MRI
Making A Real Impact –
A Celebration Of Donors!
MRI, ‘a good cause for sure’

It started one morning in late April. I woke up and just couldn’t get out of bed; the pain in my lower back was so bad.

My fiancée Becky had recently had surgery and was in a lot of pain herself. Helping each other out of bed would have looked like a comedy show—if it hadn’t hurt so badly.

It was scary. All my life I’ve done physical jobs with a lot of lifting—moving furniture and the like. Even my current job at Stackpole has a lot of lifting and moving involved. I’d felt fine when I went to bed, but something had happened overnight.

I got in touch with my doctor who ordered two X-rays—one of my back, and one for my eyes. I didn’t know at the time, but they were checking to make sure I didn’t have any flecks of steel in my eye from an old injury, so that I could have an MRI if it was needed. My eyes were clear, but the X-ray showed I had what they thought was degenerative disk disease and arthritis in my back with a bulge in the spine.

But my doctor was being cautious. Some back injuries that aren’t caught quickly and treated right, they can become permanent. I didn’t want to be paralyzed from an injury like that, so I stayed off work, started on some medication to ease the pain, and waited for the MRI that my doctor felt was the next step to take.

I didn’t have to wait long. Just a week after they contacted me with the X-ray results I was in for my MRI. I was shocked it happened so fast.

When I first saw the MRI it was a little scary, thinking I’d have to fit inside that tube. But the technicians were very nice and helpful and made me feel very relaxed. They gave me headphones to help block out the sound of the MRI and talked me through the half-hour long scan.

At the end of it, I was feeling so relaxed I almost fell asleep! The MRI confirmed what the X-rays had shown—but with much better detail said my doctor. I’ve been off work now since the injury in April, and my doctor wants me to stay off work for another 12 weeks, but I’ll have to go back sooner than that...we all need money to live. Hopefully, with the help of the medication I’m on I’ll be able to do my job properly, and my employer seems willing to get me some temporary help with lifting and moving things. So we’ll see how it goes.

I’m not much of a salesman, but if people can afford to donate money towards the MRI—even the money they spend on coffee each day—then it’s going towards a good cause for sure.

Darrin Bauer
Our Thanks to the following donors for their support!

It's not a Leonardo Da Vinci painting, but this piece of artwork is likely to be drawing a lot of attention—and maybe even the occasional fingerprint. “We expect that and more,” says Andrea Page, Stratford General Hospital Foundation Executive Director about the new MRI Donor Wall to be unveiled outside the MRI Suite on the evening of June 5th, following the Foundation's Annual General Meeting.

“‘We’ll know we’ve exceeded our donors’ expectations when we see smiles on their faces and see them searching for their own names on the wall,” she says. Mused primarily of glass blocks of various sizes which represent different donor levels of support, the new donor wall was an original concept of Ms. Page which was refined and built with the assistance of Brook Recognition, a leader in donor recognition systems.

Besides recognizing donors at various levels, the MRI Donor Wall's glass construction and leaf motif ties it to the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance tree logo and connects it to the larger donor wall in the June Blanch Lobby.

“We already have some 450 donor names listed on our MRI wall, and with the flexible design we still have the opportunity to incorporate the names of people who have saved their support until the end of the campaign—or simply want to move up a level of support,” explains Ms. Page. “In a few months from now, we'll be finalizing all the names and gift levels on the wall, as well as adding a special MRI recognition panel on our main donor wall in the June Blanch Lobby.”

“The tremendous improvements we’ve made in our Hospital—including the MRI—have only happened because of the generosity of our donors,” says Ms. Page. “We want to make sure they are recognized, revered and truly valued for their generosity.”

Gift levels listed on the Donor Recognition Wall include: Transformational Gift Society ($1 million+), Visionary Society ($500,000+), Builder’s Society ($200,000+), Major Benefactors ($100,000+), Benefactors ($50,000 to $99,999), Patrons ($10,000 to $49,999), Supporters ($5,000 to $9,999), and Sponsors ($1,000 to $4,999).
Dr. Mark says MRI has had a profound effect on his patients

I have been practising as a family doctor in Mitchell and Stratford for 24 years.

The care I provide for my patients is only as good as the resources I can bring to bear. These resources include the many specialists, nurses, midwives, therapists and other allied health professionals that I can call on to help me care for my patients.

But equally important are the technological resources available to me when I need to make an accurate, timely diagnosis. Once the diagnosis is clear, I can begin treating the patient appropriately. Then, not only do they start feeling better...so do I.

Our new MRI scanner, located at Stratford General Hospital, has without a doubt, been the most exciting and useful addition to the diagnostic tools available to me. In the short time that we have had the MRI, there have been many examples in my practice where the MRI has had a profound effect on my patients.

The first person to come to mind is a 29 year old patient who was having fairly severe intermittent low back pain. He worked at a job that involves heavy labour, and he was worried that he would have to quit. He was also planning to marry soon. X-rays of his spine were normal, and a CT scan showed a minor problem with a lumbar disc, that may have been causing his symptoms.

I suggested an MRI, but the wait was going to be long, and it was painful for him to sit in a car for very long, so he declined the test. Shortly after that our new MRI arrived, so I booked an MRI of his spine, which he was able to have within a few days. This showed a tumour in his lower spine. Although the tumour was benign, it was growing quickly and would eventually have caused permanent neurological damage.

He underwent fairly urgent surgery and the tumour was removed. He is now pain free, married, the father of a little girl, and his wife is expecting again (all in the short time that we've had the MRI). He is grateful that he is able to keep working and support his family, and I am grateful that his diagnosis and treatment was completed before any permanent damage was done.

The MRI scanner has improved the quality of his life, just as it has improved the quality of the medical care I can provide.

Dr. Kevin Lefebvre says MRI can replace more invasive tests

The MRI has not only met, but exceeded my expectations.

Before the MRI arrived many of my patients with rectal cancer or biliary tract problems were having to go to London for an MRI and having much longer waits. Now these patients are getting an MRI much quicker and closer to home. That leads to a faster diagnosis which allows them to be seen at the Cancer Centre quicker or have their biliary tract problem corrected, and for therapy to start much faster. The MRI has had a huge impact in that regard.

For many of my patients it's the first time they've ever used an MRI, but most have stories of friends who needed an MRI and it took forever. So when we're able to have it done within a couple of weeks, it makes a big impression on people. That's also true for patients who are struggling with the idea that they may have a cancer and wondering why they have to wait so long for an MRI and treatment to begin. Speeding up that process may not make much difference from an oncological standpoint, but psychologically it's huge.

As a general surgeon I'm using the MRI for more and more patients and it has largely replaced some of our more invasive tests. And if you can answer your questions using a non-invasive test and eliminate the risks, then that's always better for your patients.

It has also had a huge impact on patient treatment planning—helping us decide whether certain cancers should be treated with chemotherapy and radiation before surgery, or whether those patients are best treated with surgery first with the option of chemotherapy or radiation after.

Bringing an MRI to Stratford was worth the investment—and then some. We're now able to do things for our patients that are both new and better, and we're able to do that purely because of what people have donated. I can't stress enough the importance of having that MRI here, and more importantly encouraging people for that last push towards the MRI fundraising goal.

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We are proud to support The Stratford General Hospital
Dr. Brian Hughes encourages support for MRI

As a physician, I have been exceptionally pleased with the service provided since the installation of the MRI equipment at Stratford General Hospital.

For our patients with one sided hearing loss or specific types of dizziness, we utilize the MRI scanner several times per week, specifically looking for small tumors arising near the inner ear.

We have been very impressed with the MRI results obtained here in our Hospital and I know the patients find it much more convenient to have an MRI scan performed close to home and avoid lengthy travel to other centers for scanning, which was necessary in the past.

In addition to the reduced travel, we now have the ability to obtain the scan in a much more timely fashion, often within days or weeks. In the past, patients would sometimes wait months to have an MRI at other regional hospitals. The shorter wait times greatly reduce patients' anxiety and concern about delays in obtaining these important test results.

I have received very positive feedback from dozens of patients living in Stratford and other areas of Huron and Perth counties, who have had the benefit of this state-of-the-art technology now available at Stratford General Hospital. Having this type of diagnostic tool available locally to our patients makes a difference in our ability to detect and treat disease which can sometimes be difficult or impossible to find with other types of testing.

If you have not already done so, I would strongly encourage you to support the MRI fundraising campaign as it reaches its final phase. You really can make a difference!
Dr. Laurel Moore, Chief of Medical Staff, says MRI impact grows daily

Medicine is increasingly growing in complexity and the new technologies that are emerging are constantly improving the care physicians are able to provide to their patients.

In my mind, the MRI is the biggest single improvement we've seen in that care in quite some time and its impact continues to grow as more physicians from across our region are referring patients to Stratford for their MRIs.

Before its arrival in Stratford, patients were often waiting in excess of six months to obtain an MRI. They were forced to travel to London and even Owen Sound for an MRI, often at inconvenient hours through all kinds of weather.

Now Stratford has amongst the shortest waiting lists in the province. That not only means a faster MRI, but a speedier diagnosis and often quicker treatment. Plus, the images generated by the MRI are sharper and often reveal more than other imaging options, helping to positively diagnose everything from cancers to brain and nervous system problems; from heart and blood vessel diseases to joint and muscle disorders.

Patients often tell me how impressed they are with the MRI staff who treat them with kindness and compassion and turn what can be a frightening experience for some, into something positive. Patients who have had previous experience with MRI also mention the additional room within the Stratford MRI's "wide bore" opening—a significant design feature adding to patient comfort.

And finally, the MRI has lived up to its billing as a piece of technology that helps attract physicians and other healthcare workers to our region. That includes radiologists and technicians who work directly with the MRI, but also physicians who simply want their patients to have timely access to a piece of technology that's indispensable.

I'm very grateful to donors in our community and throughout our region who have stepped forward to help pay for our MRI. With less than $100,000 left to raise in the $3.8 million Campaign, it's an investment in healthcare that's worth every penny.

Dr. Laurel Moore

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it’s a phrase that covers so much at our hospital

- the promise every staff member makes to do their best in performing their role in patient-centred care

- the promise of every team member to ensure exceptional care

- the promise of our community and donors in making an impact and being engaged as an integral part of the healthcare team

- the promise of the Foundation to be committed to the highest standards of philanthropy, accountability and donor relations.

Thank you to our donors for helping us keep our promise!