

# Vision for Cancer Care

*This is first in a series of testimonials in which chemo patients, their families, and the staff and doctors who care for them share stories of their journey to fight the battle against cancer. A new \$2.8 million Chemo space including new technology is projected for 2020 completion. The project is one of the components in the Stratford General Hospital Foundation's capital campaign.*

Knowing you're in the hands of committed, caring, highly trained professionals is an important part of the battle for many cancer patients. And that's exactly the kind of caregivers they'll find at Stratford General's Chemo Unit: someone who brings all their skills, knowledge and compassion to work each day to give every patient their best chance of survival.

Nurse Kathy Blake joined Stratford's chemo unit in June of 2017. But she's not new to treating cancer—she's been progressively training to strengthen her education, knowledge and experience to better care for cancer patients.

"I'm a big fan of life-long learning," explains Kathy, a nurse for some 26 years and one of only few nurses in Canada to earn a de Sousa designation. "Cancer

care is what I wanted to do and where I knew I could have impact, so I invested a lot of time and effort into becoming specialized in cancer care."



Kathy Blake, Chemo RN

But her pursuit of nursing excellence isn't just academic—it's also personal. Kathy's husband was diagnosed with cancer before she started working at SGH's chemo unit. "I had just started doing my training in London to be an oncology nurse," she says. "There had been cancer in my family before, but not like my husband. That really brought it home."

The experience reinforced Kathy's commitment to the cause and her support for cancer care delivered close to home, saving patients the trip to London's Regional Cancer Centre—a trip many find time consuming and exhausting.

"When patients have to travel to London, their day is often completely shot with traveling and waiting for their cancer treatment," she says. "If you can offer that same quality of treatment closer to home, they still have part of their day left, and part of their life."

But with the ever growing number of patients seeking chemo treatment in Stratford, shortcomings in the chemo unit are evident. While there are several smaller treatment and procedure spaces, the majority of patients are crowded into one cramped room, sitting shoulder to shoulder with other patients receiving their chemotherapy treatments.

Lack of space also puts the squeeze on a support person. "I think sometimes the family that come to support the person receiving treatment feel that they're in the way. We don't want that," she says.

Ideally, in addition to a larger new Chemo Unit, Kathy would like to see upgrades in equipment, and planning for the changing face of cancer care. Even today, many patients are not simply getting "chemotherapy", but are increasingly receiving biotherapy and immunotherapy.

"Cancer care is going to be changing. It might look very different in 10 years from now, so it would be nice if that new unit can be designed to meet those needs down the road," says Kathy. "There's lots of exciting stuff on the way."

## Optimist Club of Stratford



A BIG thank you to the Optimist Club of Stratford for their support of the purchase of a Cardiac Monitor for the Maternal Child Unit. We can never say thank you enough for their gift of this essential piece of equipment that has such an impact on our tiniest patients! Front L-R: Optimists Sal Marano, Stu MacQuaig - Treasurer, Mat/Child RNs Linsey Van Kooten and Sheila Bell, Kerri Hannon - Manager Maternal Child. Back L-R: Optimists Paul Barton, Brian Pearson, Randy Fortune - President, Dean Listman, Gerry Cox, Andrea Page SGHF ED and Optimist Barry Mason.

## Walch Family Strawberries - Big Cheque Presentation



Birgit Walch of Walch Family Strawberries dropped by Stratford General Hospital Foundation for a big cheque presentation marking their generous donation of \$2,209 towards the CT Scanner! Thank you to the Walch Family for hosting the June Pick Your Own Strawberry Day in support of SGH Foundation. We can never say thank you enough! A shout out to the Volunteers of SGH for their help. L-R: Birgit Walch and Andrea Page SGHF ED.

## Farm Credit Canada Supports CT



FARM CREDIT CANADA SUPPORTS CT! Nationally there were 1,400 applicants to the FCC Agri-Spirit Fund and SGH Foundation was one of the only 84 grants FCC Agri-Spirit Fund chose for impact on rural communities. Their grant of \$20,000 towards our CT Scanner will impact over 12,000 patients a year from throughout Perth, Huron counties and beyond. L-R: Lieke Kuijpers, Farm Credit Canada Relationship Manager presents a cheque to Louanne Plain, HPHA Manager Medical Imaging.

## A big thank you to young Philanthropist



A big thank you to young Philanthropist Kendra Sherwood! Kendra and her Mom Morgan Longhurst delivered a special gift of care kits for the patients in our Maternal Child Unit. Morgan noted that when Kendra was a baby, she was rushed to the hospital and knows these extras would be really helpful for any parents who have sick children or babies in the hospital. The kits are full of essentials including baby toys, a blanket and toiletries. Joining Kendra and Morgan is Paediatrician Dr. Tina Pittman.

**Orr Insurance & Investment**  
You've Got Options  
50 Cobourg Street, Stratford  
519-271-4340  
Orr Insurance... Answering the call.

**SHOPPERS DRUG MART.**  
More than just a drugstore.  
1-211 Ontario St., Stratford  
519-271-8600

**RANDY PETTAPIECE**  
MPP - Perth-Wellington  
519-272-0660  
pettapiece.ca

**W.G. Young**  
Funeral Home Ltd.  
And Reception Centre  
519-271-7411  
430 Huron Street

**UPLevel**  
...one conversation at a time  
UPLevel Supports the Stratford General Hospital  
www.uplevel.global

**Famme & Co.**  
Professional Corporation  
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS  
Proudly Supporting Our Community for a Better Tomorrow  
125 Ontario Street, Stratford  
519-271-7581

Because We Care  
**THE BEACON HERALD**  
519.271.2220

**West End Pharmacy**  
**Remedy'sRx**  
The Local Drug Store  
426 Huron Street, Stratford  
519-273-7200  
FREE PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY!

**PERTH AUTO DISMANTLERS LTD.**  
We Buy All Types of Scrap Cars & Trucks  
Scrap Metal and Machinery  
3961 Road 111, RR4 Stratford  
519-271-4008  
perthautodismantlers@bellnet.ca

A heartfelt thanks to our donors!  
Exceptional Healthcare... built on a STRONG FOUNDATION  
STRATFORD GENERAL HOSPITAL Foundation  
Andrea Page Executive Director  
519.272.8210 ext. 2627  
"People Caring for People"

**Bickell's Flooring**  
"Where Service Is Our Commitment to Excellence"  
519-273-4564  
380 LORNE AVE., STRATFORD

**ACTION HEALTH CARE**  
SALES • SERVICE • RENTALS  
Keeping You Independent  
In Home Service & Delivery Available  
519-271-6700 • 684 Ontario St., Stratford  
519-284-4348 • 566 Queen St. E., St. Marys  
toll free 866.222.4843 • www.actionhealthcare.ca