



Karena Blowing and her family

## From unexpected emergency to extraordinary care

Young Uxbridge mother grateful for lifesaving experience at community hospital

A sore throat isn't often the reason for a visit to the Emergency Department. But for Karena Blowing, a healthy 31-year-old mother of four from Uxbridge, the one she experienced this past July felt slightly different.

"I only had the sore throat for one day and, having lived through plenty in my life, I figured it could have been anything—a cold, the flu, maybe even COVID-19," shared Karena. "But once I noticed some tenderness and white spots at the back of my throat, and after a particularly tough night spent struggling to breathe, I knew I had to get it looked at."

Karena made her way to Uxbridge Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) in the early morning hours, and, at first glance, her situation seemed perfectly fine. Her vitals were normal, her medical history showed no cause for concern, and, besides her sore throat, even her symptoms didn't give away anything problematic. Still, with Karena's strained, whispery voice, the team had a gut feeling that more was lying beneath the surface.

Moving quickly, an off-hours CT scan was ordered by Dr. Jennifer Wilson, the attending emergency physician caring for Karena. It identified swelling of the upper airways caused by an infection known as epiglottitis, which can lead to asphyxia and respiratory arrest if left untreated. And as the next steps were being determined, the situation changed drastically—Karena's throat became excessively swollen, and she could no longer breathe. Then, everything went dark...

Karena regained consciousness four days later in the Intensive Care Unit at Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH). She was told that after a network of support was mobilized—including anaesthesiologists and emergency physicians who lived near Uxbridge Hospital and who jumped into action to assist with her case—Karena had been transferred to the larger MSH to continue her care.

"Though the experience was a scary one for me and my family, the doctors and nurses across both hospitals helped me through it with remarkable care and compassion. They answered all my questions, took the time to carefully explain what was happening, and even kept my family physician up to date with my care journey every step of the way."

Nine days after her ordeal first began, Karena was finally on her way home. She was happy to be back with her family and grateful to the team that saved her life and did all they could to keep her comfortable, healthy, and safe on the road to recovery.

"You never think you'll need the ED... until you do. Like so many other families raising our children in this community, it's important that we have a hospital like this one nearby when the situation is dire. If Uxbridge Hospital wasn't right here, my situation could've been very different. But instead, by coming here first, they were able to act quickly and stabilize me before it could get any worse."

Today, as Karena returns to her normal day-to-day life, she reflects on her experience with Uxbridge Hospital, recognizing the importance of giving back for the sake of her own family and all the other families in Uxbridge.

**"Supporting our hospital means supporting our own health and well-being. It means having the best equipment, the latest techniques, and the top experts available to us right here in our backyard. Without this hospital, where would patients find themselves—where would I be today? Beyond showing our gratitude, giving to Uxbridge Hospital is a gift to ourselves and an investment in our families' futures."**

## New donor-funded technology with lifesaving impact

Thanks to generous and unwavering donor support, Uxbridge Hospital is continuing to elevate the level of care it provides to the community with a fleet of new Philips physiological monitors.

The monitors provide clinicians with access to a variety of clinical patient data for up to seven days, including vitals, electronic waveforms, and ventilator data. This technology securely transfers data to the patient's electronic medical record and ensures the process remains seamless during discharge or transfers to other departments, such as Diagnostic Imaging.

And according to patient care director Sandi Lofgren, the benefits of this new technology are immense for Uxbridge Hospital.

"These new monitors help us provide safe and expert care to our patients. Through state-of-the-art cardiac monitoring, smart alarms, and real-time data collection, our teams can be empowered in their clinical decision-making while identifying and being alerted to critical events at the earliest possible stage. Technology such as this will be pivotal in ensuring we can increasingly provide the best care for our patients, and serve the community's evolving health care needs—today and into the future."

We are grateful to the donors who have helped make this type of transformative technology possible for Uxbridge Hospital. This support paves the way for safer and more efficient patient care in our community, with every contribution making a significant difference in the lives of our hospital's patients.

Visit our website to learn more about our hospital's current equipment needs and discover how you can help:  
[www.uxbridgehospitalfoundation.ca](http://www.uxbridgehospitalfoundation.ca).



## Paying it forward for Uxbridge with a lasting legacy

Long-time resident gives back in honour of wife

Though they met as strangers on a blind date in 1956, John and Patricia McCutcheon shared a lifetime of adventure and fond memories, setting down deep roots within the Uxbridge community and making it a home for more than four decades.

"We still had a place in the city, but there was always something special about Uxbridge," shared John. "It felt quiet and private but filled with wonderful people who became some of our closest friends. Pat took a particular interest in the animal shelter while the area allowed us to enjoy the great outdoors, becoming involved in conservation and developing the growing network of walking and hiking trails throughout the Township."



Over their many years in Uxbridge, the couple also came to rely on the nearby Uxbridge Hospital and its complement of services—as well as the extensive network it provided access to through Oak Valley Health—for their health care needs. "The doctors, nurses, and staff always took special care of Pat, especially in her final days. Many of them were members of the community themselves, and we were both grateful for their compassion and kindness. For us and our neighbours, it was comforting and meaningful to know that Uxbridge Hospital was always right around the corner."

After 64 years of marriage and a growing family that included three children and nine grandchildren, Patricia passed away in 2019. To honour her memory, and to recognize and sustain a high quality of care close to home, John decided to give back to Uxbridge Hospital by making a bequest in his will. Through the Patricia Gail McCutcheon Scholarship Fund, the couple's legacy will support the ongoing education of nurses and allied health care professionals, a profession Patricia herself had once pursued. The endowment fund will also support the annual priority needs of the hospital for many years to come.

"Patricia had been a nurse in training for two years at Toronto General Hospital, but after we were married, she decided to stay home to raise our family instead. Still, she always had a passion for medicine and helping people, and this was my way of carrying on her legacy for a community that meant so much to us. Uxbridge stands behind this hospital 100 per cent, and I wanted to do my part so these up-and-coming doctors and nurses can set down their own deep roots here."



# One step closer to construction

This holiday season, as families across the region come together to share food, presents, and wonderful memories, we are excited to also share an update on one of the greatest gifts our community is set to receive: **the new Uxbridge Hospital**.

Following the provincial government's approval in April 2022 to build the new hospital on the existing Uxbridge Hospital site, the project has now received further approval **to secure a design architect and develop the full plan for the new facility**. This design process, expected to take approximately one year, will then be followed by the next stage of government approval to proceed with construction on the new campus.

"Moving into the design phase is another significant step forward in bringing this innovative campus of care together," says Jo-anne Marr, President and Chief Executive Officer, Oak Valley Health. "Our Uxbridge Hospital is already such a pivotal resource in the community and this new campus will only strengthen that further."

Once complete, the new hospital will be a brand new state-of-the-art building, where patients will receive the highest quality care, an extraordinary patient experience, and access to modern care procedures and technologies. The vision for the Uxbridge campus is moving to a community health hub including acute, ambulatory and emergency services, long-term care, and primary care services.

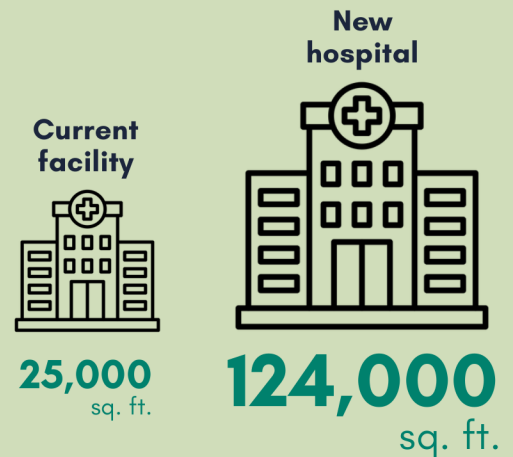
Last year, in partnership with Uxbridge Health Centre's physician group and Oak Valley Health, the Oak Tree Medical Centre opened on the site of the new hospital, marking the completion of the first phase of the redevelopment project.

"This is a really exciting phase in the redevelopment where we get to see the design concepts start to take shape," says Elena Pacheco, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Oak Valley Health. "It is also another opportunity where we get to work with our key stakeholders, including our staff and the Uxbridge community, to help design a hospital that we can all be proud of."

With a view to a brighter future for health care in Uxbridge, the new Uxbridge Hospital will enhance the overall health care landscape across both Durham and York regions. As we await this incredible transformation, proper planning will ensure continuous service during construction, with all programs and services remaining available to the community throughout the transition to the new hospital.

Stay tuned for news on the progress of the new hospital designs in the spring edition of our donor newsletter or visit our website at [oakvalleyhealth.ca](http://oakvalleyhealth.ca) for the latest information and updates.

## A closer look at the new Uxbridge Hospital



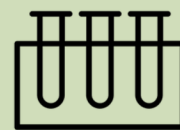
The new Uxbridge Hospital will transform care for Uxbridge and the surrounding communities in countless ways, including enabling us to accommodate:



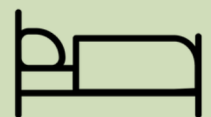
**20%**  
more **Emergency**  
Department visits



**45%**  
more **diagnostic**  
imaging exams



**34%**  
more **laboratory**  
interventions



**25%**  
more **hospital**  
beds





# TRIBUTE LIST

*Uxbridge Hospital Foundation gratefully acknowledges memorial gifts received between November 1, 2022 and October 31, 2023 in memory of the following individuals:*

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Keep our community healthy—today and tomorrow—with a planned gift to Uxbridge Hospital Foundation

Learn how legacy giving through your estate, stocks, or securities will benefit you and the Uxbridge Hospital of the future by contacting Michele Varela, Executive Director, at [mvarela@oakvalleyhealth.ca](mailto:mvarela@oakvalleyhealth.ca) or 905-852-9771, ext. 5286.

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