

Patient Journey at Richmond Hospital: **Carol Brown***

Many families have cherished traditions during the holiday season. What do you look forward to every year? For my family, our favourite Christmas activity has been giving back to those that touch our lives in the Richmond community.

Years ago, every December I would make little baskets of shortbread, cake and jams. My children would wrap the boxes in festive paper, and help deliver them to people who didn't have anybody at Christmas. Many of those gifts of love were handed to patients at Richmond Hospital.



After I moved to Richmond in 1946 as a young bride, I became active in the community, my church, and my children's school. I didn't know I would also become involved with Richmond Hospital when it first opened in 1966—or how often the caring staff would be there for my family when we needed them. I soon realized how much Richmond Hospital does for everyone in our community.

Richmond Hospital is there for all of us as we walk through life. I've sat with other parents as our children needed Richmond Hospital to mend their injuries. Later, I celebrated with others in the waiting room as I welcomed the births of five of our grandchildren.

One year, my husband and I even spent Christmas Eve together in the Emergency Department. Thankfully, we made it home for Christmas dinner - but we knew that many others would be spending Christmas at the hospital. The staff's thoughtfulness and humour helped see us through these difficult times.

I've also seen the sadness of others through my own tears. Richmond Hospital's kind-hearted staff were there for me when my first husband of 28 years, Peter*, passed away in 1975. When my second husband, Jack*, became ill a few years ago, I knew he was in good hands at Richmond Hospital. I trusted their professional and compassionate team, because for years, they've helped my family through good times and bad.

One memory has touched my heart the most. When Jack was admitted to the Palliative Care Unit on December 15, 2010, he knew he wouldn't be with us for much longer. Even so, he was determined to attend our family's pre-Christmas dinner party at Country Meadows Golf Club.

The doctors, respiratory therapist and nursing staff knew how important this was for Jack—and for us—so they did everything they could to help Jack gather all his strength to join our family just a few days before Christmas. Together, they made it possible for Jack to spend a crisp, starlit night sipping his customary Christmas rum and eggnog, surrounded by his children, grandchildren, and his little great-granddaughter. It was a beautiful night. Three days later, he quietly passed away.

That Christmas, we celebrated Jack's life and I'm so grateful that caring staff at Richmond Hospital took the time to give us all such a precious memory to cherish for years to come.

Because they have done so much for my family and me, this year I wanted to give something special in return. I don't bake or make jam anymore. Instead, I made two donations to Richmond Hospital, in loving memory of my late husbands, Peter and Jack. I wanted to give back to the people that helped me, so they could help others.

Gifts from people like you and me are vital to the ongoing work of Richmond Hospital. They are always there for us with such timely and caring service. It's time to give back.

Richmond Hospital relies on the generosity of each of us as donors from our community. If you're new to Richmond, you might not know yet how much we rely on them. If you've been here for a while, like me, you'll know that they're always there for us when we need them. But they need your help to make life-saving, life-changing care possible.

I've shared my story with you today, so you can see how often Richmond Hospital has been there for my family. No matter how our families change, there is one constant—Richmond Hospital is always there for us, just like they'll be here for you. As your families gather together this month to celebrate your cherished traditions, please take this opportunity to make a contribution to Richmond Hospital.

With warmest wishes for a joyous celebration of your traditions this season, from my family to yours,

Carol Brown

*This story is told with permission; however, names have been changed for patient privacy