



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Teddy bears raise almost \$40,000 for pediatric patient care**

**KINGSTON, Ont.** – The Kingston General Hospital (KGH) Auxiliary scored another huge success with its annual Teddy Bear Campaign during the recent holiday season, raising almost \$40,000 to help purchase patient care equipment for the pediatric program at Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC).

Donations shot past the \$25,000 goal for the annual campaign and boosted its overall contribution over the past 17 years to close to \$440,000. In this current campaign, more than 400 cuddly bears were distributed to nine sites at KHSC that provide pediatric patient care, including pediatric inpatient units, emergency department and KidsInclusive at the Hotel Dieu Hospital site.

The 2021 funds are dedicated to purchasing four portable pediatric hospital cribs for the Kidd 10 unit at the KGH site of KHSC. The beds ensure children receive safe, comfortable care as they are transported to other areas of the hospital.

“Despite COVID-19 challenges, our community has once again come through for pediatric health care in our region,” says KGH Auxiliary President Heather Breck. “Our sponsors have the satisfaction of knowing they’re making much-needed medical equipment available to children when they need it most.”

The campaign success was a fitting way to wrap up the auxiliary’s 115<sup>th</sup> year of supporting the KGH site, says Breck, who pointed to another fundraising highlight of the year: a \$500,000 donation towards hospital redevelopment. Since 1993, the auxiliary has donated almost \$18 million to the KGH site.

“While fundraising is an important and perhaps our most visible function,” says Breck, “the auxiliary continues to work with Volunteer Services at our KGH site to provide patient comforts and to improve the hospital experience for families seeking care.

“The needs and struggles in health care have become more complex but over the last 115 years the auxiliary has always been driven by the same dedication to supporting the KGH site through volunteering.”

[For a complete list of donors to the 2020 Teddy Bear Campaign, click here.](#)

## **KGH Auxiliary: Quick Facts**

- The Women's Aid, now the KGH Auxiliary, was formed on Feb. 15, 1905 by a unanimous vote of the governors to form an auxiliary organization to meet the needs of the hospital and solve a housekeeping crisis. The first president was Mrs. J. C. (Agnes) Connell.
- The Women's Aid vision was to offer hospital treatment "to the sick and injured without distinction of race, creed or sect... and to solicit and receive donations for erecting, furnishing and maintaining the hospital" (from Women's Aid meeting minutes, March 6, 1905).
- Men started volunteering at KGH in the mid-1960s but did not join the Women's Aid until 1978. By 1988, the five to 10 men volunteers refused to wear the coral smocks and had blackened out the 'Women's' on their nametags. At an emotional meeting in May 1988, the membership voted 149-25 to change the name to the more inclusive Kingston General Hospital Auxiliary, which became official on Jan. 1, 1989.
- In 1981, the Women's Aid pledged \$400,000 over five years toward redevelopment. In 1982, it introduced the Building Fund Cash Draw which was its most ambitious fundraiser for years to come. The Gift Shop and Coffee Shop were promised prime locations in the new space and, to this day, these lucrative businesses are located in the Abramsky Lobby at the main entrance to KGH.
- Currently, the auxiliary has pledged \$2.5 million over seven years to redevelopment. In the last three years it has contributed \$1,335,000. Despite losses in its retail services due to COVID-19, the auxiliary is committed to honouring the \$1,165,000 balance over the next four years.

*Source: Purpose & Passion: Kingston General Hospital Auxiliary, 1905 to 2005 by Ellen Barton.*

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