

## *Don and Diana Burr, Thedford Ontario*



### ***Have you ever noticed how everything sounds louder in the darkness?***

Speeding through a snowstorm in the dead of night, siren screaming, I struggled within the grip of an enormous, invisible fist. With each crescendo of the siren, the pain in my chest grew, matching the growing panic of my wife, Diana. She shivered beside me as the rear ambulance doors finally flew open.

Two nurses, silhouetted in the swirling snow, reached out. As their hands grasped mine, I heard, “Hello, Don. We’ve been waiting for you.”

***My name.*** In this situation, such a small thing, but for me, this is what sets Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital apart. Because it is linked inseparably with local people, its staff is on a first name basis with many patients. And when I arrived that night, exhausted, afraid and critically ill, it felt so good to know I was in the hands of friends, who diagnosed my health issue without delay, wasted no time making the right recommendations, and immediately referred me for life-saving surgery.

Every day since then, I know that without the wonderful team at SMGH, that night could have seemed very much darker for myself and Diana. And so, as our way of showing our gratitude for the exemplary care I received, we have decided to include SMGH in our estate plans. In the coming days, you will receive a call from one of our representatives who would like to talk to you about doing the same.

Since opening with just twenty beds and a staff of five back on Valentine’s Day, 1914, SMGH has remained at the heart of our community while becoming a clinically ambitious facility with an impressive role in implementing and piloting new technologies.

The Middlesex Hospital Alliance, in which SMGH is a partner with Four Counties Health Services, shares a state-of-the-art Picture Archiving Communications System (PACS) application with its partners in the Thames Valley Hospital Planning Partnership (TVHPP). This system allows for digital images to be stored, viewed, managed and transmitted electronically. Any physician in the Partnership has the ability to view patient images without having the patient on site. For example, in the case of an acute trauma such as a hip fracture, the x-ray can be instantly sent to a specialist off-site who can view the injury to immediately advise or prioritize the patient.

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At the same time, Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital is also having tremendous success with the Hip and Knee Total Joint Replacement Program. It reports the shortest wait time in the entire province, with an average wait of 69 days for a knee replacement compared to the provincial average of 280. And not only do 90 percent of patients report an ‘excellent’ experience, but SMGH’s success in this area is reducing the need for long hospital stays, increasing access close to home for joint surgery, and keeping our community on the move – a very real factor contributing towards overall health and well-being.

Combining today’s technology with the expertise of its staff, SMGH is clearly taking the lead in shaping tomorrow’s healthcare. But there are challenges ahead.

Serving one of the fastest growing municipalities in Ontario, SMGH’s patient numbers and needs are both on the increase. Yet while it is committed to embracing the latest technological advances, each year, our hospital requires on average \$1 million in new and replacement equipment and technology, which is outside the limits of government funding.

Our bequest is a powerful way to help our hospital prepare for tomorrow. As a former staff member, you understand the difference donations can make to our hospital and the patients who depend on it. A planned gift will help secure the technology and infrastructure our hospital must have to respond to the changing needs of the community. Our legacy will also allow continued recruitment and retention of highly skilled personnel and will enable new programs to be implemented that will benefit our community for generations to come.

If you have any questions about the potential of your legacy gift, please do not hesitate to contact Susan McLean at SMGH Foundation by phone at 519-245-5632 or by email at [smclean@smghfoundation.on.ca](mailto:smclean@smghfoundation.on.ca).

Please consider joining us in creating a lasting legacy for the life of our community. Each and every one of us has the power to form a future filled with hope and health, for us all, forever.

Sincerely,

Don & Diana Burr

*PS: Your support will help to secure the future of our community hospital – a legacy that you and your family will always be proud to have made.*