

# YOUR IMPACT

A REPORT ON COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING



**Sweeping success:** One of many community fundraisers that make Sunnybrook special, Toronto Hope celebrates five years of curling with a purpose, raising nearly \$250,000 and counting for Sunnybrook. This dedicated group says it “harnesses our positive energy” to support advancements in cancer research. Sunnybrook is a proud and grateful beneficiary and we look forward to 2024, which is set to be Toronto Hope’s biggest fundraising year yet.

# A message of gratitude from Sunnybrook

In life's toughest moments, Sunnybrook is the place to be – something Liz Chanruang and her family quickly learned when she was rushed to Sunnybrook at 32-weeks pregnant after having had a seizure.

While neurologists worked to stabilize Liz and identify the cause of her seizure, the on-call obstetrician monitored her unborn baby. Imaging soon revealed a six-by-six-centimetre mass in Liz's brain. She was quickly transferred to the operating room, where Sunnybrook's neurosurgeons, oncologists and maternal-fetal specialists collaborated to safely remove the cancerous tumour and keep her baby safe.

Liz's story is one of many that show why Sunnybrook is special.

But the operating room isn't the only place this is evident. The power of community shines throughout every page of this report. From accountants to NHLers and Muskoka cottagers to golfers, runners, and backyard barbecuers, Sunnybrook's supporters are proving time and again just how big an impact we have when we work together.

**Collectively, across 154 unique fundraisers, you raised more than \$5.2 million for research, education and patient care at our Hospital.**

Just like the high-performing team responsible for Liz's care, your efforts made a life-saving difference.

In Liz's case, in fact, it saved two lives. Three weeks after her craniotomy, Liz and her fiancé, Justin La Pointe, welcomed a healthy baby daughter, Josie. "I think I'm more grateful with everything that happened at Sunnybrook," Liz told us.

We're grateful, too, to every one of our community champions and their dedicated supporters.

Sincerely,



**Christina Topp**

Vice-President, Marketing & Community Engagement  
Sunnybrook Foundation



## Stronger together

To say thank you for the care Liz and baby Josie received, Justin La Pointe invited family and friends to celebrate his 2022 and 2023 birthdays with a gift to Sunnybrook Foundation. Justin hosted one of 40 Facebook fundraisers for Sunnybrook this year.

# 154

unique fundraisers

# \$5.2M+

raised for research, education  
and patient care



## It takes a community to **TRAILBLAZE PATIENT CARE**

Thanks to your support of research and technology, our Odette Cancer Program team is at the vanguard of personalized cancer care. We are moving away from a “one-size-fits-all” approach to treatments based on each patient’s unique biology and cancer.



### **Amazing Race-style competition embraces fun in fundraising**

All hands were on deck for the 2023 Boat Rally, an exciting annual event that raised funds for the Odette Cancer Program.

“We raise money to fund research and equipment that makes a difference in people’s lives,” says Joel Hock, a cancer survivor, and founder and co-organizer of the event with Simon Williams.

The August 18-19 weekend-long event in Ontario’s Muskoka region challenged teams to raise a minimum of \$10,000 each to participate in activities at multiple stops on Lakes Joseph and Rousseau, followed by a “MuskokaBiza” Ibiza-themed after-party with food, entertainment, and live and silent auctions.

“We know funding for cancer research makes all the difference,” says Joel. “We are fortunate to have such a committed group of families and friends ready to get out on the water and turn fundraising into pure fun.”



### **Bringing the latest technologies, testing and treatments to patients**

Nearly 20 years since first stepping on the green in support of Sunnybrook, the Women’s Health Golf Classic has raised more than \$4.4 million to advance the life-changing work of the Louise Temerty Breast Cancer Centre and the Odette Cancer Program.

Funds raised at the May 29, 2023 event will help purchase a specialized microscope capable of mapping cancer cells in 3D. By advancing our understanding of cancer biology and how the cells form and interact, we will be able to develop therapies that are personalized and precise to each individual patient and their cancer.

“When donors support initiatives like advanced technology, we can ensure our expertise reaches our maximum potential and we can continue to make breakthroughs in personalized and precise treatment,” says Dr. Eileen Rakovitch, research director of the Odette Cancer Program.

Grateful patients raise

## AWARENESS AND FUNDS FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Sunnybrook's world-leading ALS clinic was the beneficiary of two community fundraisers in 2023, one featuring a Toronto accounting firm and the other the National Hockey League community. Both were runaway successes, each raising more than \$150,000 for ALS research and care.

### Fred Fights ALS with your help

Eight weeks after he was diagnosed with ALS in 2021, Fred Birnbaum danced the night away at his daughter's wedding. Soon after, he began the hard work of fighting the disease with the help of Sunnybrook.

Led by neurologists Dr. Lorne Zinman and Dr. Agessandro Abrahao, Sunnybrook's ALS Clinic is the largest in Canada. The multidisciplinary team offers research-inspired personalized care to approximately 700 patients per year. They rely on many of those patients, including Fred, to help accelerate ideas into action – like the world-first clinical trial expected to launch soon to test the effectiveness of a promising therapeutic combined with MRI-guided focused ultrasound to open the blood-brain barrier.

Seeing new discoveries unfold inspired Fred to do even more to support Sunnybrook. He launched the Fred Fights ALS campaign with a goal of \$50,000 and quickly raised more than triple that from his family, friends, and colleagues and clients at Miller Bernstein, the Toronto accounting firm where he is managing partner.

The donations are impacting research and creating tremendous hope for people with ALS and their families. "Thanks to you," Fred says, "ALS will one day become a treatable disease."



Fred Birnbaum danced the night away at his eldest daughter's wedding in 2021, eight weeks after he was diagnosed with ALS. He volunteers in medical research and clinical trials at Sunnybrook.

**“Thanks to you, ALS will one day become a treatable disease and brighter days are ahead for patients.”**

*– Fred Birnbaum*





Bob Jones is channelling his own fight against ALS into advocacy.

## NHL all in for supporting ALS research

When Bob Jones was diagnosed with ALS in 2023, one of his first goals was to raise awareness and money to help find a cure – and he had the support of a community that knows exactly how to make goals happen.

Bob is now in his fourth season as a member of the coaching staff with the Ottawa Senators of the NHL. Two of his friends, Senators' Head Coach D.J. Smith and Bob Boughner, an associate coach with the Detroit Red Wings, decided to hold a charity hockey game in Bob's honour with a portion of the proceeds going to Sunnybrook's ALS research.

"Jonesy will give you the shirt off his back and always wants to help others in any way that he can," says D.J., "so there was never a question of if we were going to help him in the battle."

All in 4 ALS: Jonesy's Game was held on August 12, 2023 in Bob's hometown of Windsor, Ontario. The event featuring many NHL alumni and stars was a breakaway success, raising \$158,000 for Sunnybrook's ALS Clinic.

## Record-breaking fundraising year for youth mental health

The RBC Race for the Kids is our signature annual fundraising event, and a powerful example of community. In September 2023, more than 7,500 people raised a record-breaking \$2.7 million for Sunnybrook's Family Navigation Project at the 11th annual RBC Race for the Kids Toronto.

This marks the best fundraising year yet for the Toronto event, which has raised more than \$22.5 million for FNP since 2013. FNP guides youth with mental health and/or addiction through the mental health system. Nearly one-third of Ontario families are caring for at least one youth with a mental health condition or addiction.

At the event, Kristina Depencier, regional president of Greater Toronto Region at RBC, said: "Today brings to life one of the most meaningful celebrations of our purpose to help clients thrive and communities prosper."



## Donor support elevates **SUNNYBROOK'S TRAUMA CARE**

Sunnybrook's Tory Trauma Program achieved the highest level of recognition in trauma care in 2023, and we have our community of donors to thank. Owing in part to innovative programs, spaces and equipment funded by your gifts, Sunnybrook became the first hospital outside the U.S. to be verified as a Level 1 trauma centre by the American College of Surgeons.

### **Accelerating improvements in trauma care**

Donor support fuels our most innovative ideas, spaces and equipment and accelerates improvements in care – like that experienced by James, a recent trauma patient, and Endre, the first patient to undergo surgery in Sunnybrook's Blake & Belinda Goldring and Family Hybrid Operating Room.

### **Where skill meets compassion**

En route to Sunnybrook's Tory Trauma Centre after a February 2023 farm accident left him with life-threatening injuries, James Mann was in such a deep state of shock that he called his wife to tell her he'd be home by midnight.

Instead, he was rushed to Sunnybrook's operating room, where plastic surgeons painstakingly repaired the bone and soft tissue in his face. When James woke a week later, intubated and in critical care, he was frightened, confused and convinced that he would never leave hospital.

He credits his family and *Team Sunnybrook* with helping him make it out the other side. "All these people brought me from a dark place to a place where I recognized that I was going to be fine," he remembers.

Sixteen days after his accident, James was discharged home with a new outlook on life. "I want everyone to know," he wrote in an email to the Tory Trauma Program, "Sunnybrook absolutely changed my life."



James Mann is happy to be back on the Port Perry farm he built with his own hands and continues to run with his wife Yawen, son Wesley and daughters Mimi, Maylee and Jamie.



## Supported by donors, designed for complex care

For eight years, Endre lived with an abdominal aortic aneurysm. The artery that carries blood from the heart throughout his body had weakened, causing the vessel to balloon out. But the aneurysm was stable and his doctor felt there was no need to intervene – until an exam in January 2022 revealed it had grown to three times the typical size.

Without immediate surgery, Sunnybrook’s vascular surgeons feared the aneurysm would rupture. Fortunately, Sunnybrook’s Blake & Belinda Goldring and Family Hybrid Operating Room had just opened.

Built by philanthropy, it combines a surgical theatre, angiography suite, a cardiac catheterization laboratory and an imaging suite, making it possible for multiple teams to work in tandem on complex patients like Endre.

Guided by high-definition imaging in the Goldring Hybrid OR, the team inserted a stent graft into a catheter in Endre’s groin and carefully threaded it into the aneurysm, where it expanded to form a stable channel for blood flow. Soon after, Endre received a clean bill of vascular health.

“I get emotional thinking about it,” he says of his experience. “Everyone did a wonderful job of caring for me at Sunnybrook.”



**Barbecuing for Sunnybrook:** The Conyers Family and friends come together every summer to celebrate the life of Chris Conyers with an annual fundraiser. This amazing group raised more than \$25,000 this year for the Tory Trauma Program.

# OUR THANKS TO YOU

Your stories of teamwork, generosity and compassion are proof that when our community comes together in support of a shared goal for Sunnybrook – on the ice, the golf course, the lake, the road – anything is possible.

Thank you to every one of our 2023 community champions, sponsors and supporters.

You make this place special.