

# Believe

A publication of St. Boniface Hospital Foundation

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## St. Boniface Hospital Foundation

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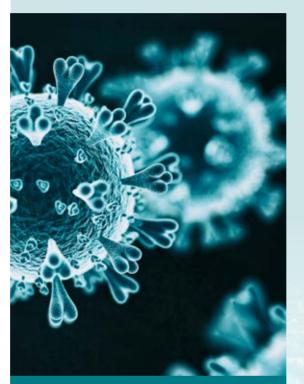
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Coming Back From COVID-19

Rick Sterzer on the fight of his life



You Fought Back

Under the continuing threat of a dangerous global pandemic, St. Boniface Hospital Foundation donors have stepped up when the needs were greatest. Story on page 7.



Overwhelming Response

Filling a need during unprecedented times



An Outstanding Leader

Dr. Grant Pierce to step down as Executive Director of Research



A Lifetime of Giving

Winnipeg couple set example as research donors

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Cheens to you!

Together, we raised more than \$80,000 in revenue for patient care and medical research at St. Boniface Hospital.

... And you didn't even have to leave your couch!



### "Compassion in every action."

In early 2020, our Board finalized the Hospital's 2020-2023 strategic plan "Building on Strengths in the Context of Change". Little did we know when we identified the theme of our plan that the biggest test of our strength and the most seismic change to society was literally right around the corner.

The COVID-19 pandemic has truly challenged us in ways never imagined and revealed something we already knew deep down - that St. Boniface Hospital already has the core strengths of resilience, agility and unwavering devotion to compassionate care which will serve us going forward no matter what the future holds.

I am proud of this Hospital's unwavering commitment to serve our community as it depends on us, perhaps now more than ever. We have heard and seen how the people of St. B repeatedly found ways - in keeping with our mission - to serve Manitobans with critical and complex conditions with a renowned spirit of compassionate care and courageous innovation.

As donors, you rose to the occasion. We received outstanding support to respond to the needs of patients, families, employees, and physicians. We witnessed the presence of love and the expressions of kindness through countless acts of generosity. The presence of COVID-19 has uncovered the conditions that lead to suffering and limitless gestures of compassion to meet these circumstances.

St. Boniface Hospital is blessed. We are well surrounded by an entire community, including our donors, who contribute generously so that our Hospital can truly be the best it can be, always. 🦃

Martine Bouchard President & CEO

St. Boniface Hospital

## "May you live in interesting times."

None of us have experienced times quite like these ever before. People around the world have been forced to adapt to the new realities of life under the relentless threat of COVID-19.

Here in Manitoba, we can be thankful that we have been spared the worst of the pandemic. Although we continue to see signs of a return to some of the comforts of day-to-day life, we have yet to understand the longer-term economic and social impacts of COVID-19. The virus will continue to bring uncertainty and challenges to us all for the foreseeable future. However, there are reasons for hope and optimism.

It takes a community to support a hospital. The support our community has shown for St. Boniface Hospital has been overwhelming and uplifting, as we have faced the greatest public health challenge of our lifetimes.

We owe a great debt to our community, which has given back in ways too numerous to count, to help St. Boniface Hospital meet the needs of our patients. Our Foundation was pleased to have been able to establish the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund in the early days of the crisis. Through the generosity of our donors, more than \$300,000 has been raised to meet the most urgent needs. These gifts have helped purchase new equipment and supplies needed to protect and support our health care workers and patients alike.

Thank you – from the bottom of our hearts – to everyone who has been a part of this incredible, historic effort.

Vince Barletta President & CEO









# Coming Back From COVID-19

Rick Sterzer on the fight of his life

From a hero's welcome home, to the lingering reminders of his battle with the virus, recovering COVID-19 patient Rick Sterzer is taking life in stride.

Home is a peaceful cove in St. Vital, where all the neighbours know Sterzer and his wife Shannon Morden-Sterzer, and their dog Frankie. The afternoon of Sterzer's discharge from St. Boniface Hospital, the welcoming committee was waiting.

"We came around the corner and every house had a truck or a car out in the driveway," said the retired Winnipeg firefighter. "People were standing on their decks. Kids were cheering. There were signs and balloons and other decorations."

"I was speechless. It was such a nice tribute!"

The next day, Sterzer began a regimen to regain his health. "I started walking. First to the end of the street, then longer. Within two weeks, I was walking five kilometres in the morning and another five in the afternoon – and using my oxygen tank less."

With a self-fashioned backpack to carry his tank, Sterzer was a recognizable figure while out on his walks. People wanted to hear firsthand about his experience as a COVID-19 patient at the Hospital. Some kept a distance far greater than two metres, as though he remained infectious.

Sterzer says he understands. "Everyone has questions. So, I kind of relive the experience all over. And someone I know just immediately backed up on seeing me and, well, I had been virus-free for weeks. It was funny."

#### Vacation cut short

More concerning are the physical damages stemming from the virus and the stress on his body as he recovered in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Walks are more challenging because of nerve damage to his right foot which prevents the forefoot from lifting properly. The result is an abnormal gait Sterzer described as "goofy".

He's also monitoring the condition of his lungs. "When I take deep breaths, I still feel like someone is standing or pushing on my chest. My lungs were quite a mess."

If Sterzer is still adjusting to "the new normal", it's still a long way from the night of April 2. That was the night Shannon brought him to St. Boniface Hospital's Emergency Department. He was unable to stand on his own, struggling to breathe, and running a fever of 42.5 C (108.5 F).

Weeks earlier, they had been on a long-planned, transatlantic cruise with eight European stops. They were with another couple – close friends and longtime travel companions. Sterzer fell ill partway into the cruise, as did many more passengers on

board. As COVID-19 spread across the world, the cruise was cut short. Sterzer's symptoms worsened while he self-isolated at home. After he first tested negative, a second test confirmed he had the novel coronavirus.

Back home, Shannon was also feeling unwell. She chalked up the fatigue and other symptoms to travel, including 11 hours on a plane back from Europe and onto North American soil.



The Hospital considered her a presumptive COVID-19 case.

"I was in 'mom mode', taking care of Rick," she said. "I wasn't really focusing on myself."

Rick echoes Shannon's sentiments. "The whole time I was isolating at home, she was feeding me and looking after me. Once I was in the hospital, she had time to reflect. That's when she started to decline; she had a couple of tough weeks."

Sterzer would spend five weeks at St. Boniface Hospital, including 18 days in the ICU. As much as the medical expertise, it was the human connections that gave him hope.

"The caregivers were the reason I made it out. Their support and encouragement carried me through my ordeal and gave me the strength to fight — for my life, actually."

Sterzer's hospital stay has taken his appreciation for front-line staff to a new level. "Being a patient opened my eyes to see what kind of person you have to be in these roles. The compassion they have is something you cannot teach."

Local media reported on Sterzer's condition while he was hospitalized. He decided to use the platform to deliver a message: "At first I was speaking directly to my fellow firefighters. I wanted them to take COVID-19 seriously and to take care of themselves. Now, I want everyone to do that."

"I put a mask on every time I go out. I know I don't have the virus, but it shows respect for the people around you," he said.

"I'm coming back. And Shannon reminds me all the time: 'Be happy. You're alive. You got a second chance. Every day should be a good one." "

Join us in this critical response effort by giving to our COVID-19 Response Fund today. Contact the Foundation at stbhf.ca or call 204-237-2067 to learn how.



The COVID-19 pandemic has united people all over the world, and inspired them to come together to help their communities. St. Boniface and Winnipeg are no exceptions.

The St. Boniface Hospital Foundation's Food and Comforts Program was one of the first programs implemented by the Hospital in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program gently called out to the generosity of Winnipeg's business community to donate, if they could, everything from food and beverages, to caps, headbands, floral arrangements, and other comfort items for staff. There was an outpouring response of generosity from restaurants and local businesses wanting to help those who were working selflessly and tirelessly to keep our city safe from the invisible enemy.

"Our front-line staff made the choice to go to work, for us. It's the least we can do to help them, however we can."

"We felt extremely grateful for the countless offers coming in from our community; several from businesses that had been drastically affected themselves," said Jessica Miller, Vice-President of Marketing and Communications, St. Boniface Hospital Foundation. "Knowing that the heart of the community gave so much in these circumstances was very humbling. Our front-line staff made the choice to go to work, for us. It's the least we can do to help them, however we can," she said.

The program saw donations from both small local restaurants to larger franchises. One of the first to jump on board was Earls Restaurants, which provided over 100 lunches each drop off, over several weekly visits to St. Boniface Hospital. Regional Manager of Earls, Ann Topp, arrived with her team of staff to set up tables and hand out an assortment of pre-packaged Earls "signature favourite" dishes, with pre-wrapped napkins and cutlery included.

The next few visits were organized by an Asian community initiative, called "From Our Kitchens To Our Heroes." Winnipegowned and operated Asian restaurants provided food – ranging from pizza and wraps, to traditional Asian cuisine. The restaurants also took to social media to share their support for health care workers.

Another local eatery, Yard Burger, of Winnipeg's newly opened Hargrave Street Market in True North Square, provided prepackaged burgers and fries with a personal delivery from managing partner Bobby Mottola.

Thank you to our participating restaurants and local businesses for your donations. Your support is nothing short of amazing!

# You Fought Back

The first wave of the novel coronavirus never stood much of a chance when it reached St. Boniface Hospital, where it found a community of donors and health care workers ready for battle.

In the face of the largest public health crisis any of us have ever seen, Foundation donors did their part to help save the lives of their fellow Manitobans and to protect front-line staff working in all areas of the Hospital. The pandemic response effort was swift, safe, co-ordinated and effective, thanks to the backing provided by donors.

To support urgent needs as the province prepared for and addressed the spread of COVID-19, St. Boniface Hospital Foundation quickly established a COVID-19 Response

Fund in March. The Foundation worked closely with the Hospital to ensure funds were made available immediately, for greatest needs as they arose. At time of publication, more than \$300,000 had been raised.

"With their gifts, our donors helped determine the outcomes of many patients who continued to rely on the Hospital for care in many important areas, including the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), and the Cardiac Sciences Program, and so on," said Vince Barletta, President and CEO of the Foundation. "Our donors maintained service to thousands of Manitobans who faced critical and complex conditions outside of the pandemic."

Patients at St. Boniface Hospital were given more opportunities to stay connected with family and friends, even as the Hospital closed its doors to visitors in response to the pandemic threat.

Donations made to the COVID-19 Response Fund made it possible for St. Boniface Hospital Foundation to co-ordinate the installation of new phone lines with patient bedside services providers HealthHub Patient Engagement Solutions and Bell MTS. The increase in capacity allowed more patients to call outside lines at the same time. Funding included three months of monthly

telecom fees. 4





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Yard Burger

\*At time of publication.



For nearly 20 years, Royal Canadian Legion Branches in Winnipeg have worked with St. Boniface Hospital Foundation donors to help support those who have served.

The Norwood St. Boniface Legion Branch No. 43, located on Marion Street, has made \$55,000 in cumulative gifts over 18 years of giving through the Foundation. This included a \$20,000 gift in 1999 to refurbish a room in the Palliative Care Unit for use in part by veterans and their families, among all others in our community.

The Legion's annual Poppy Fund campaign has made these donations possible, explained Faye Lavack, President of the Norwood St. Boniface Legion Branch. The Legion co-ordinates with the Hospital and Foundation to be able to have volunteers distribute poppies and collect donations at the Hospital entrances each year before Remembrance Day, in a mutually beneficial arrangement.

"The Hospital is a part of our community, and we of course have a lot of members who are and have been patients," said Lavack. "By giving the Legion the opportunity to collect donations at the entrances, we can then give back to St. Boniface Hospital."

Every Legion Branch has its own territory, explained Fred McGillivray, First Vice-President and campaign chair of the Norwood St. Boniface Legion Branch. "Fortunately, the Hospital is in our territory, and they allow us to distribute poppies at the entrances," said McGillivray.

"Whenever we are at St. Boniface, they're one of our biggest contributors of donations to the Poppy Fund because of the people who work there – everybody supports us. In turn we can use that money to support veterans' housing and health care initiatives, including those at the Hospital," he said.

Meanwhile, the Fort Garry Legion Branch No. 90, located on Pembina Highway, has made \$41,000 in cumulative donations over 13 years of giving through the Foundation. The Legion has in the past supported the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences at St. Boniface Hospital, among other causes.

The Fort Garry Legion Branch runs the largest poppy campaign in the Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario command, noted Brian Cutts, longtime campaign chair and one of Fort Garry's past presidents.

"Our fundraising through the Poppy Fund campaign has increased since we originally set it up with the Foundation, many years ago," said Cutts. "Early on, we used to get around \$22,000 to \$23,000 that we then gave away. But in the past five years or so, it's topped over \$40,000 every year that we have donated." Recipients have included St. Boniface Hospital, among other worthy organizations like Deer Lodge Centre and St. Amant. \$\Psi\$

If your organization would like to discuss ways to support the Foundation, call Garth Johnson, Donor Relations, at 204-235-3570 to learn more.

# Two's Lucky

# Family endowment fund honours graduate nurses

Good news sometimes comes in twos.

A pair of nurses, both newly hired in the same unit at St. Boniface Hospital, are this year's recipients of the Wyrzykowski Family Graduate Nurse Endowment Fund.

Tiffany Dhaliwal and Adelina Principe are registered nurses, working in the Cardiac Surgery Inpatient Unit (CSIU) located on the fourth floor of the I.H. Asper Institute - home to Manitoba's Cardiac Centre of Excellence. The CSIU cares for patients before and after their cardiac surgery or related procedures, following a stay in the Intensive Care Unit.

"I chose nursing because my husband had cardiac surgery in 2013 at St. Boniface, and he recovered in the CSIU," said Dhaliwal, who graduated from Université de Saint-Boniface in 2019.

"This was years before I went into nursing, but I saw the compassion with which the nurses treated him and myself, being his wife," she said. "It blew me away. It just clicked and I felt like, 'I want to do this too."

Principe, meanwhile, is a 2019 grad of the Baccalaureate Nursing Program at Red River College. After a brief stint in the Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), she started working in the CSIU early in 2020, to follow her interest in caring for adult patients.

The Wyrzykowski Family Graduate Nurse Endowment Fund was established to support graduates employed in their first jobs at St. Boniface Hospital. A random draw of all eligible graduates hired is held annually during National Nursing Week, each May.

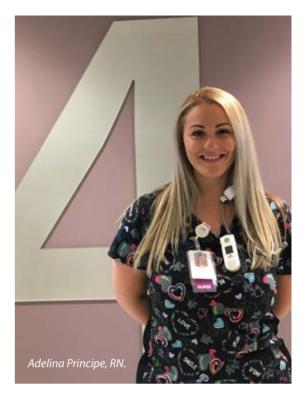
The idea was to reward and support graduate nurses, explained Conrad Wyrzykowski Jr. "Nurses – from the new grads to the most experienced – are of primary importance in taking care of patients throughout the Hospital. They need to be recognized for their work," he said.

The exciting news came as a surprise to Principe, who was on a break when she was told. "They called us all to gather at the nursing station," she said. "The manager said, 'The special person is right here,' and I was looking around, wondering who it was. She was pointing to me!"

The support will be helpful, said Principe. "Our first year of nursing is expensive right off the hop, with registration, and the licensing exam and tuition in general," she said.

Dhaliwal agrees, "My husband and I are trying to buy a house right now; so, it's a great addition. We will save it, or maybe I will use it to pay down my student debt. Either way, it's a blessing."

The World Health Organization has designated 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. 4





You can support St. Boniface Hospital nurses like Tiffany Dhaliwal and Adelina Principe by contributing directly to the Wyrzykowski Family Graduate Nurse Endowment Fund. Contact the Foundation at stbhf.ca or call 204-237-2067 to learn how.



# Dr. Grant Pierce to step down as Executive Director of Research

Called a "visionary" by his colleagues, Dr. Grant Pierce will soon step down as Executive Director of St. Boniface Hospital Research after 15 years in the leadership role.

Pierce's time – three consecutive terms – in the proverbial corner office at St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre and I. H. Asper Clinical Research Institute will come to an end when he steps down from his administrative duties this New Year's Eye.

The veteran researcher said that after stepping down, he will continue working in the new year as a principal investigator (a title he's held since the late 1980s) in his laboratory in the Albrechtsen Research Centre. There, he plans to follow his ongoing interest in the benefits to heart health of regular flaxseed consumption, and to pursue his more recent study of a new platform that he and his team have developed for antibiotics. He also plans to keep working as a Distinguished Professor of Physiology and Pathophysiology at the University of Manitoba.

Pierce considers it a privilege and an honour to have helped many of his colleagues to promote their careers but said it's time for him to move on. He noted that Dr. John Foerster, the first Executive Director of Research at the Hospital (1986-2006) and his predecessor, was at a similar point in his tenure when he relinquished the position.

"Dr. Foerster said then that it was time for new energy, new direction, and new thought processes. I appreciate now what he was saying, because I think it's similar. I've put all the energy, thought and inspiration I could into the people who are here, trying to build up the research environment and make it as good as we can. Now it's time for somebody else to take over the reins and do better than I ever could," said Pierce.

Dr. Elissavet Kardami, Principal Investigator, Muscle Cell Biochemistry, Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, has worked with Dr. Pierce for more than 30 years. She described him as "a benevolent but assertive leader" and "a visionary".

"His lab has always been open. Any technology that me or my students might have needed, he was very forthcoming with, and very encouraging towards any endeavour. Always asking, 'How can we help?' This is the attitude I associate most with Grant – not, 'This cannot be done,' but, 'How can we help?'"



Pierce himself agreed, "The primary role of this job is service, there's no question. You must be in this job to serve others. It is not to serve yourself, it is not to promote your own research, or anything else. It's to serve everybody else and to help them in their pursuits of research excellence."

### A distinguished career

Under Pierce's leadership, Research Infosource Inc. has ranked St. Boniface Hospital as Western Canada's number 1 research-intensive hospital, eight years in a row. "I'm proud of that, because that's not about me, that's about the research environment we've created here. So, that's exciting for everybody else."

## "The primary role of this job is service, there's no question. You must be in this job to serve others."

He played a pivotal role in developing the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences (ICS) and he also helped found the Canadian Centre for Agri-Food Research in Health and Medicine (CCARM) and built up the RBC Youth BIOlab Jeunesse on the foundation of an earlier program.

International research collaborations were highlights of Pierce's time as Executive Director. They included the Canada Italy Tissue Engineering Laboratory (CITEL) cardiac stem cell program – a relationship between the ICS and the University of Rome Tor Vergata in Italy, and Research Without Borders – a partnership with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel; a collaboration Kardami called "powerful".

Dr. Pawan Singal, Principal Investigator, Cell Pathophysiology, and former Director, Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, called Pierce "someone who made a positive difference during his time." The two researchers have been friends and colleagues for more than 30 years.

"In a word, he's 'outstanding," said Singal. "He was successful in bringing new programs to St. Boniface Hospital, and he was also successful in expanding our existing programs. The result being that both of our buildings at the Hospital, the Albrechtsen Research Centre and the I. H. Asper Clinical Research Institute, are now filled fully up." St. Boniface Hospital Research now boasts 30 labs, 250 staff, and serves as training ground for about 100 students each year.

"When we were operating in an environment of austerity, that never fazed him. We had the support of the Foundation donors, which made a huge difference. He was instrumental in fundraising – we not only continued; we grew," said Singal.

In response, Pierce is characteristically humble. "The work that we've done, and the work that we've accomplished in the last 15 years, has no 'I' in it. It's due to the tremendous expertise that we have assembled here," he said.

"If I have any leadership quality, it's been in my ability to listen. All I do is listen to the advice that I get from the staff we have here. They are just great people with great ideas, great expertise, and great knowledge. All I've had to do is say, 'Yeah, great idea! Let's do that.' It has been a lot of fun to see that energy and to see that, many times, youthful enthusiasm. I will miss that."

The last word goes to Singal. "I wrote him a note and said, 'You have done a phenomenal job. You could have done one term more, but it's good that you're coming back to the lab where you'll be available as a principal investigator."

"My comment to him was, 'A principal investigator with a little more experience of the functioning of the ICS and the Research Centre!' So, he will be an asset."

Your support of the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences at St. Boniface Hospital has saved the lives of countless Manitobans. Thank you.



When past and present St. Boniface Hospital researchers look back on breakthroughs made in the last 30 years, they have donors like Clark and Carole Sinnott to thank.

The couple met in Grade 12 at St. Boniface Diocesan High School and, over almost 50 subsequent years of marriage, they have given to St. Boniface Hospital for more than three decades. They've joined the Monthly Giving program, and Clark is a Legacy of Hope member with a gift to the Hospital in his will.

"I'm getting a little older...once I'm gone, there will still be some money for St. Boniface Hospital Foundation to use," he said, on the phone from the couple's longtime home in North Kildonan. "Hopefully that won't be for another 20 years or more," he added with a chuckle. With a gift in his will, Clark knows he will be supporting research for generations to come.

## "We are proud to be part of this this wonderful organization and plan to continue supporting in the future."

They also made a special donation to the Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund, established in the spring to ensure the Hospital stays well-prepared in the fight against the virus.

The Sinnotts have held a keen interest in supporting the groundbreaking medical research taking place at the St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre. The generosity of donors like them has made numerous discoveries possible - from studies into Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative diseases, to cardiovascular sciences, to agri-food and so-called "superfoods" research.

"St. Boniface Hospital is world-renowned in many areas of research, which is wonderful," said Clark. "Their amazing work is leading to all kinds of cures, identifying potential treatments and other such things. That's been one of the main reasons we give."

The Sinnotts recall a past presentation by Dr. John Foerster, the first Executive Director of Research at the Hospital (1986-2006). "He told us that even though we may think our modest monthly donations are not much in the great scheme of things, in fact they 'prime the pump' to attract millions of dollars more in government research grants and other major sources of funding. So, we're proud to help out in that way."

Carole's history with St. Boniface dates to her teenage years (unless you're counting the fact it's where she was born), when she remembers stacking dirty dishes in the Hospital kitchen as an after-school job. Later, Carole followed her interest in science and medicine, and trained to become an X-ray technologist and, after graduating in 1970, she worked in the X-ray Department. In the 1990s, she completed courses in Ultrasound and Echocardiography. She worked term and part time positions in units at the Hospital and Health Sciences Centre. 4

Consider leaving a legacy, like Clark Sinnott has. Contact the Foundation at stbhf.ca or call 204-237-2067 to learn about adding a gift of any size to your will.



# The Show Went On

Manitoba's first-ever virtual fundraising gala dinner and concert, held May 28, was a sold-out, smashing success in slippers.

"Many people used the event as an opportunity to come together with others, in small numbers. For some, this was the first time in months they had done so," said St. Boniface Hospital Foundation President and CEO Vince Barletta.

"Participants remarked to me that being part of an event like this made life seem a bit more normal again. We are very proud of that accomplishment."

Our thanks to our Rosé SoirIN co-chairs (below): Tom De Nardi, Doug Stephen, and Louis Trepel for putting this fantastic event together in this exciting and innovative way.





















# Giving. Remembering. Celebrating.

Thank you to our many compassionate donors who have chosen to make gifts to St. Boniface Hospital Foundation in honour of those listed below. Gifts recognized were made from December 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020



#### In memory

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Mervin Mitchler

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Norman Odwak

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Gary Whyte Kerry Wilkinson Larry Williamson Lori Willson Frank Woods John Wortley Margaret Wright Beverley Yaworski Arline Young Barry Young Tom Young Emil Zajic

#### In celebration

Joe Aiello Lenny Baranyk Thérèse Bisson Ron Boerchers Heather Bouchard Kara Brooks Nolan K Brown Michael Daman Emma M Deeley Leif & Finn Dickie Gary Filyk Wanda Hall Betty Heinrichs Ben Hirt Rachel P Konefall Campbell & Cadence Kuryk Erin Lubiansky Mary McDonnell Alice Middleton Somwaru Parboii Camryn Phillips Sheldon Pinx Solange Pushalski Dr Mike Raabe & Team Rubena Ragoonath Rudy & Audrey Ramchandar Conor Rautenbach Mickey & Pearl Rosenberg Jacqueline Rosner Gilbert Ruel Gwendalyn Sangalang Brooke Semchuk Michelle Smith Maurice Steele Teddy Stevenson