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PRESS RELEASE

50 Years of Generosity: One Donor's Story
Reflects Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation's
Lasting Impact

JOAN'S STORY

As Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation marks
its 50th anniversary, it celebrates not only the
milestones achieved, but the people behind
them – donors like Joan McLaughlin

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Health Sciences Foundation and Hamilton
Health Sciences

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A look back through time at some of the
milestones of Hamilton Health Sciences
Foundation over the years

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrating \$800M in Support over 50 Years at Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation

Hamilton, ON – [Wednesday, July 22, 2026] – As Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation (HHSF) celebrates 50 years of inspiring philanthropy, it is also celebrating the people whose generosity has helped transform health care across south-central Ontario. For donors like Joan McLaughlin, supporting Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) has never been about a single gift. It has been a lifelong commitment.

“It’s just a place that pulls you in and keeps your heart,” says Joan.

Joan made her first gift to the Foundation in 1985 after beginning her career at Hamilton General Hospital. Over the years, HHS became part of both her professional and personal life. All three of her children were born at McMaster Children’s Hospital, and when her son required care in the neonatal intensive unit, Joan experienced firsthand the compassion and expertise that continue to define HHS today.

Those experiences inspired a lifetime of giving. Even after moving away from Hamilton, Joan continues to support the Foundation, having witnessed how philanthropy has helped advance research, fund leading-edge equipment and strengthen patient care.

“I’m probably a drop in the bucket,” Joan says. “But at the end of the day, a lot of drops can fill a bucket.”

Joan is only one of over 550,000 donors whose generosity has helped shape the Foundation over the last 50 years. Since 1976, Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation has generated more than \$800 million in support of health care in our region through community philanthropy and careful stewardship of donor funds.

“As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we’re reflecting on an incredible legacy built by generations of donors who believed in the power of giving to transform health care,” says Anissa Hilborn, CEO of the Foundation. “Joan’s story reminds us that philanthropy is deeply personal. Every gift, regardless of its size, helps create better outcomes for patients and families.”

“This milestone is also about looking ahead. The next 50 years of health care will demand bold research, new technologies, innovative models of care and continued collaboration between our hospitals and our community. Together, we’ll continue shaping the future of care for generations to come.”

As HHSF marks its 50th anniversary, it celebrates not only the milestones achieved but the people behind them – donors like Joan McLaughlin, whose generosity continues to make extraordinary care possible.

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About Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation:

Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation provides vital funding to enable the best possible patient care. We inspire and motivate gifts that fund medical equipment and patient amenities, innovative research initiatives, essential redevelopment of clinical care spaces, and the education and training of health care providers.

As a registered charitable organization, we proudly support patients and families across south-central Ontario, and from outside the region, who receive specialized care at Hamilton Health Sciences including Hamilton General Hospital, Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre, McMaster Children's Hospital, and St. Peter's Hospital. The associated programs at the Regional Rehabilitation Centre, McMaster University Medical Centre and Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre are also included.

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MEET JOAN

"It's just a place that pulls you in and keeps your heart," says Joan McLaughlin. For more than 40 years, Joan has carried Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) in hers. As Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation (HHSF) celebrates its 50th anniversary, Joan's story reflects the enduring connection many donors share with HHS across all of its hospitals.

She made her first gift in 1985 and continues to support the Foundation today, even after moving hours away from Hamilton. Her giving journey spans decades of health care innovation, research and patient care across the region.



Joan's connection to HHS began in 1978 when she started working in the lipid clinic at Hamilton General Hospital (HGH). Over time, HHS became central to both her professional and personal life. All three of her children were born at McMaster Children's Hospital (MCH), and she participated in several research studies as both a health care professional and a mother. When her son was born in 1988 and required care in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), Joan experienced firsthand the skill and compassion of the teams caring for her family. Those experiences strengthened a connection that continues to shape her philanthropy decades later.

Even after working at other major hospitals throughout Ontario, HHS stood apart in her mind. "Hamilton Health Sciences has left a lasting memory on me for being a top-notch hospital in research and in the professional staff," she says.

Joan says her continued support comes from seeing the impact donor funding has on research, innovation, equipment and patient care. Over her decades of support, she has seen HHS rise to become Canada's second largest research and teaching hospital. She has seen the NICU that cared for her son become the most specialized in the region. She has seen countless friends and family members receive care that was both compassionate and cutting-edge. She has also included the Foundation in her estate plans as part of her lasting commitment to the organization.

"I'm probably a drop in the bucket," says Joan, "but at the end of the day, a lot of drops can fill a bucket." Since 1976, HHSF donors have helped advance health care for patients and families across the region. For Joan, giving has always been a way of supporting a place that helped shape her life, her career and her family. More than 40 years after her first gift, HHS still holds a place in her heart, and her generosity continues to help it thrive.

Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation (HHSF)

- HHSF supports life-saving care across Hamilton General Hospital (HGH), Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre (JHCC), McMaster Children's Hospital (MCH) and St. Peter's Hospital (SPH)
- It was originally founded as Hamilton Civic Hospitals Foundation in 1976, raising funds for Hamilton General Hospital and Henderson General Hospital
- Since 1976, HHSF has generated more than \$800 million dollars in support of health care in our region through community philanthropy and careful stewardship of donor funds

Hamilton General Hospital

- The #1 provider of cardiac surgeries in Ontario
- Manages nearly 550,000 patient visits annually
- Maintains the largest trauma program in Ontario, outside of Toronto
- One of two burn centres in Ontario providing comprehensive diagnosis, treatment and care for patients with acute burn injuries

Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre

- The only facility in south-central Ontario equipped to treat all types of cancers
- Manages nearly 630,000 patient visits annually
- One of three centers in Ontario offering comprehensive stem cell transplants and CART-T cell therapy
- Home to one of only a few CyberKnife Systems in Canada, offering advanced, non-invasive radiation therapy that helps treat inoperable or hard-to-reach tumors

McMaster Children's Hospital

- Second largest provider of inpatient pediatric services in Ontario
- Manages nearly 458,000 patients visits annually
- Hosts the largest neonatal intensive care unit in Canada
- Home to the largest pediatric mental health program in Canada

St. Peter's Hospital

- The largest inpatient palliative care program in Canada
- Manages more than 5,000 patient visits annually
- A leading institution in dementia and behaviour health care
- Home to the GERAS Centre for Aging Research, a preeminent institution dedicated to improving the health and independence of older adults



1976

Hamilton Civic Hospitals Foundation is created, raising funds for Hamilton General Hospital and Henderson General Hospital



1997

Hamilton Civic Hospitals Foundation amalgamates with Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals Foundation to form Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation



2006

Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation concludes its *Cornerstone of Care* campaign, raising more than \$100 million



2012

Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation hosts its first *Walk and Wheel* event in support of McMaster Children's Hospital



2018

Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation hosts its inaugural *Illuminight* event in support of Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre



2025

A new polar-dip event, *Hammer Plunge*, supporting emergency care at Hamilton General Hospital is introduced in place of the previous *Strides for the General* event