

# Teddy News

Your Donor Impact Report

{ Spring 2024 Vol. 20

## Donors like you provide “comfort and confidence”

This is a story about eyes.

An eagle-eyed mom, and a baby girl whose eyes revealed that she had a serious health problem.

Just a few weeks after Tessa was born, her mom and dad, Christy and Ryan, began to notice that something seemed wrong with their baby's vision.

The day after her two-month check-up, Christy felt more strongly than ever that something was wrong.

***“I was calling her name over and over, but she never made eye contact with me. I just knew that this wasn't right.”***

At 10 weeks old, an optometrist referred them to HSC Children's Hospital's ophthalmology team. They discovered a significant mass — retinoblastoma — in her left eye.

Within a week — at only 11 weeks old — baby Tessa began chemotherapy.



Tessa with her eye patch

***“She was so itty bitty,”*** Christy remembers.

For 10 months, Tessa was stable. But in March 2021 Children's Hospital doctors began to see regrowth. She went to Toronto to participate in a clinical trial.

Fortunately, the experimental treatment has been successful in keeping the tumour from growing.

Now her team at Children's Hospital are keeping

a very close eye on Tessa. She goes for follow-up appointments every three months.

This past November, Tessa celebrated her fourth birthday. She is thriving. She loves her three older sisters, playing make believe, and shooting pretend ice crystals from her hands like her favourite character, Elsa, in the movie *Frozen*.



Tessa

Her medical issues are definitely not slowing Tessa down, even though for four hours a day she has to cover her right eye with a patch to remind her brain to keep using the left eye.

***“For four hours a day, she's legally blind,”*** says Christy. ***“But you would never know it.”***

A physiotherapist at HSC Children's Hospital herself, Christy has now experienced what it's like from both sides — as a healthcare worker and as the parent of a sick child.

She's seen first-hand how gifts from donors like you go directly to helping children and their families.

***“The Children's Hospital and the teams that we've been involved with... we feel a bit like they're family.”***

***There's a comfort and a confidence knowing that we get such great care.”***



**Dr. Richard LeDuc**

# How Genetic Research and Bioinformatics are Changing Pediatric Healthcare

Many parents have children who suffer from genetic disorders.

Many of these disorders are caused by inborn errors in the way the child's cells are functioning.

And it can be very difficult for physicians to determine what exactly is going wrong, and what is the best treatment for the affected child.

That's why Dr. Richard LeDuc and his team at Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba (CHRIM) are working with Mainstreaming Genomics in Manitoba to pioneer novel approaches to diagnose these disorders. Their work will give countless families more hope.

In the past, it often took years to uncover a child's genetic problem and determine an appropriate treatment.

But thanks to genome sequencing and a field called bioinformatics, our scientists can examine patient information more quickly. They can now analyze vast amounts of biological data, like DNA, in just months. And their findings can save families years of unnecessary hardship and countless medical tests.

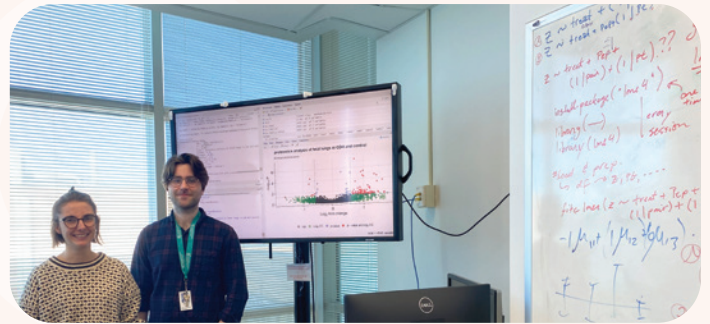
Science is advancing rapidly, and this incredible team is leading the way. This work will transform lives.

Because of this research, doctors can help diagnose children faster. They can set up a personalized treatment plan. And a child and their entire family will enjoy a better quality of life.

Bioinformatics is playing an increasingly vital role in life-saving research. That's why Dr. LeDuc wants to send this message of thanks to Foundation supporters who help make this work possible:

*"Donations like yours allow people like me to help the physician-scientists solve the medical issues facing children. Our goal is to both save and improve the lives of children. I thank you for your generosity."*

This bioinformatics research targets the individual child and will lead to new therapies to help more children in the future. Every gift allocated to this research brings hope to the parents of children with genetic diseases, and best of all it will reduce a child's suffering.



**Researcher and a bioinformatics grad student working together on some proteomics data**

## “Grateful Quotes”

“Without donations and support, most of the specialized equipment necessary for our daughter's care wouldn't have been available.”

Courtney, Alexis's grateful mom

“Every dollar that you give is going to make a difference. This is a place where there are so many needs.”

Lauren, Madeleine's grateful mom

“My child and our family felt like we had an army of support behind us, thanks to donors we didn't even know.”

Robyn, Oliver's grateful mom

# A Party with a Heart

We love seeing the creative ways our donors come up with to help children and their families in hospital.

Earl and Cheryl Barish turned a birthday party into a celebration of generosity — raising an amazing sum for the children in our care at the same time.

The couple are long-time supporters of Children's Hospital, both through their business Salisbury House with the "Pay It Forward" campaign, and their family Foundation.

Knowing what a vital role healthcare teams at Children's Hospital play in the lives of their patients, Cheryl and Earl want the doctors, nurses, and Child Life Specialists to know how grateful they are for the work they do.

*"Giving is an important thing," says Cheryl. "We really feel for children, they are the future of the world and it's heart-wrenching to see when they are suffering."*

So when it came to planning a way to mark Earl's 80th birthday, they came up with an idea for celebrating the occasion with friends and raising money for the kids all at the same time.

They sent out birthday party invitations to their friends and family with a unique proposition: instead of bringing a gift for Earl, bring a donation for the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba and the

Barishes would match it dollar for dollar.

They were thrilled with the response, raising over \$23,000 to provide kids with a Cricut machine, mats, book bags, virtual reality goggles, music therapy supplies and instruments, and a Bubble Tube to help develop visual sensory skills.

Now they hope their idea will inspire others to do the same.

As Cheryl says, *"The people on the ground who are doing the work are the people who need the support so they can do what they do. The easiest thing you can do is write a cheque; the hard part is what healthcare staff do on the other end."*



Earl and Cheryl Barish

If you would like to host your own fundraiser to raise money to support Children's Hospital or make an in memory donation, please email us at [info@goodbear.ca](mailto:info@goodbear.ca).

*"It's a place (the Children's Hospital) where you don't want to go through its doors but when you do, you're grateful it's there. A strong community has a strong children's hospital."*

Mary Beth, Daniel's grateful mom

Are you a grateful parent with a story to tell? Please contact us at [communications@goodbear.ca](mailto:communications@goodbear.ca) to share your child's health journey.

## Janessa, 2024 Champion Child

We are thrilled to introduce you to 15-year-old Janessa Dumas Colomb, 2024's Champion Child. Janessa is the first Champion Child in Manitoba who lives in a remote northern First Nations community. She's excited for her Champion year: *"I'm ready to share my story to help in a good way so other kids like me get the same great care that I had."* **Read more at: [goodbear.ca/Janessa](https://goodbear.ca/Janessa).**





# Celebrating 35 YEARS of the Teddy Bears' Picnic



**First annual Teddy Bears' Picnic (Summer 1987)**

a child or a great-grandparent, who has never attended The Teddy Bears' Picnic.

Now, thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers, a cherished Winnipeg tradition returns to delight both children and adults.

At the heart of this event is a commitment to education and healthcare. The most important purpose is to help children feel comfortable in healthcare settings. When children see a teddy bear undergoing an MRI, it helps them to lose their fear of what happens if they need tests.

The crowd favourite "Dr. Goodbear Clinic" and "I Want to Be a Scientist" tents are delightfully entertaining and show children of all ages how medicine and science work in a playful, interactive manner.

The teddy bears are back! Please join us once again to celebrate 35 years of Health Education and Community Spirit, on Sunday, September 8, 2024.

It's hard to find a local person, whether

These initiatives, led by frontline staff, provide a sense of comfort and familiarity for all kids.

*"The Teddy Bears' Picnic has been a staple within the Winnipeg community for over 30 years and it is so exciting that this beloved event is returning to Assiniboine Park in September," says Scott MacDonald, this year's Picnic Chair.*

*"Providing education and exposure to children on important topics such as health and safety while delivering it in a fun and approachable way is why the Picnic has made such a positive impact over the years. Parents who once attended the event as children will now have the opportunity to bring their own family to share that same experience and reminisce of fond memories of their childhood."*

At this magical event, where teddy bears come to life, every child can embark on their healthcare journey with courage, knowledge, and a smile. We hope to see you there!



**Over three decades later, and the tradition continues**

## Events:



35<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL  
**Teddy Bears' Picnic**

**Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>**  
Assiniboine Park



**Children's Hospital Book Market**

**Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup> –  
Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup>**  
St. Vital Centre

**Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>**

RBC Convention Centre  
To attend or sponsor visit  
[goodbear.ca/IceCrystalGala](http://goodbear.ca/IceCrystalGala)

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invites you to a fun family

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