

Believe

A publication of St. Boniface Hospital Foundation

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St. Boniface Hospital **Foundation**

C1026 – 409 Taché Avenue Winnipeg, MB R2H 2A6

Open weekdays: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tel: 204-237-2067

Web: stbhf ca

Email: info@stbhf.org

Social: @STBHF

Writers: Jeremy Brooks (MITT), Randy Matthes, Nigel Moore, Kate Yacula

Design: Bounce Design **Printing:** Prolific Group

Archives, Kate Yacula

Photography: Brittany Jill Photography, Roger Daignault, Kelly Morton Photography, Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, Randy Matthes, Nigel Moore, St. Boniface Hospital





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Helping Kids to **Understand COVID-19**

Donor support has helped create a new science magazine that's earning the praise of educators, medical and scientific communities, and young readers. Story on page 9.



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A Plateful of Grateful Hospital staff kept fuelled and motivated by meals program



Secrets in the Lungs Lipid research holds promise for **COVID-19** treatment



Make the Right Call Dial 911 at first signs of a heart attack



Breaking Records in Unusual Times

Foundation events went virtual in 2020







Manitobans are united more than ever, showing a willingness to help each other and overcome obstacles...but especially to BELIEVE we will get to the other side.

Our St. Boniface Hospital family is fortunate and, above all, well surrounded by many in our community who provide quality care and

conduct cutting-edge research recognized around the world. Through this pandemic and during difficult, even heartbreaking moments, our care teams have created the conditions for continued excellence and provision of care in a spirit of compassion - a hallmark of this beloved organization.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of our highly regarded institution established by the Grey Nuns. This hospital - our hospital - is where patients and families receive compassionate care. For fifteen decades and through many generations, their legacy grew to the St. Boniface Hospital workforce of today - a group of committed and courageous professionals who stepped up with even more courage and skill imaginable as we faced a once-in-a-lifetime global health crisis.

COVID-19 challenged us anew, commanding an unprecedented effort led by health-care professionals, scientific experts and every person who works in every single capacity here at St. Boniface. It is both humbling and awe-inspiring to witness first-hand this unwavering commitment. I am proud of this organization, what it represents and the people who work here.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to each of you. Every day, you embody the spirit, the history as well as the values that serve as the foundation of our 150 years of service. You have followed in the footsteps of those who came before you and have attended to those wounded in combat, the sick, the injured and the victims of the great epidemics of the past.

When the history books are written after the pandemic, I am sure it will be people such as nurses, physicians, scientists, health care aides, housekeepers, security staff, volunteers, and first responders who will be remembered as the heroes of this generation for their enormous efforts to save as many lives as possible. 4

Martine Bouchard President & CEO St. Boniface Hospital



St. Boniface Hospital marks the occasion of its 150th anniversary this vear. But that's not all we're celebrating!

At St. Boniface Hospital Foundation, we are looking forward to you joining us as we reflect on our community's many

accomplishments. We have exciting events planned - some of which, like last year's Run2Believe and our Radiothon of Hope & Healing, will likely continue to be virtual editions until we're safely clear of the virus. Stay tuned for details!

In the meantime, did you know there's even more for us to celebrate together this year? It's true, because there is another anniversary - our own Foundation's 50th, in fact! In 1971, during its centennial, St. Boniface Hospital gave itself a unique gift by establishing the St. Boniface General Hospital Research Foundation.

We shortened our organization's name in 2009, but the earlier emphasis on research remains apt. Our original mandate was to raise funds to support groundbreaking medical research - and with our donors' help, we succeeded in making St. Boniface a world-class research facility. The Albrechtsen Research Centre opened its doors in 1987 and the rest, as they say, is history.

In this issue of Believe, you can read about important medical research being done at St. Boniface Hospital to learn more about how tissue damage in COVID-19 patients may potentially lead to future treatments for the disease. You will find that story on

Happy 150th birthday, St. Boniface! If you ask me, we don't look a day over 50.

Karen Fowler Interim President & CEO

St. Boniface Hospital Foundation

Lanen fauler

Congratulations to Dr. Michael Czubryt on being named Interim Executive Director, St. Boniface Hospital Research, effective at the start of this year.

Dr. Czubryt has been a Principal Investigator, Molecular Pathophysiology, for the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences at St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre for the past 17 years.





It was December 23rd, and Rosauro Rosales, 57, was relaxing with his common-law partner, Genesis Mallen, and her sister, Yzel Mallen, in their St. James home.

Rosales had called his sisters in Toronto for a chat earlier in the evening. At around 9 p.m., they were watching a show on Netflix when "suddenly, out of nowhere, Rosauro started feeling pain in his chest," said Genesis Mallen, noting Rosales had no medical history of heart problems.

"I asked him if it was a pinching pain, or heavy like something was pressing on his chest," she recalled. "He felt the heaviness, and his pain was severe and increasing. He was nervous, worried it was a heart attack; but we were not sure."

The couple then made a decision that might well have saved his life. "He was preparing to drive himself to the nearest hospital. I said, 'If it's a heart attack, you could endanger others if you got into an accident while driving.' My sister and I told him to call an ambulance instead, just to be safe, and he agreed," said Mallen.

They made the right choice by dialing 911, said Dr. John Ducas, Medical Director of the Manitoba Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS) Network.

"St. Boniface is Manitoba's Cardiac Centre of Excellence, and we are here and trying to help you. We want you to know, if you are witnessing or experiencing signs of a heart attack how important it is to dial 911 or your local emergency number," said Ducas.

There are two types of heart attacks, the more serious of which is called a STEMI, where a main heart artery is suddenly blocked by a blood clot. If left untreated, one in four STEMI patients will die in the first few hours or days.

The way to treat a STEMI is to remove the blood clot. "If you unblock the artery, the chance of you dying from a STEMI drops to about one in ten or so," said Ducas.

There are two ways that can be done, according to Ducas. One of them is an angioplasty, an operation in which an artery can be unblocked and widened with a small balloon. "This works very quickly and effectively," he said. St. Boniface Hospital is the only facility in the province equipped to provide heart angiogram X-ray treatments like angioplasty.

"If you very quickly unblock the artery with angioplasty treatment, then the chance of you dying drops to less than one in 20. So, your best chance of living, and the best chance of reducing any damage that may give you problems like heart failure or arrhythmia (heartbeat out of rhythm) in the future, is getting this angioplasty to rapidly unblock the heart artery."

The second way to treat a STEMI is with a blood clot-melting intravenous (IV) drug. "This is not as fast, not as effective, and surprisingly, is quite expensive," said Ducas.

If a patient is far outside of Winnipeg and they cannot reach St. Boniface Hospital by ambulance in about 1.5 hours or less, then they are better off at that point getting the clot-melting IV drug at a local hospital. After that, all such heart attack patients are sent to St. Boniface Hospital by ground or air ambulance/helicopter, to make sure the artery was unblocked and for further treatment.

"Now I have personally treated patients who have crashed their cars because they get that arrhythmia on the way to the Hospital," said Ducas.

"The moment you dial 911 – if you're in the city it's five to seven minutes, if you're outside the city, 10 to 15 minutes – and as soon as they show up with the defibrillator the ambulance crew can put your heart in arrythmia back to normal, then your life may be saved."



Rosauro Rosales, of Winnipeg, dialed 911 the night he had a heart attack.

"People misunderstand this: you hear somebody 'died suddenly of a massive heart attack.' You don't need have to have a massive heart attack to get the arrythmia and die. You can have a relatively small heart attack that causes the arrhythmia. You can die of the arrythmia, and not of the heart damage," he said.

"If it's a heart attack, you could endanger others if you got into an accident while driving."

"But your best chance at surviving a STEMI, and your best chance of reducing any chance of you having heart problems in the future, no matter where in Manitoba you live, is by calling 911 or your local emergency number and being treated quickly."

Driving can be deadly

Back on December 23rd, Rosauro Rosales and Genesis Mallen dialed 911. "It was crucial that we called an ambulance – so that if it was a heart attack, they could do whatever was necessary to avoid any further damage to his heart," she said. "They arrived in less than five minutes."

Dialing 911 can shorten a patient's time to get treated by as much as 40 to 50 minutes. "Within the city of Winnipeg, there were about 450 STEMIs last year, with about 100 more in the surrounding communities," said Ducas.

"Tragically, only about half of those patients dialed 911. Many of the rest were gripped by fear, panic, or denial. They came to the Hospital by taxi or in their own vehicles – some even drove themselves. It's the wrong decision," he said.

Turns out, Rosales did have a heart attack last December. He got the angioplasty treatment at St. Boniface Hospital and survived.

"That night I got a call from his doctor, who said it was good thing that we did not let him drive. He could have caused an accident, or he could have gone to a hospital other than St. Boniface, that is not equipped as well for heart attacks. It was a good thing we called the ambulance, because they knew where to bring him for the treatment he needed," said Mallen.

"It was scary, but we got the best-possible Christmas gift. We got his life." $\mbox{\textcircled{$\wp$}}$

Your support of St. Boniface Hospital's Cardiac Sciences Program has saved the lives of thousands of Manitobans. Thank you.



A Plateful of Grateful

Hospital staff kept fuelled and motivated by meals program



"Food equals gratitude."

Though not the official slogan for the partnership between MITT's Culinary Arts and Design program and St. Boniface Hospital, the phrase captures the essence of a collaboration to support health-care workers on the front lines. In a project that started in January, MITT students prepared and delivered more than 2,800 hot meals to St. Boniface staff by the end of February.

The idea hatched during a fall 2020 conversation between culinary faculty members: instructors Chef Perry Favoni and Chef Curtis Bayne, and production chef Chef Stephen Strecker. Realizing that COVID-19 restrictions would put their students' four-week work practicums on the back burner, the trio set about devising an alternative – one that provided real-world experience for their classes, while also giving back to health-care workers. Strecker pitched the idea to a nursing friend at St. Boniface, and from there it found its way to St. Boniface Hospital Foundation.

"We are so grateful to the Culinary Arts and Design program and their students for thinking of the front line staff at St. Boniface Hospital – many thanks! This is just another reminder to our staff that they do not stand alone in this fight," said Karen Fowler, Interim President and CEO of the Foundation.

In the winter, students ran the production and demo kitchens at MITT, filling the spectrum of roles, from sous chef to dishwasher, they would experience during a practicum in a commercial kitchen. Faculty deliberately took a step back to help students embrace the level of responsibility they will need to master as professionals, with Strecker providing daily oversight and guidance on everything from meal preparation to inventory counts and time management.

"This is about letting our students take control and become self-sufficient in the kitchen," said Strecker. "It's great to see faculty support this level of hands-on learning and autonomy. We all know from our own kitchen experiences how invaluable that is to becoming competent, confident culinary professionals."

Four-hundred meals were prepared each week, including a 50 per cent complement of options for food allergies and restrictions. Meals were delivered to the Hospital on Fridays in two batches of 200 (around noon and in the evening) to coincide with shift changes.

The Hospital co-ordinated distribution to ensure staff in a variety of departments enjoyed the full-course fare. Weekly menus inspired creativity in the kitchen and helped the students practice their techniques and sharpen their teamwork skills under real-world pressure.

"For all the challenges COVID-19 has presented, it has also inspired new levels of creativity and community spirit," said Ray Karasevich, MITT President and CEO.

"It's great to see our culinary students gain vital experience in the kitchen while giving back to the front line workers who are helping Manitobans get through the pandemic. I commend each of them, and our faculty, for this great initiative and I thank St. Boniface Hospital for helping make this partnership happen." •

You can join MITT in this critical response effort by giving to our COVID-19 Response Fund today. Call 204-237-2067 or visit stbhf.ca/donate to give now.

Our thanks to the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT) for sharing this story with St. Boniface Hospital Foundation for this issue of Believe.

Pillow Talk Heart pillow a huge help, said grateful patient

Doug Wark has high praise for St. Boniface Hospital staff after open-heart surgery.

As a bonus, now well into retirement, he learned something new about the company where he built a three-decade career.

The Brandon resident, 73, underwent double bypass surgery and an aortic valve replacement on September 10th. Recovering in hospital, he was urged to cough to prevent a fluid build-up that promotes pneumonia. A heart-shaped

pillow made it easier.

"Coughing doesn't hurt nearly so bad with this pillow. It gives you confidence."

Wark, who retired from MTS in 1996 - then still named Manitoba Telephone System - learned the supportive pillow was assembled by Bell MTS volunteers.

"That made me appreciate the volunteers and the effort."

Bell MTS Volunteers - an organization of current and former employees, friends, and family - provides volunteers and resources to a wide variety of people, organizations, and events across the Manitoba.

Their Heart Pillow Project provides cardiac surgery patients at the St. Boniface Hospital with handmade heartshaped pillows to aid in post-operative deepbreathing and coughing exercises. The pillows provide compression against the breastbone as it heals from a surgical incision.

> Io-Anne Peltz leads the volunteers in making some 900 heart pillows a year each "made with love and never used in a pillow fight."

> > Nearly eight weeks removed from his stay at St. Boniface, Doug Wark was still using his heart pillow. He's keeping busy at home, with a grateful heart of his own. 😃

Still a Classic Through COVID

The 2020 Cardiac Classic golf tournament held at Niakwa Country Club on August 10th looked a little different last year — with reduced numbers and social distancing efforts, to ensure everyone's safety.

The day kicked off with some exciting news, National Bank announcing Title Sponsorship of the tournament for the next five years beginning in 2021!

The Foundation was overwhelmed by the generosity of donors, sponsors, and golfers, who showed their continued commitment and support to the beloved flagship event.

An incredible \$95,000 was raised for research and patient care at St. Boniface Hospital, Manitoba's Cardiac Centre of Excellence.

> A special thank you goes out to our returning sponsors who made the event possible, and our participants for their generous donations throughout the day.

We look forward to seeing you all again August 9th – save the date! Call the Foundation at 204-237-2067 to ask about booking a team and/or sponsorship opportunities.



A Great Place to Work

Hospital's 150th anniversary an opportunity for reflection

St. Boniface Hospital's 150th anniversary this year marks a century and a half of excellence and commitment to compassionate care and healing in our community.

Marking this important milestone for St. Boniface in 2021 is a way to honour both the legacy of our founders, the Grey Nuns, and the tremendous efforts demonstrated by Hospital staff over the past year in particular.

"These are challenging times. Thankfully, we have a strong and dedicated team of professionals who work here," Martine Bouchard, President and CEO, St. Boniface Hospital, said in a statement.

"I am thankful to everyone – our staff, physicians, researchers, and volunteers. I thank every one of them for their dedication and diligence in showing up for their colleagues, and for rising to meet the needs of patients and their families daily," said Bouchard.

Believe tracked down two recent St. Boniface Hospital retirees, each of whom had put in decades of service, to ask them about their careers:

- Jody Semchuk, Registered Nurse, Cardiac Clinics Y2, Cardiac Sciences Program, started in 1982. She retired December 18, 2020, after 38 years of service.
- Donna Otte-Cornejo, Unit Clerk, A8 Palliative Care, started in 1984. She retired January 2, 2021, after 36 years of service.

What kept you working at the Hospital?

Jody: I was attracted to St. Boniface because it is a teaching hospital. It's patient-centered care, but you also have lots of opportunities for education – I took an intensive care nursing course in 1986-87 which served me and my patients well. It allowed me to work in different specialty areas, and eventually, in Cardiac Sciences.

What stayed the same for me was the people part of it. The chance to care for patients and their families, who are entrusting their health care and safety to you – that never changed. All the dedicated, hardworking, compassionate nurses and staff who work there, being a part of that.

Donna: Working in the Hospital was always a good learning experience for me. I had good opportunities to get into something different. I hurt my back in 1998, and they gave me an opportunity to take a back-to-work program as a ward clerk. It helped to further my career.

The Hospital helped me to change course in my career, and to get into different areas of work.

What advice would you give a newly-hired Hospital employee?

Jody: Be patient with yourself, especially during this unprecedented time. Usually, for myself, I found it was always great to have the benefit of newer people mixed in with seasoned workers, who had the experience to help guide you. I see where there's an expectation for yourself, but sometimes you just need to get through the shift, take care of your patients, keep everyone safe, and do your best.

Donna: Work your hardest and give it your all. Do your work as best as you can and take pride in it.

Any final thoughts?

Jody: If I had it to do all over again, I would not change a thing.

I was lucky enough to work for so long and in different areas. There was always an element of change in my career, and so I am grateful for that.

Donna: Working in Palliative Care, you develop a different outlook on life. I've learned you need to get out there and enjoy living while you can. Get the most out of life!



When COVID-19 began to spread around the world, information was scarce.

Today, the flow of facts and figures can be overwhelming. For concerned parents and curious kids, it can be extra hard to know which sources are trustworthy.

Thankfully, families now have a reliable resource to better understand COVID-19.

Donor support has helped create a new science magazine that's earning the praise of educators, medical and scientific communities, and of course, young readers!

Published by La Liberté (Manitoba's French-language weekly newspaper), the first two issues of Sciences Mag Junior - No Mercy for the Coronas and Together against the Coronas! – are filled with illustrations and fun to read.

They describe the building-block science concepts and information necessary for understanding viruses and this pandemic. At 60 and 64 pages respectively, the two issues are packed with practical tips to help kids (and grown-ups!) understand concepts such as the human body's response to the virus. Some of our cells are like the walls of a castle!

Sophie Gaulin, Editor and Publisher, La Liberté, gives credit to a team of science and health-literacy educators, including staff from St. Boniface Hospital's RBC Youth BIOlab Jeunesse.

"The team's knowledge was important, but just as important was their understanding of how kids learn. Stephen (Jones) and Meghan (Kynoch) were amazing resources. They know to engage kids and trigger their curiosity."

Sciences Mag Junior is available online, at lalibertesciencesmagjunior.ca, and in print, for free. Schools, health agencies and many more partners across Canada and internationally are all helping distribute the magazine far and wide.



Publisher, La Liberté.

The first issue has even been distributed to remote Indigenous villages in South America.

More than 200,000 Internet users in 10 provinces and/or territories have read and/or downloaded the English and French version of the first issue alone.

"We're so happy with the response," Gaulin said. "And with the support of St. Boniface Hospital leadership, who early on understood that our goal for this resource was education and empowerment."

By donating to St. Boniface Hospital Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund, you have played an important role: helping children and their families to gain knowledge and peace of mind in the face of this global health crisis. Thank you.



It's what we picture when we think of COVID-19 taking hold: breathing problems severe enough to require treatment with oxygen or even a ventilator.

While it's clear COVID-19 attacks the lungs, the question remains: why do some people become so sick, and others do not?

Researchers at St. Boniface Hospital believe the answer might be found in the lungs' lipids – the fatty molecules that make up the building blocks of the structure and function of living cells.

"Something occurs in the sicker COVID patients – a massive inflammatory syndrome," said Dr. Amir Ravandi, Principal Investigator, Cardiovascular Lipidomics and Staff Interventional Cardiologist with the Hospital. "We are looking at lipids to first understand how they've changed in the sickest patients and then to develop potential therapies to block the action of lethal lung lipids."

Ravandi and his St. Boniface Hospital colleague, Dr. Harold Aukema, Principal Investigator, Nutrition and Lipid Mediators with the Canadian Centre for Agri-Food Research, are members of a cross-disciplinary team that includes representatives from the University of Manitoba, Health Sciences Centre Winnipeg, and Canada's National Microbiology Labs.

It's the first-ever investigation into the relationship between lipids and COVID-19, Ravandi said.

"We want to know if the lipids – these fat molecules in the lungs – are predictive. Will they help explain why some people do worse? And will it be possible to intervene medically to change the lung lipids to improve outcomes?"

The research requires an examination of live samples – biological extracts. These samples are collected daily for a period of 11 days from critically ill COVID-19 patients relying on a ventilator to help them breathe.



"The patients are unable to cough, so respiratory therapists and doctors are using suction to remove what these patients cannot expel on their own. We're drawing our sample from what this suctioning process collects. These samples include the live virus, so a lot of precautions are in place, of course. We're fortunate to have a lot of collaborative knowledge across the team."

A mass spectrometer on site at the Hospital's Albrechtsen Research Centre is essential for a key step in the research. By accurately measuring the mass of different molecules within a sample, the instrument allows a researcher to identify a particular type of molecule, including lipids. Just as importantly, Ravandi added, the mass spectrometer quantifies the presence of a particular type of molecule, indicating whether its number is going up, or down.

In early 2021, the project is in its initial stages.

"We've begun collecting our samples. Our hope is that this year we'll have completed the study and we'll have results to see which lipid molecules are part and parcel of patients getting very sick. Then the next phase would be to focus on developing an antibody – a kind of therapeutic surgical strike – for delivery directly into the lungs."

Ravandi invites St. Boniface Hospital Foundation donors to take pride in this project.

"This research is possible because of our unique expertise. We're one of the few facilities in the country that dedicates itself to looking at the role lipids play in different diseases."

"It really wouldn't be possible without donor support."

You can join us in this critical response effort by giving to our COVID-19 Response Fund. Your gift is essential.

Farewell to a Friend

Compassionate leader was guided by the legacy of the Grey Nuns

What makes a man? And what drives him to give selflessly to his community?

For Conrad Wyrzykowski Sr., who passed away November 7, 2020, the essence of giving was found not only in financial contributions, but also in the devotion of his time and seemingly limitless enthusiasm.

"Conrad was a generous supporter of patient care and research through St. Boniface Hospital Foundation, and a friend of St. Boniface Hospital, for close to three decades," said Foundation Board Chair Carmine Militano.

"Over the years, he volunteered on the Hospital's Patient and Family Advisory Committee and with Spiritual Care Services, and visited countless patients and families as a deacon in his church. He will be missed."

Perhaps most remarkable about the man was that he supported not only the Foundation, but dozens of charities in Manitoba. These included St. Paul's College at the University of Manitoba, FortWhyte Alive, the United Way, the Catholic Women's League, and Knights of Columbus, among many others.

In 2008, Conrad received the Manitoba Philanthropy Award for Outstanding Philanthropist, noted Karen Fowler, Interim President and CEO of St. Boniface Hospital Foundation.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with his family," she said. "Conrad's generosity of spirit will be remembered."

"His impact on not only St. Boniface Hospital, but also all the individuals and organizations he touched during his lifetime, was immeasurable."

Over the years, Conrad and his family established five endowment funds through the Foundation, that will continue to give the gift of hope and healing for generations to come. Among them is a fund that has been used to annually support two undergraduate or graduate students in the fields of health care and research.

He will be deeply missed.



Breaking Records in Unusual Times

Foundation events went virtual in 2020

Run2Believe Winnipeg 4.0 took a virtual turn last fall, runners were able to complete their race at their leisure using the sanctioned route or on a path of their choosing!

The Manitoba running community showed their unwavering support helping us reach our goal of \$20,000, virtually. Runners picked up their race kits at

the 4L Communications Telus Dealer on Pembina Highway, where staff created a safe social-distanced environment.

We would like to thank our sponsors for their continued support. "Believe it. Run it!"

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On November 27th, the Radiothon of Hope & Healing presented by the Vickar Automotive Group raised over \$165,001 for patient care and research at St. Boniface Hospital.

Listeners tuned in to 680 CJOB, Peggy@99.1, and Power 97 throughout the day and heard from patients sharing their heartwarming stories

from their time at St. Boniface, as well as some of our staff and caregivers including: Steve Jones from the RBC Youth BIOlab Jeunesse, Dr. Grant Pierce from the St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre, and others.

The generosity and love from the Manitoba community was felt through the radio waves, and for that we are grateful.

A special thank you to the Vickar Automotive Group volunteers, and Vickar manager Steve Lipischak. As well, a personal donation of \$3,001 was made in the final hour by the Vickar family of Winnipeg – Larry (who is also a Foundation board member), Tova, Sam, Steven, Marie and Odessa.

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Giving. Remembering. Celebrating.

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