

Your

# CHARLIES' NEWS

ISSUE 14 AUTUMN 2024

Because of *you* - it's a  
good news story





From  
Vicki's desk

As we stride into 2024, I extend a heartfelt welcome to you. The unwavering support of our donors in 2023 propelled the Foundation to new heights, and I'm genuinely grateful for your commitment.

Oscar Wilde noted, "the smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention." Contributions, big or small, profoundly impact the lives of patients and the broader community. Everyone makes a difference, and the year ahead promises more breakthroughs.

Last year, our community's generosity fuelled 36 transformative projects, greatly improving patient care at Sir Charles Gairdner and Osborne Park Hospitals. These projects have had a remarkable ripple effect, extending beyond the hospital walls.

This edition reflects on the intensive care unit's (ICU) incredible work in a place where the realities of critical care can be confronting. The extraordinary dedication of the staff and the pioneering research being undertaken helps provide hope to those most vulnerable.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition and seeing just how our community is actively changing people's lives.

Our door is always open. Drop by for a hello or a cuppa or connect with us online or by phone if you can't make it to the hospital.

May 2024 bring health, happiness, and fulfillment through collective positive impact across our community.

*Rasmussen.*

**Vicki Rasmussen**  
Chief Executive Officer

# The **Undeniable** Impact of the ICU: 24-hour care for our most critically ill patients

**It is thanks to the continued support of our community and the unwavering dedication of the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital (SCGH) ICU team, that Gerry is alive today.**

In early 2022, Gerry began experiencing leg pain, concerned, he visited his local doctor. Whilst waiting for the results of a scan, Gerry's condition rapidly worsened, and he was soon found unresponsive, by his loving wife, Janet. On route to SCGH Gerry suffered a cardiac arrest and needed to be resuscitated. He had been gone for 10 minutes, and it took three rounds of defibrillation to bring him back.

Arriving at the hospital, Gerry was transferred to the ICU. The ICU is a never-ending hive of activity, with staff giving incredible support to some of WA's most critically ill patients and often a confronting place with flashing lights and alarms 24-hours a day.

Intensive care specialists Dr Matt Anstey and Dr Brad Wibrow recognise that research into ICU specific interventions can build a strong platform of best practice healthcare for their most medically vulnerable patients.

Over the last 7 years, Dr Anstey and Dr Wibrow have successfully applied for grant funding through the Foundation to further projects including research into septic shock, how to help patients who have a tracheostomy communicate earlier and so much more.

*"I am very interested in research because I like asking questions and trying to work out how we can provide better patient outcomes," says Dr Anstey.*



Week 4 ICU - Gerry.

# Everyday miraculous recovery from life threatening illness is occurring thanks to medical research.

7 months out of hospital Gerry's 70th Bday with family.



Whilst in ICU, Gerry was diagnosed with sepsis, an aggressive infection that had spread to his heart, resulting in cardiac arrest. The rapid spreading infection had initiated an internal assault on his organs, causing the collapse at home earlier that day.

*"We all thought he was going to die because he had sepsis – the most severe form of infection and then a cardiac arrest. You don't see many patients fight like Gerry did,"* Dr Wibrow reflects.

Gerry had now been unconscious for three weeks. The team were preparing Janet and their daughters, Jennifer, and Hayley for the worst. Alongside sepsis he had blood clots, an abscess on the spine and bleeding. *"The doctor couldn't tell me if Gerry would survive and if he did, what sort of impairments he might have. I had some difficult decisions to make but I was still thinking he'll be alright."*

*"We'd just had this horrible conversation, and we can*

*see him lying there and Jennifer goes – 'wake up, you're not going to die on me'. I just remember bending right down next to him and whispering, 'sorry and please wake up',"* Janet remembers.

But it was like Gerry had heard everything and the next morning Janet was greeted with the news she had been waiting to hear – Gerry had started moving his fingers and toes. Gerry's progress was long and slow, including spending time at Osborne Park Hospital learning to walk again. But Gerry's journey didn't end here.

Almost a year later, Gerry was back in the same ICU after falling ill with an infection in his lung and gut. *"His lips went blue, and his chest was tight, and I said to him, I'm not finding you on the bathroom floor unconscious again,"* Janet recollects.

Back at SCGH, Gerry was diagnosed with three leaking heart valves and kidney failure which later

resulted in heart failure and required risky open-heart surgery. After the eight-hour agonising wait for Janet, Gerry was out of surgery and back in ICU with the very same care team. *"It was weird for me as I doesn't remember my first time in ICU and all these people knew me, saying I can't believe you're back,"* remembers Gerry.

Fast forward three month and Gerry is on the mend and back playing with his three grandkids. *"It's a real good news story,"* says Gerry. *"Up on ICU, nobody ever comes out after five weeks. I'm a miracle, apparently, and it's all thanks to the incredible staff!"*



*First day of Sunshine after 9 weeks - Gerry*

# Incredible Giving Day generosity provides *significant difference* patients and families.

On the 18th October, we asked our community to stand together for our 2023 Giving Day. We had big goals to support our teams and improve patient treatment outcomes – you helped bring this to life with your generosity.

Thanks to our incredible supporters we raised an astonishing \$160,000 in 24 hours. These funds will make a significant difference to research and projects across Sir Charles Gairdner and Osborne Park Hospitals.

Your support means more life-saving research, treatment, and equipment for people in need of medical care. Together, we can continue to provide vital resources and support, ensuring that no one faces these challenging times alone.

Stay tuned for information on our 2024 Giving Day and how you can get involved.

ABORIGINAL  
HEALTH AND  
WELLBEING  
COMMITTEE

**\$4,040**

ALLIED  
HEALTH  
CARING

**\$8,981**

ENDOCRINE  
SURGERY

**\$10,190**

INTENSIVE  
CARE UNIT  
ICU

**\$3,355**

RESPIRATORY

**\$4,042**

IMMUNOLOGY

**\$4,479**

YOUTH  
CANCER

**\$56,670**

CHARLIES  
FOUNDATION  
FOR  
RESEARCH

**\$23,225**

OTHER  
- NO TEAM  
SELECTED

**\$46,018**

## Virtual Reality Breakthrough: Donor-Fuelled Innovation Transforms Patient Care

**Thanks to the incredible support of our donors, the ICU team at SCGH has achieved remarkable strides in patient care, exploring innovative approaches to enhance the well-being of patients.**

Recognising the heightened risk of post intensive care syndrome, Senior ICU Physiotherapists Natalie Tran, Amanda Ziatas, and Wendy Jacob, alongside Intensivists, Dr Matthew Anstey and Dr Bradly Wibrow, have embarked on a groundbreaking project. Treating post-ICU syndrome, involves medications and therapy, but the team sought a novel solution—the use of virtual reality (VR). With the help of a Discovery Grant from the Foundation, the team were able to provide 20 patients with VR headsets. “It allows patients to experience individualised virtual worlds with scenes and scenarios that are calm, comforting, exciting and transports them out of the ICU,” said Dr Anstey. The tailored virtual experiences range from meditation in nature to active sporting events, resulting in overwhelmingly positive emotional well-being.

*“We wanted to give our patients a psychological break from the chaos of the ICU. They have*

*been through many traumatic procedures. To provide moments of normality in a very abnormal environment is so important.” Ms Ziatas.*

In almost 100% of cases, the team observed improved mood with good tolerance and no side effects. Family members reported a sense of calm in their loved ones after just a few minutes using VR, providing critical moments of normality and respite. This success has been immensely rewarding for the team. Ms Ziatas shared, “*To see the responses, excitement, and happiness from our patients during their time in a traumatic environment has meant the world to us.*”

Your generosity has made this possible, emphasising the vital role of continued funding for innovative research and treatments in WA healthcare.



# A Lasting *Legacy* Helping Families Navigate Life Beyond Critical Care



Kirsten at home in her garden.

**Inspired by Kirsten, who faced life-threatening medical crises at SCGH, the My Life After ICU website aims to support survivors and their families, by addressing the challenges faced by patients and provides strategies and support to vastly improve their quality of life.**

Tony, loving husband of Kirsten, made an extraordinary contribution to critical care recovery following Kirsten's passing in 2019. Her family, grateful for the ICU's support, wanted to create a lasting legacy, resulting in a groundbreaking resource - filling a vital gap in healthcare. The website, a tribute to Kirsten, has become an invaluable support system for patients and families across Australia and New Zealand.

It stands as a testament to Kirsten's memory and the remarkable work of the SCGH's ICU team, offering a lifeline for those navigating life after the ICU. Tony shared, *"Our family funded this website so that other patients and families can gain a better understanding of ICU and how it affects everyone and hopefully make their time a little less traumatic."*

For information on leaving a gift in memory of a loved one or a gift in your Will, contact our CEO Vicki Rasmussen for a confidential chat on 6457 2042.

To learn more about the My Life After ICU website visit: [www.mylifeaftericu.com](http://www.mylifeaftericu.com).



## A Marathon in Memory Powers Vital Neurological Research

**Following the tragic loss of her 21-year-old brother, Jacob, Niamh was determined to do something meaningful to keep his memory alive.**

Jacob was taken to SCGH after becoming unwell. He was quickly admitted to ICU where they discovered he had life-threatening complications from encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain often caused by infection. Despite the incredible care he received, Jacob's symptoms worsened, and his family were forced to say goodbye far too soon.

As a physiotherapist at SCGH, Niamh was already familiar with the Foundation. To pay tribute to Jacob, she embarked on a powerful mission—running the Sydney Marathon, Australia's largest. Her goal, raising funds for ongoing neurological research in the ICU.

*"Jacob was an incredibly selfless and gentle individual, and raising money in his name seemed fitting as was something he would've done."*

With unwavering determination, Niamh raised an impressive \$6,300, to support a groundbreaking project being undertaken by Dr Vanessa



Carnegie. The project is a potential gamechanger for those facing brain bleeds and injuries caused by oxygen deprivation.

Niamh's fundraising contributes to the first-of-its-kind study in Australasia, aiming to revolutionise neurological well-being for ICU patients. Her message is clear: live each day to the fullest, as tomorrow is never guaranteed.

*"I wanted to spread the notion to live every day as our last and make the most of all that we are capable of, whilst we can, because tomorrow is never guaranteed."*

Join Niamh in making a difference by becoming a community fundraiser. For more information, contact our friendly team on [fundraising@charliesfoundation.org.au](mailto:fundraising@charliesfoundation.org.au).

# IN BRIEF

## Charlies Community Raffle

Introducing our new Charlies Community Raffle! Purchase a raffle ticket for \$2 for your chance to win \$15,000 cash! The more tickets you purchase, the better your chance of winning. For more information and to purchase tickets, scan the QR code.



## HBF Run for a Reason

On Sunday 19th May, HBF Run for a Reason will be back for Perth's biggest fitness fundraising challenge. Choose your distance and nominate the Foundation as your beneficiary to help raise funds for improved healthcare, right here in WA! Scan the QR code below to register today.

## Celebrate someone special

Celebrate the life of someone special or an upcoming occasion with donations in lieu of flowers or gifts. You can even create a personalised fundraising page on our website to easily collect donations. Contact us on 6457 2042 to see how we can support you.

## Containers for change

By recycling your containers for change, you've helped us raise over \$330 for vital medical research in the past year! You can help support us by collecting eligible containers by heading to your nearest Containers for Change collection point and nominating the Foundation using our member ID: **C10270074**.



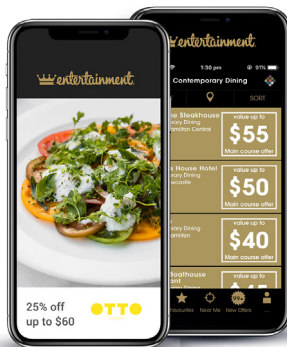
## Fundraise your way

Whether you're looking to complete a fitness challenge, organise a bake stall, or host your own an event, we'll support you with everything you need on your fundraising journey with us. Head to our website to create your very own personalised online fundraising page. You can even check out our fundraising toolkit and FAQs to help you get started or contact us on 6457 2042 to discuss your fundraising idea with us!

## Entertainment Membership

Don't forget you can support our fundraising efforts by purchasing an Entertainment Membership. 20% from each purchase is donated to the Foundation,

so while you are enjoying dining, shopping and all the offers the Entertainment Membership provide, you are also supporting medical research. Use the QR code below to purchase yours today.



## Contact Us

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