

Connections

A newsletter for donors and friends of **niagarahealth**
—  foundation



KID'S
Ultimate Challenge

**Thank you for
your support!**

FALL | 2022



Katherine and Bill

“Thank you for the exceptional care and compassion.”

William (Bill) is a long-time supporter of Niagara Health, giving generously for over 27 years. As a Niagara-born and raised resident, he believes in supporting healthcare, especially local healthcare and has relied on Niagara Health for his medical needs.

On June 25, 2022, Bill’s partner of over 17 years, Katherine, was rushed to the St. Catharines Site by ambulance. “Katherine was not feeling well; she would not eat or drink. I knew she needed immediate care, so I called 9-1-1,” recalls Bill.

Upon arrival, several tests were conducted. Unfortunately, the result of the tests was a large gallbladder stone in her stomach, which is why Katherine was unable to keep anything down.

Katherine was taken to the operating room to remove her gallbladder stone. Dr. Azabi was able to save her gallbladder. **“Dr. Azabi came to visit Katherine a few times after surgery. I am truly thankful for Dr. Azabi caring for Katherine,”** said Bill.

After the gallbladder stone was removed, Katherine required further medical care, which meant she would need to remain at the St. Catharines Site in the Progressive Care Unit (PCU). “I would stay and visit with Katherine from 11:00am to 8:00pm everyday. Ensuring she had everything she needed – even the smallest gesture of holding her hand, ensuring she was covered with a blanket and giving her something to drink,” said Bill.

Because of Katherine’s condition, she could not eat or drink too fast without choking. Bill was there every day during visiting hours so Katherine knew everything would be okay.

“The nurses and staff at Niagara Health were amazing. I saw firsthand the pressure the healthcare workers were under. They are short staffed and working long hours. I wanted to do everything possible to ensure Katherine was cared for, which also gave me the opportunity to give the hard-working nurses a break. They deserve it!”

When Katherine’s son and daughter would visit, Bill would take sometime for himself. “I found myself walking around the St. Catharines Site. With taking care of Katherine, I needed to take care of myself.”

Prior to Katherine’s hospitalization, Bill worked for GO Transit for over 25 years and drove trucks for another 25 years after. Due to her medical condition, he found it difficult being away from

Katherine. Three and half years ago, Bill decided to leave his job and stay home as Katherine's caregiver. They did everything together – shopping, going out to dinner, etc. They had nicknames for each other. Bill was Yogi, and Katherine was Boo-Boo.

With Katherine being in the hospital, Bill continued to spend his days with her. He found that going outside was refreshing and would take Katherine out at every opportunity. Even if it meant wheeling her out with the oxygen tank, Bill knew it was worth it as Katherine also found being outdoors enjoyable.

Due to Katherine's ongoing medical care needs she was transported to Niagara Falls Trillium Unit at the end of July. Bill continued spending his days with Katherine, enjoying each other's company.

In early August, the Niagara Falls Trillium Unit was declared in lockdown due to a COVID-19 outbreak, which resulted in Bill being unable to see Katherine until the lockdown was lifted.

Bill built a relationship with the Trillium Unit staff. He would call

for updates between their shifts, at times as early as 3:00am. The nurses would place the phone next to Katherine's ear so that she would hear Bill's voice. Even though she did not respond, Bill knew she could hear him.

A few days later, Bill received a call from her doctor at Trillium Unit informing him that Katherine might be moving to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). She was having difficulty breathing. **"Dr. Doyle was amazing. He took the time to talk to me about Katherine's condition and what steps were being taken to care for Katherine. I am so thankful!"** said Bill.

Katherine passed away peacefully on Tuesday, August 9, in her 88th year.

"The hospital staff was very nice. They allowed me to take my time to be with Katherine. The Chaplin, Nathan Kendall, was nearby and came to speak to me. We spent over 45 minutes talking. I found it to be a great comfort," recalls Bill.

"On behalf of Katherine and myself, I want to express our sincere gratitude to all the St. Catharines Site and Niagara Falls Site staff for the exceptional care and compassion that Katherine received during her stay at this hospital beginning on June 25 to her passing on August 9. This includes staff in the ER, ICU, OR, PCU, Critical Care & Recovery (5th Floor) and the Paramedics. Special thanks to Surgeon Dr. Azabi for performing such a successful operation and Dr. Doyle for taking care of Katherine up until her last day with us. We will be forever grateful for the exceptional care and compassion that Katherine received while here for treatment. Bless All of You!"

Sincerely,

Bill Nestorovich

Bill Nestorovich



On behalf of Katherine Avakian, Bill made a **Gifts of Gratitude** donation to recognize members of Niagara Health's care teams and to say **thank you** for providing extraordinary care during Katherine's hospital stay.



Niagara Families Come Together



New CT Simulator at Walker Family Cancer Centre to Positively Impact Cancer Patients

Jeff and Lynn Henderson made a commitment of \$500,000 to cover the entire cost of the renovation for a new CT Simulator, bringing a faster and more precise CT Simulator to patients of Walker Family Cancer Centre (WFCC). The renovations were completed and the new CT Simulator was installed in May 2022.

In 2021, while Lynn's mother was undergoing cancer treatment in the WFCC, Jeff and Lynn made the decision to honour both of their mothers, Jacquie Wing and Florence Henderson, with a generous gift to the Niagara Health Foundation.

Touring the new unit with Dr. Michael Levesque, Medical Director of the Walker Family Cancer Centre, Jeff and Lynn were pleased to learn that the faster speed of the new unit allows more patients to be seen in a day.

The enhanced precision of the new unit allows medical professionals to more precisely target tumors, leading to better outcomes for patients.



New Medical Imaging Equipment Coming to Niagara Health Thanks to Norm Opperman

Norm Opperman made a generous donation of \$25,000 towards the purchase of a Fluoroscopy Table. The Fluoroscopy Table is accompanied by a compact C-Arm which is used in operating rooms across Niagara Health Sites and are primarily used in Orthopedics, Urology and General surgery.

Norm and his late wife of 49 years, Jody, moved to the Niagara Region in the 1990s. They operated a Bed & Breakfast for seven years and cherished memories of hosting guests from all over.

With Norm's cancer diagnosis, his family physician directed him to receive treatment locally at Walker Family Cancer Centre instead of travelling outside the region. Norm has had a positive experience, saying "I am impressed with the level of care I received, the staff and the modern facility."

As a way to say thank you for his treatment and to make a difference in the lives of others, Norm made a very generous gift to Niagara Health Foundation. Gifts through the Foundation support purchasing vital equipment needed for patient care.

To Support Niagara Health Sites



New Mobile Digital X-Ray Machine Made Possible by Ed Melna and Family

Ed Melna and his family were inspired to make a difference for Welland Hospital Site patients and families by funding the entire cost of the new Mobile Digital X-Ray machine with a donation of \$165,000.

Ed's ties to Welland have stayed strong even though he built a successful life and business far away from home. Ed grew up near the Welland site and still visits with his immediate family and high school friends as often as he can.

In June 2022, one of his high school friends, who worked for the Niagara Health Diagnostic Imaging Department at both the Welland and Port Colborne Hospital Sites, identified an urgent need for a replacement Mobile Digital X-Ray machine.

A new Mobile Digital X-Ray machine allows patients to be scanned at their bedside. In addition, quality images are received in seconds, allowing more patients to be scanned in less time. It also reduces radiation levels for some patients who require multiple scans during their hospital stay.



Niagara Health Needs Your Help To Purchase New ECG Machines

An Electrocardiogram (ECG) is one of the simplest and fastest tests to evaluate the heart. Electrodes (small, plastic patches that stick to the skin) are placed at certain spots on the chest, arms, and legs. The electrodes are connected to the ECG machine which produces a diagnostic report.

The ECGs will be used at Emergency Departments and Urgent Care sites across Niagara Health.

What does an ECG machine detect?

An ECG is used to check your heart's rhythm and electrical activity. Sensors attached to the skin detect the electrical signals your heart produces each time it beats.

Why is an ECG needed?

- Irregular heart rhythms (arrhythmias)
- Possible blocked or narrowed arteries in the heart (coronary artery disease) are causing chest pain or a heart attack
- Assess whether there was a previous heart attack
- Assess heart disease treatments, such as a pacemaker

Please help support the purchase of new ECG machines. By making a donation today, you will empower Niagara Health to make faster, more informed cardiac care decisions at the point of care.



When David became your friend, you had a friend for life

In 2018, David Larouche looked into the mirror and noticed the colour of his skin and the whites of his eyes had turned yellow. It was a sign something serious was happening. David and his wife, Fay, went to the Welland Site of Niagara Health Emergency Department to seek medical attention.

Initially, the Emergency Department doctor believed it was an issue with his liver. A few tests were run, and the decision was made to admit him to the hospital for additional tests. An Endoscopy was scheduled. "The scope results showed that his liver was 100% fine, but they noticed a blockage between his bile duct that runs from his pancreas and liver, so nothing was being filtered. A biliary stent was inserted during the procedure at the Walker Family Cancer Centre at Niagara Health" said Fay.

After three days, David's colour was back to normal. Even though David was looking and feeling better, ongoing investigations were ordered to determine the cause of the blockage, including a CT scan. "The CT Scan results showed that David had cancer markings. After running additional tests, he was informed that he had Stage 1 Pancreatic Cancer," recalls Fay.

Throughout his treatment, David and Fay felt welcomed and comforted by the Walker Family Cancer Centre staff. David was under the care of Dr. Radhika Yelamanchili, an Oncologist at the

Walker Family Cancer Centre. "Dr. Yelamanchili and the staff were amazing," praised Fay. "From the moment we walked in, we were treated like family. The staff knew all their patients by their first names and made every effort to get to know them and keep in touch", recalls Fay.

David and Fay put their trust in the staff as knew they were in good hands. **"They love what they do and love the people. When you open the door and see all of them doing their work. People have no idea what happens behind those doors,"** said Fay.

"David was a trooper. He never gave up through his Chemo and Radiation treatments. Whatever they said to do, David did it. He never complained" said Fay.

Unfortunately, David passed away at home on Saturday, January 9, 2021, with his loving and devoted wife, Fay, by his side.

During David's battle, David and Fay sat down and started to make plans, knowing what was coming. David was determined and motivated to raise funds for cancer care. In speaking with their family, Fay & David came up with a plan to host a golf tournament to raise funds for local cancer care. They were confident it would be a success as David had such a large support system of family and friends. **"When David became your friend, you had a friend for life. He was a very loyal friend,"** said Jim, David's brother.

The David Michael Larouche Golf Tournament was a great success!

On May 28, 2022, the David Michael Larouche Memorial Tournament was held at the Port Colborne Country Club to honour David. 110 golfers raised over \$10,835 for the Walker Family Cancer Centre. **"This was David's wish; he loved the outdoors. He loved fishing and being outside with his friends. From golf to hockey, David was always involved,"** said Fay.



When asked what she wanted her final message to be, Fay said, "I can't stress enough about how important it is for the community to donate and get involved in events like ours. The dollars raised go toward patient care and to purchase life-saving equipment. We are so thankful for the resources and care David received and want to ensure all future patients have the same experience".

Community Fundraisers

Our community is the heart and soul behind the Niagara Health Foundation. The funds raised through community events help us provide Niagara Health with state-of-the-art equipment for all our hospital sites. If you are interested in learning more about hosting a fundraising event please call 905-323-FUND (3863).



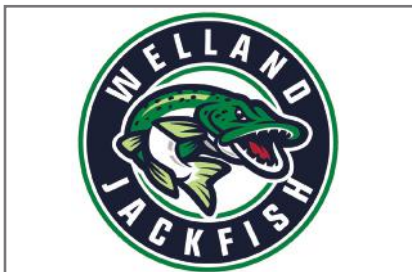
NIAGARA PENINSULA DENTAL ASSOCIATION (NPDA) GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 2022 NPDA Golf Tournament took place on Friday, June 17, 2022, at Legends on the Niagara Golf Course. Over 110 golfers participated in "Take a Bite Out of Oral Cancer" raising \$20,000 for the Walker Family Cancer Centre.



ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

Branches across Niagara came together to support local healthcare. Members of Branches #4, 56, 71, 350 and 396 gave individual gifts totalling \$23,400, which includes \$6,000 from Branch #4. The grant was awarded through the Ontario Provincial Command and helped purchase vital equipment across all Niagara Health Sites.



WELLAND JACKFISH "STRIKEOUT CANCER" CAMPAIGN

The Welland Jackfish Baseball team ran a season long campaign where \$5 was donated for every strikeout thrown by a Jackfish pitcher. The campaign has raised an outstanding \$1,595 for the Walker Family Cancer Centre.



KIDS ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

Thanks to all those who supported the 2022 Kids Ultimate Challenge this past June. We were excited to be back in-person and welcomed over 950 challengers who completed the 1km obstacle course all while helping us raise over \$86,000 for the Children's Health Unit.

Upcoming Events

Garden City Home Hardware Grand Opening

September 30 & October 1, 2022

1380 Fourth Ave, St. Catharines

In support of urgent needs at Niagara Health.

Bodhi Yoga Stretch & Sip

October 1, 2022

Fielding Winery, Beamsville

In support of urgent needs at Niagara Health.

Visit: [bodhiyogawellness.ca](https://www.bodhiyogawellness.ca)

Sparks of Pink Gala

October 5, 2022

Americana Resort & Spa, Niagara Falls

In support of the Walker Family Cancer Centre.

Visit: [Niagara Health Foundation Community Events page](https://www.niagarahealthfoundation.ca/community-events)

Santa 5K Run

November 27, 2022

Niagara-on-the-Lake

In support of urgent needs at Niagara Health.

Visit: [santa5k.com](https://www.santa5k.com)

Foundation Events

Elimination Draw & Dinner

November 24, 2022

Croatian National Home

In support of the Niagara Health Welland Hospital Site.

Visit: [elimdraw.com](https://www.elimdraw.com)

Celebration of Lights

November 14 – December 31, 2022

Celebrate recovery. Support healing. Honour someone special.

Visit: [lightsforhealth.com](https://www.lightsforhealth.com)

Thank you for your generous support!

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