

Health care close to home good for patients and family members

“Nine doors down.” That’s how Eric Pottle describes the distance from his AGH hospital bed to the home he has shared with Sharron, his wife of 39 years. The close proximity to home consoles Eric, although he won’t head home in the foreseeable future.

A chance mishap on a Saturday afternoon last summer changed Eric’s and Sharron’s lives forever. They were sitting in their backyard with a few friends on August 27, when Eric stood up from his chair. He tripped and fell on his back, which was already damaged by a chronic spinal condition. Eric was rushed to the AGH’s Emergency Department where the doctor on duty immediately called the X-ray Department, which provides 24-hour service for emergency cases. A medical radiation technician rushed the AGH’s new digital portable X-ray machine to the ER and took an X-ray on the spot. After reading the X-ray, the doctor diagnosed a broken neck. Eric was stabilized and then transported to Ottawa where specialists performed surgery.

Two months later, Eric returned to AGH, first to the Medical-Surgical Unit and, on November 4, to the Rosamond Complex Continuing Care Unit. Eric is paralyzed now, with only limited mobility in his left hand. He receives his food and medication through a feeding tube inserted in his stomach. AGH nursing staff provide Eric’s personal care, while an automatic lift assists in moving him between his hospital bed and wheelchair. In a few weeks, Eric will be fitted with

an electric wheelchair. He’s looking forward to that, “though I don’t know how long it will take to learn to drive it.”

Eric has adjusted remarkably well to his new life with the help of Sharron,

“ We are so lucky that Eric is here in AGH... It’s like a second home for him. ”

who visits him every day. And Sharron offers generous praise to their family physician, Dr. Christiane Deschenes, who is also AGH’s Chief of Staff, and others on the AGH health care team. “We are so grateful to Dr. Deschenes. She has been our doctor for over 35 years. We don’t know what we would have done without her. Dr. Heather Abramenko was on duty when Eric was rushed to the ER. The nurses, the physios and all the staff are so caring and good to us,” Sharron adds.

The Pottles also appreciate the critical importance of AGH’s diagnostic imaging (DI) equipment in providing Eric’s care and comfort—first the X-ray machine used to diagnose Eric’s broken neck in AGH’s ER, and more recently an abdominal X-ray to check placement



of his feeding tube. Each time, DI staff wheeled the X-ray equipment to Eric’s bedside. “The portable equipment makes such a difference to our patients with mobility issues,” says Dr. Deschenes. “They avoid the ordeal of being moved and brought downstairs to the DI Department.” The new digital X-ray equipment provides even greater benefits, says Dr. Deschenes. “The image quality in digital machines provides better diagnostic accuracy, and the digital machines have much lower radiation.”

Those benefits, and pretty well all the care Eric has received at AGH, are not

lost on the Pottles. They are also thrilled that Eric is close to home. “We are so lucky that Eric is here in AGH,” Sharron says. “It’s like a second home for him. It so much easier for me to visit and it’s so nice for Eric’s peace of mind.”

Being close to home means a lot to the Pottles, especially after Sharron’s experience in the first two months after Eric’s injury. Two days after Eric’s accident, Sharron had knee replacement surgery. The surgery had been previously scheduled, and despite her worries

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The case for a CT scanner: faster, more accurate diagnosis close to home

Kirsten Solymar first began to experience stomach pains on a Sunday afternoon in early September, 2016. "It felt like the flu," recalls Kirsten, a 24-year-old teacher with the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

"By Monday, I was feeling better, but then the pain returned on Thursday." On Friday, the pain was bad enough that Kirsten decided to visit the AGH's Emergency Department. At 6 a.m. on Saturday, she was back at AGH's ER. "It was becoming unbearable," she says.

The doctor on duty ordered blood tests and an ultrasound, but found nothing abnormal in the results. When the pain shifted to Kirsten's right side, the doctor began to suspect

possible appendicitis and sent her to the Queensway Carleton Hospital for a CT scan. She arrived at 11:30 a.m.

Although the QC Emergency Department had been notified of her arrival, Kirsten waited in a wheelchair for a CT scan till 4 p.m. Appendicitis was then immediately diagnosed and Kirsten had surgery at 9 p.m.

"It was a very uncomfortable experience," says Kirsten. "It would have been so much better if I could have just had a CT scan at the AGH."

With advances in technology in recent years, the computerized tomography (CT) scan has become the diagnostic tool of choice to detect tumours, blood clots, internal bleeding, infections and various other anomalies or abnormalities in the body. A CT scan is used for diagnosing a range of illnesses from cancer to cardiovascular disease, appendicitis, trauma and musculoskeletal disorders. Much more powerful than an X-ray, a CT scan gives detailed images of bone, soft tissue, organs and blood vessels, which can reduce the need for biopsies and other investigative surgical procedures.

Without a CT scanner in AGH's Diagnostic Imaging Department, patients must travel outside the community to other hospitals for testing, says Dr. Christiane Deschenes, AGH's chief of staff. "Not only is this

travel stressful, time-consuming and expensive for patients," Dr. Deschenes says, "but it increases wait times for diagnosis."

In urgent cases, physicians must call radiologists at other hospitals to arrange the transfer of patients for CT scans, says Dr. Deschenes. "If we had a CT scanner at AGH, we could diagnose a patient's condition much more quickly. In the case of a head injury, in particular, the CT scan could show if someone has a cerebral bleed or not, with a vastly different course of action in either case."

Dr. Deschenes points out that a CT scanner would be particularly useful to AGH's Emergency Department. "It would support our request for transfer of a patient with a serious condition to more specialized care," says Dr. Deschenes, "or it could help us to decide that a worrisome patient can safely remain at AGH."

A CT scanner also would be an important asset in the recruitment of a general surgeon to AGH's staff, says Dr. Deschenes. "Nowadays surgeons need to see a CT scan before they operate in many instances. A CT scanner on site would satisfy that requirement."

The AGH-FVM Foundation plans to raise funds for a CT scanner in its Put Yourself in the Picture campaign, launched on May 10. Purchase of

Not only is this travel stressful, time-consuming and expensive for patients... but it increases wait times for diagnosis.

the CT scanner must go through an approval process, which is still in its earliest stage. The process includes proof of need by the community, which includes fundraising support, endorsement by the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, and permission from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

"The importance of a CT scanner to quality of care makes it a priority for AGH," says Mary Wilson Trider, AGH President and CEO. "In order to offer the best possible care to the communities we serve," says Wilson Trider, "we must keep up with technological advances, which means providing the best available diagnostic tools for our health care team."

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HEALTH CARE CLOSE TO HOME GOOD FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS



AGH staff Nicole Proulx and Diane Villeneuve with Eric

about Eric, doctors advised her to go ahead with the surgery. When she was released from hospital a week later, she was confined to a wheelchair. Friends drove Sharron to Ottawa every day to visit Eric during her recovery period, until she was able to drive again. "Those two months were dreadful," Sharron recalls. "It's been so much better since Eric was moved back here."

Now Sharron visits Eric daily, as do other family members. Three of Eric's "coffee buddies" also drop in twice a week for an afternoon chat. Then there are regular workout sessions in the AGH's

Physiotherapy Department where physio staff play a CD of country music that Eric recorded back in 2014. The CD's title, *That Foghorn Sound*, recalls Eric's childhood in Conception Bay, Newfoundland. Eric, who retired in 2000 at the age of 60, used to sing and play guitar and violin with local musicians before the accident. He even fondly recalls performing for patients and residents at AGH and the Fairview Manor over the years. Now he is on the receiving end of those recreational visits from community-minded entertainers. Just one more benefit of being here at AGH, close to home.



Storyteller shines light on growing up blind

Ottawa storyteller Kim Kilpatrick will bring her one-woman show, "Flying in the Dark," to the Almonte General Hospital's Octagon Room on May 27 at 7:00 p.m.

Blind since birth but fiercely independent, Kilpatrick provides a humorous, yet compelling description of her childhood and early adult years in "Flying in the Dark." Kilpatrick started competitive swimming at a young age and won medals at two Summer Paralympics Games, in 1980 and 1984. In recent years, her popularity as a storyteller has led to performances

at the National Arts Centre and other venues in Ottawa, as well as other parts of Canada.

This evening of heart-warming entertainment is a fundraiser for the AGH-FVM Foundation's Put Yourself in the Picture campaign, to support the purchase of digital imaging equipment for AGH.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for those 12 and under, and can be purchased at the AGH Gift Shop, L.G. Lee and Sons store, 38 Mill Street, Almonte or on line at almontehospitalfoundation.ca



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AGH launches \$4 million Put Yourself in the Picture campaign to ensure patients have access to the best in diagnostic imaging

“Put Yourself in the Picture” is what representatives of the Almonte General Hospital- Fairview Manor Foundation are asking community members to do in an effort to raise \$ 4 million for new diagnostic imaging equipment at the Hospital.

“AGH counts 100 percent on funding from the Foundation to ensure our staff has reliable, up-to-date equipment with which to treat our patients,” said Mary Wilson Trider, President & CEO. “We have recently purchased two new digital ultrasound machines, a new portable, digital X-ray machine and a new digital X-ray suite, all of which cost the Hospital

\$1.8 million. We are now counting on the Foundation to pay off loans for these vital tools as quickly as possible to minimize our borrowing costs.”

The Hospital moved to purchase the new equipment because both the old ultrasound machine and the old X-ray equipment were more than 10 years old. Finding replacement parts was becoming increasingly difficult and wait times for ultrasound were becoming too long. Plus, the new equipment is better for the patients. “The image quality in digital machines provides better diagnostic accuracy,” said Dr. Chris Deschenes, Chief of Staff at AGH.

AGH also intends to purchase a CT scanner, subject to the approval of the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (CLIHN) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Part of the approval process depends on confirming a funding source. The AGH-FVM Foundation has committed to raising \$2.2 million to pay for this new and urgently needed diagnostic tool.

AGH currently does not have CT scanning so patients requiring a CT scan are sent to another hospital.

Long-time Almonte residents Paul and Rhonda Virgin were announced as Put Yourself in the Picture campaign co-chairs. They were then presented with three cheques:

- The staff, volunteers, board members and physicians at AGH and the Fairview Manor have raised \$100,000 to date through a “Family” or internal campaign.
- Long-time Hospital and Manor supporters Art and Helen Levi presented the Virgins with a cheque for \$250,000 as lead donors to the campaign.
- Representatives of the Foundation including Art Solomonian, current board chair, and Al Lunney, past board chair, gave \$650,000 from the Foundation’s reserve, bringing the campaign to \$1 million so far.



Long-time Hospital and Manor supporters Art and Helen Levi

“Quality health care is part of what makes a community a place to put down roots and raise a family,” said Co-Chair Rhonda Virgin. “We can never take our quality of life for granted and must continuously work together to maintain and enhance it”.

“That’s why we are asking individuals, businesses, groups, schools and community organizations to join us and to ‘put themselves in the picture,’” said Co-Chair Paul Virgin.

For more information on the Put Yourself in the Picture campaign which will run until the end of 2019, please contact the AGH-FVM Foundation at 613-256-2500, ext. 2297 or visit: www.almontehospitalfoundation.com.



Diana Shephard, Diane Eve and Bryson McConnell present Foundation Chair Art Solomonian and AGH-FVM President and CEO, Mary Wilson Trider with a cheque for \$100,000 from the members of the AGH-FVM and LCPS Family.



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Put Yourself in the Picture 365 days a year: Join our Circle of Friends monthly giving society

Almonte General Hospital and Fairview Manor have a very special society of supporters, and we'd like you to join them.

Circle of Friends donors make a monthly donation because they know that the Hospital is there for them 24/7, 365 days a year, and they want to be there for the Hospital every day of the year, too.

Last year, for instance, our Birthing Centre had close to 500 deliveries. That averages out to more than one baby born each day.

Our Emergency Department had more than 15,000 visits in 2016. That averages out to 41 patients seeking treatment in the ER each day of the year.

Almost every medical journey begins with an accurate diagnosis, which means our Diagnostic Imaging Department sees patients every day, too. Last year, 4,551 ultrasound examinations were conducted; that's about 12 per day. Our X-ray staff was even busier with about 18 per day, totalling 6,701 for all of 2016.

The Put Yourself in the Picture campaign is the perfect time for you to join our special Circle of Friends monthly giving society. Your support will mean better quality images, faster more accurate diagnostic tests, shorter wait times and better health care closer to home. Your donation will automatically be withdrawn each month or put on your credit card (good if you

collect reward points!). At the end of the year, you will receive one income tax receipt, which cuts down on our overhead expenses as well. You can cancel your monthly gift any time by contacting our office.

If you join now you will receive special recognition to help show others that "You're in the Picture" for health care close to home.

This offer is only available to Circle of Friends society members to thank them for their ongoing, monthly support, and so they can show people how much they care about the care provided at the Almonte General Hospital.

Join our
**Circle of Friends
monthly
giving society**
and get some
awesome swag!

**\$10 a month gets you
a Put Yourself in the Picture
campaign T-shirt.**

**\$20 a month gets you
a Put Yourself in the Picture
T-shirt and hat.**

**\$50 a month or more gets you
a Put Yourself in the Picture
campaign sweatshirt.**



Yes, I want to 'be in the picture' to support health care close to home.

I wish to make a one-time gift of:

\$10 \$20 \$50 _____

Making a **monthly gift** can be a convenient and easy way to lend your support.

I wish to make a monthly gift of:

\$10 \$20 \$50 _____ per month.

Deduct it from my bank account. (I've enclosed a cheque marked VOID.)

(Bank deductions will be made on the 1st or 15th of each month).

Charge it to my credit card:

VISA Mastercard AMEX

(Credit cards will be charged on the 1st or 15th of each month).

Card No: _____ Expiry: _____

Signature: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Shirt Size: SM M L XL XXL

Thank You!

Charitable Registration No.
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Return by mail to:

**Almonte General Hospital /
Fairview Manor Foundation**

75 Spring Street,
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T. 613.256.2514 Ext. 2296

Donate online at:

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Get in the swing for AGH golf tourney on June 16

Golf enthusiasts, take note! Registration is now open for the 2017 Almonte General Hospital Golf Classic, which will be held on Friday, June 16.

Guido Patrice, owner of Your Independent Grocer in Almonte, returns this year as chair of the 15th annual golf tourney after a few years' hiatus. "I am very excited and proud to be chair of this year's AGH golf tournament," said Patrice. "There is something special about not only the AGH, but this golf tournament, and especially the people who support it, volunteer and play in it. We are so fortunate to have a hospital in our community that offers the highest care for the people it serves," Patrice added.

The tournament will begin with a shotgun start at 11:30 a.m. and includes a barbecue lunch, an 18-hole round of golf, a shared golf cart and steak dinner, as well as a silent auction, a live auction, a 50-50 draw, and several other contests and prizes.

The tourney is the centrepiece of the AGH-FVM Foundation's annual fundraising campaign, said Joyce Delahunt, chair of the Fundraising Committee for the AGH-FVM's Foundation. "Last year, the campaign raised \$60,000. We're expecting to outdo that total this year," Delahunt said, adding that the funds will go to the purchase of new diagnostic imaging equipment for AGH.

"The event has always attracted a large crowd of golf enthusiasts," said Delahunt. "We greatly appreciate everyone who contributes to this worthwhile event, from the players to the sponsors, and everyone who works on planning, organizing and the game itself." The main sponsors this year are Karson Konstruction, Bank of Montreal, Bean Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd. in Carleton Place and Levi Home Hardware Building Centre in Almonte.

Get more information about the
2017 AGH Golf Classic or register online at
www.almontehospitalfoundation.com.

Or contact Carolyn Piche
at cpiche@agh-fvm.com
or call 613-256-2514 extension 2296



Campaign co-chairs aim to put community in AGH fundraising picture

Broken bones, stitches, concussions, any number of childhood illnesses—you name it. Paul and Rhonda Virgin have lots of memories of panicked visits to the AGH Emergency Department while they were raising their four children in Almonte. And then in 2004, Paul's father suffered a stroke. And Paul himself was diagnosed with a blood clot in 2014.

Over the years, and now with four generations of family living in Mississippi Mills and surrounding communities, the Virgins clearly understand the AGH's importance to area residents.

That's why they have agreed to co-chair Put Yourself in the Picture, a new fundraising campaign for the AGH-FVM Foundation. The campaign aims to raise \$4 million to pay for much-needed equipment in the AGH's Digital Imaging Department, including two digital X-ray machines (one of which is portable), two ultrasound machines and a CT scanner. **Purchase of the CT scanner must go through an approval process, which is still in its earliest stage. The process includes proof of need by the community, which includes fundraising support, endorsement by the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, and permission from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.**

"Over the years, our whole family has used the AGH," Rhonda says, "including ourselves, our four children, our grandchildren and Paul's parents. We love the quality of care that AGH provides in our community and the fact



Front Row: Grayson, Paul, Rhonda and Sophia Virgin. Back Row: Kristina Myers, Kyle Virgin, Becky & Dustin Littau, Leslie & Blake Virgin. Supporting AGH but not in this picture: Florence Virgin, Sean Virgin & Laurier Dalton.

that we don't have to travel to the city for health care."

"In fact, our family has used almost every section of AGH," adds Paul, "from the Obstetrics Unit to the Medical/Surgical Unit, the Emergency Department, Diagnostic Imaging and Physiotherapy. Our granddaughter Sophie was born at AGH. We sat in the waiting room for 16 hours for her delivery. And our son Sean was born there, too. Now my mother, Florence, is a resident in Fairview Manor. We travelled to Kanata for eight months until a spot at FVM opened up for her. That really made us appreciate what we have in our community."

The Virgins are longtime volunteers for the AGH. Paul has served on the AGH Board since 2005, and was Board Chair from 2014 to 2016, while Rhonda has worked in a variety of roles "from helping with fundraisers like the spring balls and house tours to decorating for AGH Christmas parties."

Paul, who was born and raised in Almonte, says that raising funds for the new equipment is not only vital to quality patient care at AGH, but an important investment in the success of Mississippi Mills and its surrounding communities.

"As our communities grow, AGH needs to expand health care services to meet our population's needs. New diagnostic imaging equipment is a critical part of providing quality health care." He points to increasing demand for obstetrical services in recent years, with patients coming from as far as Renfrew and Ottawa, which also has increased demand for ultrasounds. "As well, the Emergency Department had roughly 15,000 patient visits last year," Paul says. "We need appropriate diagnostic imaging services to accommodate this demand."

As a longtime owner of a local life insurance and segregated fund business, Paul is well attuned to the vital role AGH plays in the area's economic success. "When people decide to move here, they consider four requirements—affordability of housing and access to education, to recreation and to health care facilities," Paul says. "And health care is probably the most important part of that equation. Whether they are young families or older people, everyone needs health care."

He points out that just as AGH must keep pace with the expanding health care needs of the communities it serves, AGH needs the support of those communities to improve health care services. Provincial funding for hospitals doesn't extend to equipment, Paul adds. "We need to raise the funds to pay for our new DI equipment. That won't get done by anyone else, but the people here, in our communities."



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Paddle up some family fun at AGH's Canada Day water challenge!



Canada Day festivities will make a big splash in Almonte this year with Paddle for the Almonte General Hospital, a special event organized by the AGH-FVM Foundation to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

Paddle for AGH offers a variety of boating competitions mixed with lots of family activities, said Joyce Delahunt, Fundraising Committee chair for the Foundation, adding that proceeds go to the Put Yourself in the Picture campaign to raise funds for much-needed diagnostic imaging equipment at AGH. "It should be a wonderful day for all the family," Delahunt said. "People can participate in a variety of water sport events, pledge support for a team, or just sit back and watch the fun."

Six paddling events are included in the water sports program. A five-kilometre community paddle to Appleton Wetland and back will be led by Mississippi Mills Councillor John Edwards, who competed

in the 1976 Olympics as a sprint canoeist. Water races will include a 300-metre two-person canoe sprint, a 300-metre one-person kayak race and a 150-metre standing paddle board race. Finalists in each category then compete for a winner in an overall race.

The make-your-own raft competition offers the biggest challenge to boating enthusiasts. Four-person crews must assemble their own rafts on site and then race them in three-raft heats with the fastest team from each heat competing in a final race. The fun begins at 6 a.m. when raft teams can bring their materials to the Almonte Fairgrounds to start assembly.

...a wonderful event to celebrate Canada's birthday and... a great opportunity to support our hospital.

But water sports aren't the only activities planned for this Canada Day extravaganza. For landlubbers, childrens' activities include games dating back to 150 years ago. Music will be provided by a local band called Cratur. As well, visitors can buy breakfast on site, served up by the Lion's Club.

"Paddle for AGH is a great opportunity for people in the community to challenge one another to some good-hearted fun, and to form boating teams or raise pledges from colleagues, teachers, students or local businesses," Delahunt said. "It's not only a wonderful event to celebrate Canada's birthday and our historic Mississippi River, but a great opportunity to support our hospital."

General admission to the Almonte Fairgrounds is \$5, or \$20 for a family. The event begins at 6 a.m. and ends at noon, so be sure to arrive early! For more information and to register for water sports events, please go to www.almontehospitalfoundation.com/Paddle or call the AGH-FVM Foundation office at 613-256-2500 ext. 2296. With online registration, participants can complete their own pledge web pages.



Volunteer Organizing Committee:
Marilyn Snedden, John Coderre, Joy Delahunt, Clare Nixon, Gretta Bradley,
Doug Hewitt-White. Absent: Cliff Bennett & John Edwards