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Deb and Warren Jestin,
Huntsville Hospital Foundation Donors

A Little Bit of Heaven on Earth

Why one Lake Vernon cottager believes caring for the place she loves means supporting local healthcare.

For Deb Jestin, a perfect morning starts with a cup of coffee on the dock.

"It's my happy place," she says. "Just sitting there, being still, listening to the loons and watching the lake. It brings such a sense of peace." She loves the quiet reverence that comes from being surrounded by nature. "I'm not religious," she laughs, "but there's almost something meditative in it."

It's easy to understand why Deb describes Lake Vernon as her own little piece of heaven on earth. And it's a feeling she's been returning to for most of her life.

Deb's connection to the area began as a young girl spending summers at her family's cottage here. Years later, that connection deepened when her son attended Rosseau Lake College, giving her family even more reasons to spend time in Muskoka. Eventually, Deb and her husband purchased their own cottage on Lake Vernon before making Huntsville their full-time home.

"The water brings such tranquility, such peace. There's a simplicity to it all. It just feels like you can finally take a breath and sit still."

Today, Deb is woven into the fabric of the community. In addition to her involvement with local organizations, she serves on the Huntsville Hospital Foundation Board, helping to shape the future of health care in the region she has come to love. For Deb, supporting the Huntsville Hospital is a natural extension of her commitment to the community, a place that has given so much to her family over the years.

Her support also comes through her membership in Our Cottage Cares, a Foundation initiative that brings together cottagers and lakefront property owners who are making multi-year commitments to ensure exceptional care is available nearby.

"People are just as likely — probably more likely — to use the hospital up here."

And the need is very real. Every summer, our population more than triples, and ER visits increase by more than 50%. Behind those numbers are families, guests, neighbours and visitors who may suddenly need care while they are here in Muskoka.

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For Deb, that reality lives right alongside everything she loves most about cottage life: music around the campfire, late-night trips to the dock with blankets for stargazing, and family celebrations (including one family wedding that ended with everyone, including the bride and groom, jumping into the lake with their clothes on.)

"It's just a place of connection," says Deb. "You just have really, truly good visits when you're together like that."

Deb says supporting the hospital is part of protecting those moments of connection.

"There's a responsibility to make sure the hospital is there and thriving when people need it."

That sense of responsibility is what inspired her to join Our Cottage Cares.

It offers the opportunity to give back to the place that gives so much. It's about protecting the moments, memories, and connections that bring us here year after year, while helping ensure future generations have access to our hospital when they need it most.

Our Cottage Cares is built on a simple idea: **a tradition of gathering, a tradition of giving.**

Thank you, Deb, for your leadership, your generosity, and for helping inspire others to care for this little bit of heaven on earth.



**LEARN MORE AND JOIN
OUR COTTAGE CARES**

ourcottagecares.ca

The Care You Don't Always See

Supporting the whole person beyond the emergency

Behind every medical emergency is a person with a story. As Huntsville Hospital's Lead Emergency Department Social Worker, Allana Healey helps patients navigate the challenges that don't always appear on a chart, providing support, advocacy and compassion when it's needed most.

What inspired you to become a social worker?

I had actually been set on becoming a veterinarian for most of my life until I got to high school. I started to experience my own mental health struggles then and was exposed to the world of social work and the support it provides for the first time. It changed the trajectory of my life, and subsequently my career path – I knew I wanted to spend my career dedicated to helping others in the way I was supported when I needed it most.

People may not realize social workers are an important part of the emergency department team. What role do you play?

The beautiful function of social work care in the emergency department is the holistic nature of patient care that the role is dedicated to. The focus of a social worker is to see the whole person within the systems they operate in, and due to this, we often receive information from patients that might not get disclosed to their nurse or doctor. For example, I once met with



*Allana Healey,
Lead Emergency Department Social Worker*

a patient who needed help finding housing after a difficult change in their living situation. Through our conversation, it became clear there were additional and very serious challenges affecting their wellbeing that had not previously been identified. As a result, the care team was able to adapt the patient's plan of care and connect them with the support they needed.

What are some of the challenges patients are facing when you meet them in the emergency department?

The situations I help patients and families navigate are incredibly varied, from connecting people with mental health,

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addiction, grief, and community support to helping them access resources during really difficult times.

Many of the patients I meet are experiencing some form of crisis and may feel overwhelmed, isolated, uncertain, or unsure where to turn. My role is to meet people where they are, build trust, and help them find a path forward. As you can imagine, adaptability, groundedness, and the ability to build rapid rapport are critical skills when it comes to understanding a person's needs and supporting them.

You're helping people through some of the hardest moments in their lives. What's that like?

It's an honour and a privilege. The look on someone's face when they leave the emergency department feeling seen, supported, valued and understood — sometimes for the first time in their lives — is an incredible role to play in a patient's life. It really fills my cup and gives me motivation to return every day.

How do donations help support patient care?

I don't think it's well known how much hospitals depend on donations and fundraising to meet various important needs within the walls of the building. They help patient care on every level. Even the small things leave a lasting impact. For example, donations provide increased access to clothing, so patients have shoes to depart the hospital when they arrive barefoot. Donations provide pillows and blankets, for the patient with a bad back who needs extra cushioning to be

comfortable; the list goes on. In addition to funding the major equipment and technology the hospital needs, donations also support the nuances in the emergency department that make the patient experience comforting and person-centered.

When patients come here, they are never having their best day. Donations allow for their most challenging days to become less challenging, less distressing, and improve outcomes.

Any closing thoughts as we look toward a new hospital in Huntsville?

Definitely. When healthcare spaces are overcrowded or lack privacy, it can be harder for patients and care teams to connect, build trust, and respond with empathy. A new hospital means access to quiet, private spaces helping patients feel more supported and respected. Better facilities also support staff collaboration and reduce burnout, allowing teams to focus more fully on patient-centred care. From a social work perspective, I'm looking forward to infrastructure that incorporates culturally-safe, accessible, and trauma-informed spaces that will help ensure people from diverse backgrounds feel welcomed, respected, and cared for holistically.

I'm excited about what a new hospital will mean for all of us: our patients, families, and healthcare teams, and the opportunities it will create to deliver even more compassionate, connected care for years to come.

Care That Lives On

As our community comes together to support the development of a new hospital and invests in the future of health care in Huntsville, it's worth remembering that every generation plays a role in shaping what comes next. While today's donors are helping create a phenomenal future of care, **legacy gifts ensure that future generations will continue to benefit from a strong, thriving hospital.**

Whether through a gift in your will, a beneficiary designation, or other planned giving options, there are many ways to create a lasting impact and help shape the future of care in Huntsville and our surrounding communities.

We know that planning a legacy gift can feel like something to put off, or that it may seem complicated to navigate. We're here to help. Whether you're just beginning to

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explore your options or are ready to take the next step, our foundation team can provide information, answer questions, and help you find an approach that aligns with your legacy giving goals.

Planning Your Legacy with Epilogue

Thinking about creating or updating your will?

Through our partnership with Epilogue, supporters can access:

- An easy-to-use online will platform
- A 20% discount on will creation services

- The ability to update your will as life changes
- A simple and approachable way to include a gift to support Huntsville Hospital

Learn more about creating your
legacy while supporting the future
of healthcare in Huntsville.

huntsvillehospitalfoundation.ca/legacy-giving



A Message from Katherine

One Year In. Millions Raised.

One year ago, we launched the Raise Muskoka Campaign with an ambitious goal: to help build the future of healthcare in Muskoka, including a new hospital right here in Huntsville. Today, thanks to supporters like you, we've reached an incredible milestone.

Together, our community has raised more than \$53 million toward our \$70 million goal, and the \$17.5 million Bob Hutcheson-inspired matching challenge has been fully met. This achievement belongs to every donor, volunteer, business, family, and community member who chose to invest in local healthcare. **This milestone belongs to you. And I simply can't thank you enough.**

While there is still important fundraising work ahead to reach our \$70 million goal, I hope you take a moment to feel proud of what you've helped make possible. Your generosity is helping create a future where exceptional care remains nearby for generations to come.

Thank you for rising up, for believing in this community, this campaign, and the future of healthcare, here.



Katherine Craine, CEO
Huntsville Hospital Foundation



RAISE MUSKOKA, the campaign to build one integrated healthcare system, two new hospitals and one phenomenal future, is off to an amazing start. But the work is just beginning. Together, we can keep the momentum going and help build the future of healthcare Huntsville deserves.



Please donate online (huntsvillehospitalfoundation.ca/raise) or contact Meaghan Byrnes at meaghan.byrnes@mahc.ca to discuss how you can make an impact.

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A Clearer Picture, Thanks to You

There's something reassuring about receiving important health care close to home, especially when it comes with the latest technology and a more comfortable patient experience. Thanks to generous donor support, a new mammography unit is now serving patients at Huntsville Hospital, bringing enhanced breast imaging services to residents across Muskoka and the surrounding area.

The new GE Senographe Pristina system offers advanced 3D imaging technology that can improve the detection and diagnosis of breast cancer, particularly in dense breast tissue.

Your Impact

Because of donor generosity, patients now have access to:

- Advanced 3D mammography technology close to home
- Clearer, more detailed breast imaging
- Improved detection capabilities
- Faster imaging and less time in compression
- Enhanced comfort during exams, featuring supportive armrests and calming visual and audio elements
- Continued access to high-quality diagnostic care in our region



Brenda Allen, Senior Imaging Technologist MAMMO
Aimee Brodie, Senior Imaging Technologist

Learn More about the Impact of Your Generous Donations



huntsvillehospitalfoundation.ca/your-impact

Help us keep our promise to support ongoing hospital improvements across Muskoka. Please give today!

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