



# MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

## St. Joseph's Report to the Community 2021-2022

*An unrelenting pandemic has meant another historic year for St. Joseph's Health Care London. Yet it has also been a year of tremendous accomplishment - a testament to the tenacity of our staff, physicians and volunteers and their unwavering focus on those we serve.*

*Each year in our Annual Report to the Community, we share the achievements and aspirations from across our multi-site organization. Amid the second year of an ever-evolving pandemic, these accomplishments truly reflect the enduring mission, vision and values of our organization, which remain our compass and our foundation.*

*Through the video below and story highlights on these pages, we provide you with a snapshot of how St. Joseph's has excelled under the most challenging circumstances to safely and expertly advance our priorities of Reaching Out, Connecting Care, Innovating Together, Leveraging Technology, and Empowering People. We look back at all we have achieved together and move forward with great optimism to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.*

*Jonathan Batch,  
Chair, Board of Directors*

*Roy Butler,  
President and CEO*

# Watch Our Highlights

Select the image below to play [Moving Forward Together: St. Joseph's Annual Report 2021-22 video on Youtube](#) >



# OUR HIGHLIGHTS

## *A sigh of relief*



*Joel McLaughlin, who has a long list of severe allergies, was able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine safely at the Allergy Clinic at St. Joseph's Hospital.*

*Like so many people with serious health conditions, Joel McLaughlin lived in fear of contracting COVID-19. Yet, the teen was also terrified of what it would take to properly protect himself - the vaccine.*

*Joel has numerous allergies so serious that a mere touch could trigger a dangerous reaction. As a youngster, he had a severe reaction to a flu shot and, a few years ago, landed in hospital with an allergic reaction to a virus.*

*"So when it came to COVID, we couldn't take any chances," said mom Carrie. "We went into lockdown."*

*But when the vaccine became available, new fears arose. While the COVID-19 vaccine was essential for Joel, the risk of a reaction was frighteningly real. It had to be done carefully and safely.*

*The Allergy Clinic at St. Joseph's Hospital is answering that call. For patients with potential allergies to the COVID-19 vaccine, the clinic, in a cautious approach, provides the vaccine in small and gradually larger doses over a period of time and monitors closely for signs of reaction. By the end of their visit, patients will have received the full dose.*

*For a grateful Joel, the clinic allowed him to safely receive the vaccine and resume a more normal life - attend school, play hockey, get a part time job.*

*"It was big sigh of relief for me."*

[\*Read more about a sigh of relief >\*](#)

## Climbing back from injury

Miranda Scott had big plans. She had just bought a house, was about to graduate from college for a second career, and was an avid rock climber, gardener and all-around exceptional athlete.



With the help of the spinal cord injury rehabilitation team at Parkwood Institute, rock climbing enthusiast Miranda Scott was able to reach great heights - and return to the things she loves most.

*"It wasn't the height; it was the angle. I fell right on my neck,"* says the fit 34-year-old.

Miranda's short fall had resulted in a traumatic spinal cord injury with several fractured vertebrae. She had weakness throughout her upper and lower extremity muscles, and no voluntary movement in her left leg. After two weeks of acute care, she was transferred to Parkwood Institute, where she was admitted to the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Rehabilitation Program. She had a lofty goal - to return to some of the activities she enjoyed so much, including rock-climbing.

*Fortuitously, Miranda's physiotherapist, Neal McKinnon, was also a rock climber. In fact, he was belay-certified and a member at Junction Climbing Centre, a local indoor climbing gym. Due to COVID-19 the gym was closed to the public, but the Ontario government was allowing people with disabilities to access gyms for the purpose of physiotherapy. Neal worked with the gym owner and staff on a plan to get Miranda climbing once she was discharged.*

*"When I was able to get back into the climbing gym for the first time, I felt complete joy," says the fitness enthusiast.*

*Today, Miranda climbs two to three times each week and is an outpatient with the SCI Rehabilitation Program. Figuratively and literally, she has reached great heights with help from her care team at Parkwood Institute.*

[\*Read More about climbing back from injury >\*](#)

## Partnering to fill gaps in care

*Compassionate care at the right time, in the right place, by the right people is at the heart of a pilot program in London that is targeting gaps in care for the city's most vulnerable citizens.*



*Members of the COAST pilot program are making a difference in the lives of those with serious mental health issues who are at risk of crisis due to addictions, poverty and/or homelessness.*

*St. Joseph's has partnered with Canadian Mental Health Association Elgin-Middlesex (CMHA), Middlesex-London Paramedic Service (MLPS) and London Police Service (LPS) to create the Community Outreach and Support Team (COAST). Building upon the strengths of each organization, the purpose of COAST is to improve collaboration between health care services and police for individuals age 16 and older living in the community who are at risk of crisis due to addictions, poverty and/or homelessness.*

*Historically, individuals experiencing a mental health crisis have had to rely on 911 as their primary access point of care. COAST is the missing link within our community, providing a layer of proactive, health care-led support to individuals, explains Deb Gibson, Director, Mental Health Care at St. Joseph's.*

*"The main goals are to reduce police-led responses to situations in which an individual is experiencing a mental health/addictions related concern and ensure they receive the appropriate care."*

*Available seven days a week, each COAST team consists of two members: one COAST constable from LPS and one COAST health care provider from either MLPS, CMHA, or St. Joseph's. Health care members consist of social workers from CMHA, paramedics from MLPS, and nurses from St. Joseph's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams.*

*"As experts in engaging hard to reach individuals, St. Joseph's COAST members have experience reaching out to individuals wherever they live," explains Deb. "Whether it's in a home or apartment, a group home, or if the individual has been displaced or are homeless, St. Joseph's COAST members bring a sensitive and person-centred approach to their interactions for those in need of support."*

[\*Read More about partnering to fill gaps in care >\*](#)



## Connecting to care



*Swati Mehta, a scientist at Lawson Health Research Institute, is studying the value of cognitive behavioural therapy delivered online to serve the unique needs of people living with a spinal cord injury, chronic disease and neurological disease.*

*After a long battle with a disease that left him with a severe spinal cord injury, Phil Raney was doing his best to live life to the fullest - with devoted wife Janna and Rutger the service dog by his side.*

*Searching for resources online, Phil discovered a research study at Parkwood Institute that sparked hope for the Brantford native. To serve the unique needs of people living with a spinal cord injury, chronic disease and neurological disease, Lawson Health Research Institute scientist Swati Mehta (PhD) is piloting an online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) program that combines mindfulness-based pain management and practical life applications guided by a therapist.*

*Physical symptoms are often only part of the daily battle for people living with a major chronic health condition, explains Swati. They are also more likely to develop the psychological fallout of their illness - feelings of anxiety, distress and depression. Yet these challenges often go untreated due to lack of access to specialized services and a concern by patients about stigma.*

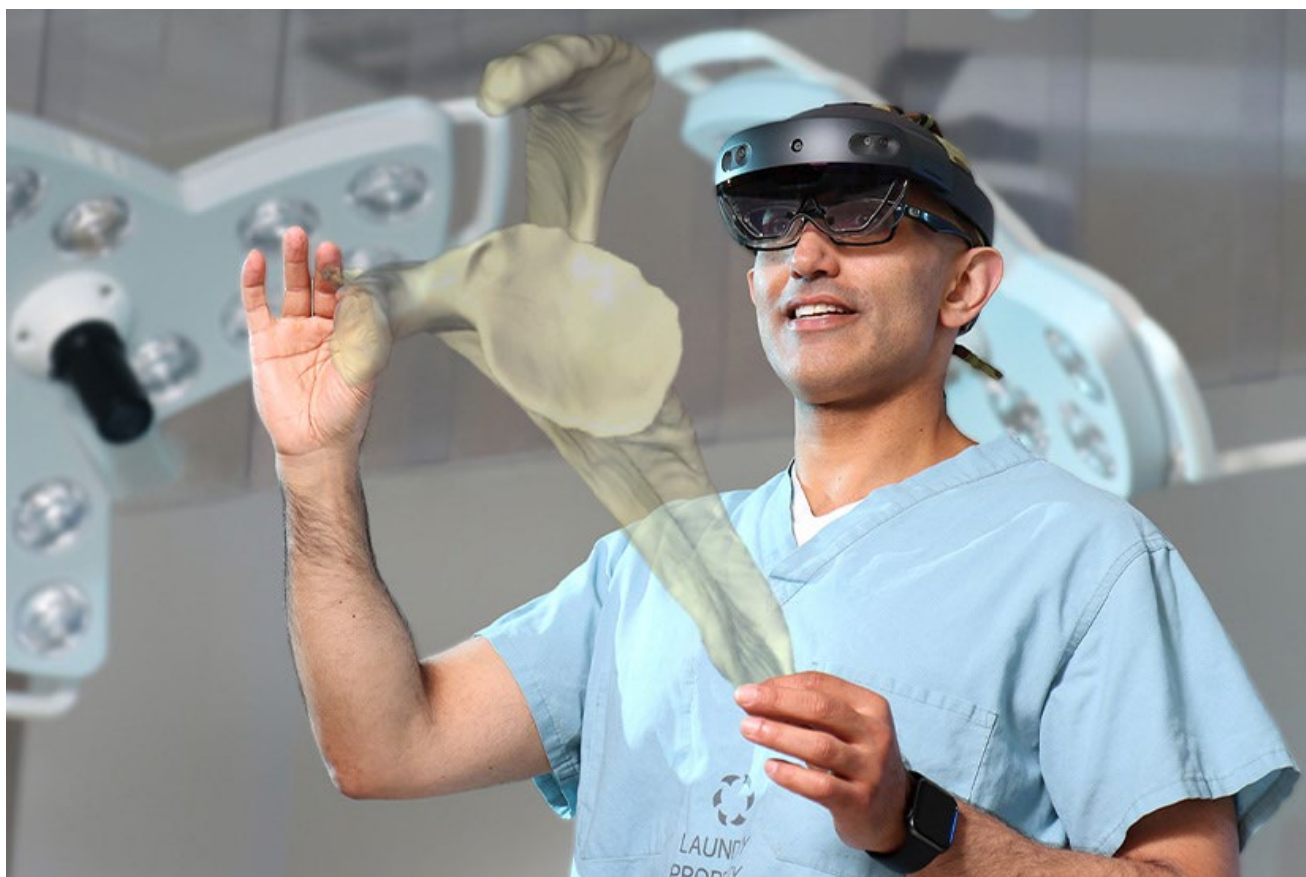
*With donor support through St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation, the pilot program, provides an online alternative to help people overcome these barriers.*

*Phil credits the web-based CBT course with helping him get the care he needed during a difficult time in his life.*

[\*Read More about connecting to care >\*](#)

## Hovering holograms hone surgeons' skills

At the Roth / McFarlane Hand and Upper Limb Centre at St. Joseph's Hospital, orthopedic surgeon Dr. George Athwal has become a Canadian pioneer in the development and use of digital 3D holograms to enhance surgical precision for shoulder replacement patients.



*During shoulder replacement surgery, orthopedic surgeon Dr. George Athwal at St. Joseph's Hospital parks a digital 3D hologram within reach for reference as he operates. The hologram is of the patient's anatomy and the metallic implant, which is based on.*

*Digital holograms are a revolution in the field of interactive 'mixed reality' technology, which is emerging as an exciting new tool in operating rooms. Part of a team who developed the technology for shoulder replacement surgery, Dr. Athwal was the first surgeon in Canada to perform a mixed reality shoulder replacement, and second in the world.*

*Wearing a specially-designed headset, Dr. Athwal uses verbal commands and hand gestures to manipulate a digital 3D hologram of the patient's anatomy and the metallic implant,*

*which is based on a CT scan of the patient's bones. During surgery, he has the hologram hovering - or rather parked in space - within reach to guide the most intricate surgical manoeuvres as they happen.*

*Dr. Athwal worked with Stryker, a manufacturer of shoulder implants, and Microsoft Corporation, manufacturer of the HoloLens 2 - a holographic headset - to develop the mixed reality shoulder replacement technique. There are now surgeons in multiple countries using this tool, says Dr. Athwal, who has since performed numerous surgeries using the technology and is in demand to provide demonstrations world-wide.*

*"It is a groundbreaking tool that allows me to replicate the surgical plan very precisely, which will hopefully result in a lower complication rate and therefore a higher success rate and increased longevity of the newly replaced joint."*

[\*Read More about hovering holograms hone surgeons' skills >\*](#)

## Surviving COVID-19 - the recovery reality

*Wendi Heal had heard the horror stories about those who ended up on a ventilator with COVID-19. And here was the lead COVID-19 physician at her bedside explaining her deteriorating condition and just that grim possibility.*



*Wendi Heal says she is "in awe" of St. Joseph's Post-Acute COVID-19 Program team, which has helped her recover from the lingering symptoms of COVID-19, including speech language pathologist Nadia Torrieri. A professional jazz singer, Wendi worked on re-learning how to find and hold notes.*

*"I remember asking him what my chances were for recovery once on a ventilator and I'll never forget his words. He said he wouldn't lie to me - that my chances drop to single digits. I asked him if I could have two days to see what happens, and those are the days I made calls*

*to my husband, my son and my two brothers. I wanted to say the important things I needed to say."*

*Wendi miraculously improved and avoided the ventilator, but it would only be the beginning of many more dark days and a struggle that persists today.*

*Wendi is a COVID-19 long hauler whose debilitating problems with fatigue, memory, brain fog, lung capacity, gastrointestinal episodes, pain, and more derailed her life for many months after leaving hospital. A small army of experts have been integral to her recovery.*

*Wendi became a patient of St. Joseph's Post-acute COVID-19 Program, which provides care at St. Joseph's Hospital and Parkwood Institute Main Building to address each person's unique set of symptoms. These can include physical, cognitive, communication, as well as mental health effects such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, explains Saagar Walia, Coordinator, Rehabilitation Program at Parkwood Institute.*

*Wendi was thrilled to be gradually "laid off" by her various specialists as she improved. Today - 18 months since falling ill - some symptoms persist but she continues to use the tools and strategies she learned at St. Joseph's to live a full life.*

[Read More about surviving COVID-19 - the recovery reality >](#)

## The art of paying tribute

Nestled within St. Joseph's Parkwood Institute are three extensive art studios filled with paints, canvases, fabrics, wood, clay, textiles and other materials waiting to be transformed into pieces of art. The men and women behind the crafty creations are veterans who reside at Parkwood Institute as part of the Veterans Care Program.



Veteran John Spivey, left, proudly displays a handmade purse with art instructor Kim Smith. The Veterans Arts Program at Parkwood Institute recently celebrated its 75th anniversary.

Providing the veterans with an opportunity to socialize, explore individual talents and hone new skills, a wide-range of art projects are adapted to fit the abilities of each individual, minimizing limitations while maximizing creativity.

*This year, a special project was an important focus for the veterans. To mark the 75th anniversary of the Veterans Arts Program, the number 75 was created out of wood and adorned with painted silk, ceramic, wool, stained glass and other materials. With the assistance of the program's art instructors, the veterans designed, crafted and painted the artwork.*

*"The vision for our tribute piece was to celebrate the diversity of art mediums and techniques that we offer in the program," says art instructor Rachel Woolmore-Goodwin. "We have a robust variety of materials to work with in our studios, providing our veterans with limitless opportunities for creativity."*

*Artwork created by the veterans is typically sold at events held at Parkwood Institute, with profits going to the veteran artist and a small portion back into the program. From silk scarves, pottery and paintings to decorative cards - the collection of work is a labour of love for all involved.*

*"Being a part of their journey is an incredible privilege," says Rachel of the veterans. "I am truly honoured to be of service to the people who have served us."*

[Read More about the art of paying tribute >](#)



## Together again

After more than three decades as husband and wife, Adam and Suzanne Jessburger found themselves separated when both landed in hospital just as the initial wave of the pandemic swept in.



Due to illness and hospital stays, Adam and Suzanne Jessburger were apart for about eight months before being reunited at Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care.

Suzanne, 80, had suffered a stroke and Adam, 85, had fractured a hip that needed surgery. They would be apart for more than half a year.

Today, the lovebirds are grateful to be together at Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care, where they reunited just in time for their 35th wedding anniversary. With a little help from

*staff, Adam surprised Suzanne with flowers, chocolates and a decorative colouring book - a hobby she enjoys.*

*"She is my rock," says Adam. "I wouldn't have survived all of this without her."*

*Since May 2021, more than 1,500 new and returning residents like the Jessburgers have made the transition from living in hospital to long-term care in Ontario. By working with hospitals to facilitate quick patient transfers, long-term care facilities have helped alleviate pressure on acute hospitals and free up resources for intensive care beds during the pandemic, explains Morgan Hoffarth, Director of Care at Mount Hope.*

*"This has been a vital collaboration during the pandemic while remaining vigilant, with increased infection prevention and control measures to keep everyone in our facility safe," says Morgan.*

*At Mount Hope, Adam and Suzanne now reside on the same unit where they enjoy regular dinners together, date nights, and some much-needed hugging and hand holding.*

*"There are some things we can't do because of the pandemic, but the staff have made it as comfortable as possible," says Adam. "We have felt welcomed at Mount Hope."*

[\*Read more about together again >\*](#)

# Treasurer's Report

*St. Joseph's reported strong financial results for 2021/22 as we continued to weather the impact of COVID-19 on our organization and our community.*



*Statue of Saint Joseph at St. Joseph's Hospital*

*Despite the significant disruption caused by the pandemic, St. Joseph's was able to meet or nearly meet all volume accountabilities established with Ontario Health West including 318,000 patient/resident days, 21,000 surgeries, 48,000 urgent care visits and 802,000 outpatient and outreach visits. Outpatient and outreach visits include 130,000 virtual visits, a 200% increase in virtual care visits since the start of the pandemic.*

*As part of St. Joseph's pandemic response, a total of 44 surge beds were operated at Parkwood Institute during the pandemic's third wave and many of these beds stayed in operation throughout the year to support our health system and community.*

*St. Joseph's ended the fiscal year with an accounting surplus of \$30.5 million driven by confirmation of government funding above our budget estimates, post-construction operating plan funding above budgeted estimates and strong performance of our investment portfolio.*

*This year's surplus will enable investments in critical areas across St. Joseph's including virtual care solutions, reducing patient waitlists that have increased during the pandemic, expanding the electronic health record OneChart and renewing our facilities.*

*St. Joseph's financial position remains strong, with a healthy working capital position and a current ratio of 1.6 to 1.0. St. Joseph's also maintains internally restricted investments of \$274 million which are externally managed by a professional firm under the stewardship of our investment subcommittee of the Board of Directors.*

*We have invested \$15.4 million in new equipment and building-related projects including the OneChart electronic health record, the purchase of seven ultrasound machines at St. Joseph's Hospital, replacement of an air handling unit at Parkwood Institute and investments in our information technology infrastructure.*

*St. Joseph's capital investments were funded by \$8.3 million of hospital resources, \$2.5 million of support from St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation and \$4.6 million of other government grants, including \$2.2 million of funding from the Ministry of Health's Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund. This Fund supported the replacement of flooring, water lines, roofing, ventilation systems and elevator refurbishments.*

*We are thankful for the support of the Foundation throughout this time and their ability to foster community support and harness the generosity of our donors. We are particularly blessed to live in a community where compassion and kindness triumph over crisis. This is evidenced through those who contributed to our pandemic response directly and supported the impactful work of the Care, Comfort and Recognition initiative. This partnership, which included community partners, ensured ongoing recognition and acknowledgment of our staff through treats, gifts and other items in appreciation for their hard work and dedication in service to our patients and residents.*

*Although we face a number of uncertainties, a constant is our staff, leaders, physicians, and our values rooted in the legacy of our founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph. We stand confident in continuing to respond to the needs of our community and health system. As we focus on the future, we are assured that our stable financial position will support us in post pandemic recovery as we continue our mission of excellence in care, and our pursuit of forging a better health care system for those we serve.*

*Don MacDonald, Treasurer, St. Joseph's Health Care London Board of Directors*

[Download Financial Statements >](#)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [2018–2021 Strategic Plan](#)
- [St. Joseph's Website](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

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