

"I think that's why I was able to get home earlier than hospital staff thought – because they really looked after me."



#### Dear Friend,

Marnie and Ted Williamson, former owners of Barry's Bay V&S Stedmans, have always valued the importance of accessible local healthcare. Before moving to the community, the couple lived in Bracebridge, where they ran another Stedmans store.

When the chance to purchase the Barry's Bay location arose, the nearby presence of St. Francis Memorial Hospital was a key factor in their decision.

"The number one item on our list was to have some kind of healthcare available," she said.

For over 20 years, the Williamsons have been dedicated supporters of the hospital, contributing to Foundation fundraisers.

"We support the hospital on a regular basis, and we feel that it's the most important facility in town," she explained.

While she had made use of the hospital for the occasional test or appointment, she never expected to need it in such a serious way.

That all changed in 2022, when Marnie was returning home through Algonquin Park following an annual visit with her sisters. They gather every Mother's Day to visit the gravesite of their mother and father in Stayner, Ont.



RN Maureen Bloskie tends to a patient in the medical unit. Proceeds from the 2025 Tree of Lights Campaign will go toward the purchase of 10 new patient beds, along with other essential comfort and care equipment. As she was making the drive, her vehicle left the roadway and she accidentally hit a rock cut. Emergency personnel arrived and transported her to St. Francis Memorial Hospital, where she was airlifted to the Ottawa Civic Hospital.

She was treated for a fractured neck, ribs and kneecap, and stayed in Ottawa for one week. When she was told that there was a bed available in the medical unit of her hometown hospital, she was elated – particularly for her husband Ted.

"He was coming every single day to Ottawa," Marnie said. "He would leave the store, drive to Ottawa, stay for an hour, then drive home. Then he would come back the next day."

It was worrying Marnie to see Ted make the daily trip to the city, plus have the stress of managing the store.

"When they said we could come back home, he visited me three times a day instead of one," Marnie laughed.

Having local healthcare close to home eased some worry and allowed the Williamsons to stay connected during Marnie's path to healing.

As a rural community, we are fortunate to have access to a 20-bed medical unit, where patients can recover with quality care close to home. Without government funding, the Foundation is called to raise

funds to purchase critical comfort and care items for the medical unit.

We count ourselves extremely fortunate to have loyal donors who continue to demonstrate their dedication and commitment to the Hospital in a meaningful way throughout the year. We know that without support like yours, the medical care we have come to know and expect at St. Francis could not be delivered.

This is why we hope that when you are making your Christmas list this year, you will also consider a gift of healing to support local healthcare.

#### **EXCEPTIONAL CARE CLOSE TO HOME**

It took Marnie almost seven weeks to recover at St. Francis Memorial Hospital. She credits her stay for developing a newfound appreciation for our healthcare teams.

# Give the Gift of Healing this Christmas You can make your gift from now until December 31st.

"Everyone was fantastic, and I can't say enough good things about my stay," Marnie recalled. "Not that I would want to do it again, but it was a great experience to know that **staff really do care**. They're not just there to punch the clock. They are there to help you and make sure that you get better as fast as possible."

Even the little things stood out. She remembers enjoying one salad so much that she wrote a thank-you note to the dietary team. The very next day, she found the recipe printed and placed on her meal tray.

The countless physicians and nurses that she interacted with every day also made a difference in her recovery. Marnie was discharged ahead of schedule to recover at her home.

"They would help you in any way they could," she said. "I think that's why I was able to get home earlier than hospital staff thought – because they really looked after me."

This year, the medical unit urgently requires new equipment to continue providing excellent care and comfort for patients. These include:

- 10 new patient beds (\$80,000) designed for comfort and faster recovery.
- A VAC wound healing machine (\$28,000) helping patients heal more quickly with fewer complications.
- Five patient ceiling lifts and motors (\$15,000) ensuring patients can move safely and with dignity.
- A medication dispensing system (\$31,000) improving accuracy and patient safety.

This holiday season, we will depend on the Hospital to be here for us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure we get the care that we need. If it is within your means this year, your gift will help our hospital to continue to do just that!

Registered Nurse Maureen Bloskie sees firsthand how these tools transform patient recovery.

"As a nurse, I see how much a comfortable and safe environment helps patients recover. When someone is unwell, having the right equipment - like proper beds, lifts, or mobility aids - makes a real difference in how they

# Give the Gift of Healing at St. Francis Memorial Hospital



#### Patient Beds

- 10 Umano Patient beds need to be replaced
- Adjustable positions allow patients to sit up, recline, elevate legs, etc.
- Integrated scale provides accurate weight measurements



## **VAC Machine**

- · Accelerates wound healing
- · Reduces infection risks
- Minimizes the need for surgical interventions
- Negative pressure removes infectious material



## Ceiling Lifts

- · Five lifts required
- Minimizes risk during transfers; reduces the risk of falls, bruising, or muscle strain during movement between bed, wheelchair or bathroom
- · Reduces caregiver injury



#### Automatic Dispensing Cabinet

- Current machine is 12+ years old
- New machine will have enhanced automation and precision, ensuring accurate medication dose through numerous checks and balances

feel and how quickly they recover," Maureen said. "Being able to receive that care close to home means so much to our patients and their families. It eases stress, keeps loved ones nearby, and helps people feel more supported during a difficult time. With the right tools, we can continue to provide the kind of care our community deserves."

Seeing the difference new equipment can make, Marnie donated funds to purchase a new specialized wheelchair and walker for the medical unit.

She recognizes that not everyone has the means to donate large gifts, but encourages others to support the Tree of Lights Campaign in whatever way they can so that patients can continue to recover in their home community.

"Every little bit adds up," Marnie said.

Help the Foundation raise the funds needed to ensure healing can remain local for generations to come. Thank you for showing us how much you care this Christmas with your Gift of Healing.

From the bottom of our hearts, we sincerely thank you for considering a lifesaving gift toward this important campaign.

Sincerely,

Erin Gienow

**Executive Director** 

St. Francis Valley Healthcare Foundation

P.S. Each and every gift of support is important and very much appreciated – **no matter the size!** 

P.S.S. Did you know that you can show you care and support local healthcare throughout the year by joining our *Monthly Giving Club?* Ask us how to become a member of this club of loyal donors or sign up on the enclosed donation form.



