



November 15, 2021

Dear Friend,


My name is Susan Walsh and I am the new President and CEO of Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH). I am proud to be serving as the Chair of this year's **Light Up a Life** campaign.

I joined the NHH team in 2017 as Vice President, Patient Services and Chief Nursing Executive and from the very beginning, the role donors play in making our hospital the incredible place it is was clear to me. From the moment I walked through the front doors for my first interview, NHH felt special to me; it was clear this is a **community** hospital in every sense of the word, with our community's heart reflected throughout.

Our primary goal through this year's Light Up a Life Campaign is to fund cardiac monitors and a new central monitoring system in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). I am confident your gift of any amount – combined with gifts from other friends in the community – will help us realize this goal.



Susan Walsh,
NHH President & CEO



Cardiac monitors are fundamental in caring for some of our sickest patients – we rely heavily on the data from these machines to monitor a patient's heartbeat and rhythm, blood pressure, oxygen levels in the blood, and more. In recent times, our province has focused on expanding critical care resources and NHH has expanded our ICU from six beds to ten. **Your support will help us fund cardiac monitors for these additional beds and ensure we have the latest technology across our facility for our cardiac monitoring systems to expand to meet the needs of our growing future.**

The global pandemic has demonstrated how imperative our critical care resources are. The importance of having this care available in our community became abundantly clear in the case of Joni Krampert – a member of our healthcare family, who has worked on the frontlines as a paramedic throughout this pandemic, and who arrived at our Emergency Department (ED) this past spring.

“Some days I can't believe I'm here – I can't believe this all happened,” shares Joni.

On April 25, 2021, Joni arrived to NHH's Emergency Department with difficulty breathing and a positive test soon confirmed she had contracted COVID-19. She was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) where she remembers asking her Respiratory Therapist how long she might be there. At the time, Joni was floored by the possibility of even a week-long stay – four months later and after multiple hospital transfers, she was finally able to return home.

A paramedic with Northumberland Paramedics for over 17 years, Joni is quite familiar with NHH. She was drawn to paramedicine with a desire to help others and she strives to always make people feel comfortable and cared for no matter the situation. Filling the role of the patient was not one she was familiar with.

As Joni's condition worsened and the level of care needed increased, she was transferred first to a regional hospital, then to two different Toronto-based hospitals. She does not remember much from her first few days at NHH, or even over the next few months as she spent much of them in an induced coma, intubated and on life-support. She's heard from her family it was a 'day to day,' and at times, 'hour to hour' battle and recognizes how scary it must have been for all of them. Finally, in July, she was transferred back to NHH where she spent close to a month recovering in an inpatient ward and doing rehabilitation and physiotherapy to improve her strength and relearn everyday tasks – from sitting up, to standing, and eventually taking steps.



Joni Krampert

"I was so happy to return home to the Hills," remembers Joni, referring to NHH with an affectionate nickname. "I felt lucky to be able to do rehab in my own community, where my family could visit me without having to travel. I had a great care team – it didn't matter how tired they were or what I needed, if I hit the call button, someone always showed up with a smile – everyone I interacted with was friendly and professional. All you really want when you're in the hospital is to go home, but they helped make the best of the situation."

In addition to the healthcare workers caring for Joni, she credits her family for getting her through and what stands out most through it all was their support. She and her husband, Tom, have three adult children, Katherine, Matthew, and Michael, and shortly before Joni became ill, Katherine had shared the news she was pregnant. Even while in an induced coma, her family video called her every day to cheer her on and encourage her to fight, and the calls kept coming once she was awake.

"I really can't thank my family enough for being so devoted," shares Joni. "It even went beyond my family to my coworkers, my friends, and my whole community. People who didn't know me – some of them on my care team at NHH – shared they had heard my story and were pulling for me. There was just an outpouring of love that was really incredible."

Today, Joni continues taking things day by day. She is still on home oxygen and has a walker to help her get around, but she is happy to be home with her family and excited to soon become a grandmother.

Our hospital is an anchor in our community. It's no secret Northumberland County is growing, and to keep pace with our changing needs, so too must NHH. Your past donations have helped make our hospital the place it is, and as we grow, it is important to me we do not lose our essence, or the heart that makes our hospital so special. I hope we can continue to count on your support.

Will you join me by making a donation to ensure the most advanced cardiac monitors are available for our patients?

Together, we will continue to respond to our community's needs and offer the highest level of care, close to home. Thank you in advance for your support – your generosity means so much to so many.

Yours truly,



Susan Walsh

NHH President & CEO

Chair, Light up a Life Campaign 2021

