



DONOR IMPACT NEWSLETTER

Fall 2023 Edition



WIFE, MOTHER OF THREE, TEACHER AND CANCER PATIENT

First diagnosed with breast cancer at 36, Hira Ahmed-Tahir has used various resources at the R.S. McLaughlin Durham Regional Cancer Centre throughout her treatment journey, many of which have been made possible by donor funding.

Hira began chemotherapy at the Cancer Centre in early 2020, completing 16 rounds.

"I remember the fear and the anxiety. However, my nurse was so calm and that helped me. My entire medical team were my superheroes," she says. **"We have this renowned Hospital and Cancer Centre just 15 minutes away from our house. It's a blessing to have that."**

Genetic testing revealed that Hira was susceptible to two rare genetic mutations – knowledge that led her to the difficult decision to undergo a double mastectomy.

"After I had my bilateral mastectomy in July 2020, the pathology results revealed that five out of eleven of my lymph nodes were cancerous. We knew it was the right decision."

Hira has been on endocrine therapy since due to the severity of her cancer and will continue with treatment for up to eight years. Now, three and a half years later, she and her family have chosen to show their gratitude for the high quality care she received at the Oshawa Hospital by becoming monthly donors.

[Hira's Story Continued Inside →](#)

Your Gift Helps Provide the Best Patient Care, Close to Home. Donate Today!

“ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE SURGERIES I’VE EVER SEEN”



In early 2023 as part of *Our Cancer Campaign*, Lakeridge Health purchased one of the most innovative pieces of equipment in recent years – the da Vinci Surgical System. Thanks to the Verwey Family and the support of our generous donors, we can share the remarkable story of Whitby resident Joe, the first patient at our Hospital to have two robotic surgeries.

After being diagnosed with Lyme disease in 2022 and struggling with respiratory issues, Joe was delivered some more difficult news – his care team discovered two tumours: one on his abdomen and one on his lung.

Joe’s surgeon, Dr. Daniel Sisson, suggested robotic surgery using this incredible donor-funded equipment to diagnose and remove his tumour, which was located so close to his aorta that traditional surgery was too risky.

“The da Vinci Robot makes it feel like I’ve been shrunk down inside the body,” explains Dr. Sisson. “With the robot, I can address complicated areas in ways I couldn’t before, and the 3D high-definition camera gives me the best view possible.”

In April, Joe was one of the first thoracic patients to undergo robotic surgery. His team skillfully removed tissue from his tumour, which was sent to the lab on-site at the Oshawa Hospital for immediate diagnosis to determine the type and severity.

After determining the results, the surgical robot was used to successfully remove Joe’s tumour and a small portion of his lung. After one night in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Joe was back home, and hiking by the lake within two weeks – a truly incredible recovery.

A few weeks later, Joe was required to undergo a second procedure with the da Vinci Robot, after additional testing determined his case was more complicated than expected. Dr. Sisson, and fellow thoracic surgeon Dr. Trainor, were miraculously able to perform a lobectomy using the robot.

“Joe’s surgery was one of the most remarkable things I have ever been a part of,” shared Dr. Shannon Trainor. **“This equipment is going to do incredible things for our patients.”**

After just two short nights in the ICU, Joe returned home to his family. “My family and I are grateful to benefit from all of this technology – equipment our own community helped fund!”

Though Joe’s cancer journey is not over, he and his care team are confident in the innovative equipment that is now at their fingertips, thanks to you and our generous community of donors.

Your Gift Helps Provide the Best Patient Care, Close to Home. Donate Today!

→ Hira's Story Continued

"I want to support what's close to my home. Lakeridge Health is where my family, my neighbours and my friends will visit when they require medical care. As we continue to donate, our Hospital will have the resources to help our entire community," says Hira.

Becoming a monthly donor is one of the most impactful commitments you can make for health care in our community. Hira and her family say they believe that giving back is the best way to show their appreciation and pass it forward for future patients in the same position.

"I benefited because somebody donated," says Hira. "I wanted to do the same for others."

ADVANCING WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE IN DURHAM REGION

This past Spring, with the help of gynecologist Dr. John Ibrahim and Health System Executive for Clinical Services Tabitha Carroll, we sent out a call for support to help advance women's health care in Durham Region - and you answered!

Through conversations, phone calls and emails, we heard countless stories of women and families who have experienced gynaecological challenges and who wanted to help improve the way we can care for women in our community.

With your support, a Myosure System can be purchased to benefit gynaecological patients at our Oshawa Hospital.

The Myosure uses microsurgery and advanced imaging to address excessive bleeding, fertility issues, polyps, fibroids and gynaecological cancer, making a difference for women's health across Durham Region.



Gynecologist Dr. Ibrahim

AN EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR CANCER CARE!



Patient, Marc Gibbons

An important diagnostic tool is coming to Durham Region and patients are thrilled with the news.

A **PET-CT**, or positron emission tomography-computed tomography, helps to determine important information about a patient's cancer, such as its aggressiveness, stage and size, by measuring the energy cancer cells use in comparison to normal cells in the body. The three-dimensional scans generated by the **PET-CT** can be used to determine the best course of treatment for an individual's cancer diagnosis.

Currently, 30 patients per week from Lakeridge Health must leave the Region and travel several hours for this type of imaging. There are 14 PET-CTs in Ontario, but the closest scanners to Durham Region are in Toronto and Ottawa. For patients like Marc Gibbons, founder of Port Perry Pedals, who has had eight PET-CT scans since first being diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2019, this news is a big deal.

"It means a lot to have such expert cancer care available so close to home. But when you're already experiencing the stress that comes with cancer treatment, having to drive or take transit far out of town for scans is tough," says Marc.

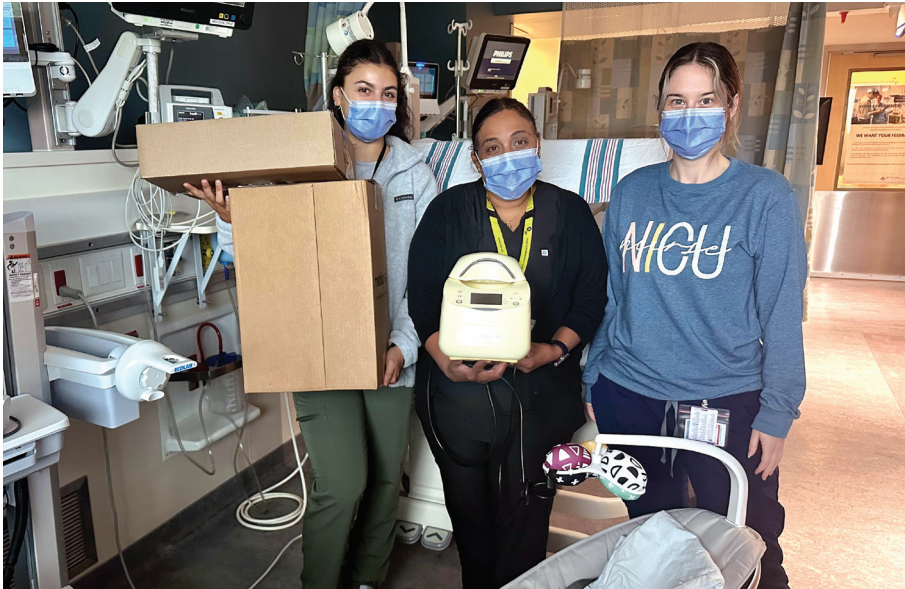
Fundraising for the **PET-CT** has just begun, but the news alone means an important advancement for cancer patients in our community.

This is our cancer.

90% Achieved!

Thanks to **you**, **Our Cancer Campaign** has reached a big milestone! **Our \$20 million goal is in sight—let's do something remarkable in 2023.**

Your Gift Helps Provide the Best Patient Care, Close to Home. Donate Today!



A BIG GIFT FOR OUR TINIEST PATIENTS



The tiniest patients at our Oshawa Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Paediatric Department will benefit from three new pieces of equipment thanks to our donors.

For children who are admitted with respiratory illness, two new high-flow oxygen machines will help patients and their families breathe a little easier during their stay.

Down the hall, the NICU will be the new home of a Biliblanket system. This special blanket provides increased comfort for babies experiencing jaundice, and allows for phototherapy treatment while still encouraging skin-to-skin contact.

All three of these items were made possible thanks to over **\$32,000** raised by our incredible donors.

Connect with your community. Connect with us!

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Have a story to share?
We'd love to hear it. Contact
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**Lakeridge
Health
Foundation**

A Million Thanks (and More) to our Donors

From our smallest patients to our wisest, everyone in our care benefits from upgrades to the latest technology, new equipment and innovative research, all possible because of donor support. **You help fund the important tools our talented care teams need to provide the best care to patients who visit our Hospitals.**

In the past year, we granted nearly **\$3.6 million** to our Whitby and Oshawa Hospitals.

Below is a partial list of what you helped us purchase in the last year:

- Supplies and renovations for Youth Mental Health Programs
- 2 Bladder Scanners
- Creation of 1 new Intensive Care Unit (ICU) room
- Replacement of Linear Accelerator to provide radiation therapy
- Upgrades to the Brachytherapy suite including transducer and SpaceOAR Hydrogel kits that drastically reduce side effects from radiation
- The da Vinci Surgical Robot

