 \$42,620 Raised!

The inaugural St. Mary's Doubles Open was hosted in the fall of 2020. 116 golfers played in pairs at scheduled golf times to ensure social distancing. Each hole provided an opportunity for golfers to engage in several activities, including samplings from local distilleries and restaurants, competitions - including the Great Lakes Helicopter Ball Drop, swag bags, and hearing from guest speakers. Players were provided with a pre-packed lunch to enjoy in their golf carts. Eating while driving was discouraged!

Friday June 11, 2021  
 \$371,310 Raised!

This year, the community was invited to virtually unite by sharing videos, posting photos, and messages of heart health encouragement, all while wearing red. The hospital was aglow with red, and the feeling inside was electric. Smiles, laughter, and fantastic participation - among the staff wearing RedDAY T-shirts, thanks to Manulife. Departments throughout the hospital were decorated in hearts and red, and one team even choreographed a special heart theme dance, all in celebration of RedDAY!



**A HUGE** thank you to all the sponsors, donors, and participants who supported the events in the past year. Funds raised from all three events were directed to St. Mary's Regional Cardiac Care Centre to help purchase much-needed cardiac care equipment.



# A PATIENT'S APPRECIATION

A year ago, Stefan Preisenhammer began experiencing occasional indigestion and chest pain. Although his heart was healthy, the only indicator that something may be wrong was a sudden increase in his blood pressure. After some exploratory testing, he was diagnosed with a hiatal hernia.

At that time, his hernia wasn't causing him too much discomfort. However, he was told there was a six-month waitlist for a phone consultation with a specialist and over a year and a half wait for surgery due to the pandemic. In the meantime, he changed his eating habits to reduce the possibility of discomfort.



Stefan with his wife Nicole

"I didn't know the Ontario Government doesn't fund equipment. We budget for so many different things, so why not make it a habit and give a monthly donation."

Stefan Preisenhammer, Patient

May long weekend 2021, Stefan started experiencing excruciating pain that wouldn't alleviate. He first went to the hospital near his home in Fergus and was quickly transferred to St. Mary's for surgery. Two days after arriving at St. Mary's, he was prepped for surgery. "I was told it's usually a two hour surgery, but for me, they needed three and a half hours. No less than one-third of my tummy was pulled back and then wrapped around the end of the esophagus and stitched up."

Stefan was released from the hospital a day and a half after his surgery. That afternoon he looked up how much the same procedure would have cost in America. "I'm a very cost-conscious person, and I wanted to know what the monetary value of my surgery was. The same surgery costs \$56,000 in the US. I thought, wow, that would have put a dent in your retirement savings. I paid nothing. I didn't even have to pay for the transfer up to St. Mary's."

"I was so grateful when they told me I could go home. Two weeks after my surgery, I was back to my daily yoga routine. I felt fantastic. I'm just so appreciative, and that's why I donated."

Stefan was so inspired and grateful for the compassionate and thoughtful care he had received at St. Mary's; he went a step above writing a thank you note to his care team. He created a thank you video and made a significant first-time donation.

To see Stefan's Grateful Patient video, visit [supportstmarys.ca/update2021](https://supportstmarys.ca/update2021)



# REIMAGINING EYE CARE

## St. Mary's is expanding eye care beyond the hospital walls.

Over 2,700 patients in the Waterloo Region are currently waiting for cataract surgery. To address this backlog, St. Mary's entered into a joint partnership with TLC Vision, an off-site provider of vision care services.

This off-site St. Mary's program will address the less complex cataract surgery needs of at least 500 and as many as 1,000 cases over the next year. Priority will be given to those who are already on the surgical waiting list. All care provided through this partnership will be part of the SMGH eye care program and meet the same standards of care.

"We are pleased to partner with TLC Vision to support increased access to cataract care in our region. Strategically, we believe that this is the future for eye care in the region: to have a model that is a combination of ambulatory/community-based service and in-hospital service for more specialized and complex cataract cases. We are confident that this will improve the lives of hundreds of our patients who have been waiting for surgery."

Lee Fairclough,  
President, St. Mary's General Hospital

## As Ontario starts gradually lifting public health restrictions, like everyone, St. Mary's staff is excited to start making plans.

"Watching my kids play the sports they love."

Sara

"Being together with my whole family."

Dianne

"Finally having my wedding, being able to travel, and hugging people again!"

Mel

"Camping, socializing with friends, travel to BC to visit my daughter."

Gudrun

"CASINOS and concerts!"

Brooke

"I'm most looking forward to indoor rock climbing with my friends."

Brendan



"My book club, which has been meeting since 1999, will finally start up again!"

Catherine

In March, the hospital introduced its Strategic Plan for 2021-2026: **Inspiring Excellence. Healthier Together.** The plan acknowledges the need for health care in this community to keep pace with growth and innovation in the region. It also addresses the necessity to plan for infrastructure and care needs of the future, aligned with the Region of Waterloo’s vision of planning for a world-class community.

**Our MISSION**  
LIVING THE LEGACY: COMPASSIONATE CARE. FAITH. DISCOVERY.

**Our VISION**  
INSPIRING EXCELLENCE. HEALTHIER TOGETHER.

**Our VALUES**  
COMPASSION. RESPECT. INCLUSION. INTEGRITY. COLLABORATION. INNOVATION.

**Our STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- Expand equitable access to high quality, empowered care
- Transform connected care with our partners and community
- Develop our team of today and the future
- Embrace new ways to innovate health care
- Build for growth

**ENABLERS:** Ensure our future fiscal sustainability. Create a safe, healthy & supportive place to work.

“Our success in providing better connected, more equitable care for patients and families will depend on strong partnerships. Working through this pandemic has strengthened many partnerships within and outside the health sector in our community and region. The plan incorporates the continued need to address the pandemic and envisions opportunities to extend those partnerships to other aspects of care.”

Lee Fairclough, President, St. Mary’s General Hospital

# YOU provide what's missing in hospital funding.

## It's not a question of **IF** you'll need care, it's **WHEN**.

You should be confident in the knowledge St. Mary's is ready to provide you the care you need. This level of readiness requires that staff and physicians are provided with the tools needed to perform their life-saving work.

Though government funding provides day-to-day operational costs of the hospital and the staff within its walls, 100% of the purchase of new and replacement medical equipment must be covered by the financial support of generous donors like you.

Can you imagine how important it is to have the right tools to provide safe and high-quality healthcare? Whether you are a cook, a mechanic, a business owner, or DIYer, you can appreciate that having the right tools to support your work makes a world of difference. Essential tools of every size, like IV pumps, heart rate monitors, scalples, ventilators, and microscopes, are all made possible thanks to the annual support of donors.



Please help ensure St. Mary's is ready to provide you and your loved ones the care you need, when you need it.

**Your donation does more than purchase equipment; its an investment in the health of your community.**

## Donate at [supportstmarys.ca](http://supportstmarys.ca)

### Yes! I want to help St. Mary's:

Please accept my one-time investment of:

\$1,000  \$500  \$250  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Paid by:

Cheque (Payable to St. Mary's General Hospital Foundation)

Credit Card (Complete information below)

Credit Card:  Visa  MasterCard  AmEx

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

- I wish to give anonymously and not be named in Foundation communications.
- I would like to learn more about making a gift of securities.
- I would like to learn more about leaving a gift in my will. (If you have previously notified us of a gift, thank you.)

I would like to make a monthly donation to St. Mary's General Hospital Foundation:

\$25  \$50  \$100  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize St. Mary's General Hospital Foundation to debit the amount indicated above each month from my:

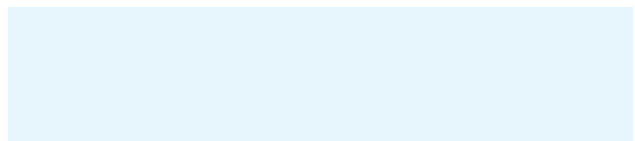
Bank (Withdrawn: 1st of each month, include void cheque)

Credit Card (Withdrawn: 30th of each month, complete info to left)

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Email my tax receipt





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