

Give the gift of life,



November, 2022

Dear Friend,

“I was playing with my seven-year-old son at the park when I got the call – **you have breast cancer.**”

My whole world froze ... I was in shock. I am only 37! My boys are 7 and 12.

My son’s voice woke me up – ‘Mom, what is the matter?’

I said to my son, ‘nothing, honey. I am coming to play with you now.’

That was my first day of cancer. I was trying to keep it together. I hope this never happens to you.”

I am Steve Cook, the Executive Director of the BGH Foundation, and this is how Erin started her cancer story with me when I met her.

That’s why I’m writing you today. BGH needs to invest in lifesaving equipment throughout the Hospital.

Investing in life-saving equipment will ensure our health teams are ready to spring into action should you or your loved ones need our care. **Will you make your most generous holiday gift of \$50, \$75 or even \$100 today?**

I’d be so grateful for you to join our hospital family. Please respond today to pledge your support. Your holiday gift will help so many people.

Erin continued her story. “I was working in a doctor’s office, so I knew how stretched the health care system was after COVID. I was not sure what to expect at BGH. I knew it was the regional cancer centre, but nothing else.

Shortly after the cancer call, I walked through the doors of the Oncology Department for the first time. The whole team hit me with so much love and kindness that I was stunned.

But my care team also told me the truth. My triple-negative breast cancer is aggressive and dangerous. It could mean my tumour would grow rapidly. But what was worse was that it could spread to any part of my body to cause other cancers.

I had a mammogram two weeks after my first visit, showing my tumour had doubled in size. But that was the same day I got hit with my first massive dose of chemo.”

I need you to give today. Cancer will touch every family in our region.

Erin added more to her story, “While in the chair, as the first round of chemo drugs seeped into my body, I thought of my family. My Husband, Tyler, tries not to tear up when we discuss my condition. The poor man watched his mom go through breast cancer.

(continued over...)



The Wilkinson family gave up their music career in Nashville to ensure his mom got the best care. That meant returning to Belleville. Tyler knows cancer changes everything in your life.

I call my mother-in-law all the time. She survived. I want to survive too.

Since my diagnosis in the summer, I have returned for treatment week after week. The drugs hit me like a freight train. But I adore the whole regional cancer team. The nurses sweep me into their arms for the day, making this scary, painful process manageable.

At this point, I have lost my hair. I had to quit my job. I can't play with my kids. I can't even help out around the house. Each treatment leaves me drained."

Your gift of \$50, \$75 or \$100 will help to outfit the whole hospital to care for you and your loved ones. From Oncology Drugs to CT Cameras BGH needs your gift today.

Erin added, "The chemotherapy has to shrink my tumour. Meaning my surgery is not until February. I must go through Christmas, not knowing how this will turn out.

I never thought much about having local health care until now. The only thing keeping me going is the short trip to Belleville for treatment. I don't have to travel to Kingston or Toronto. I never realized how important this is for my family.

My kids go to school, and I head to the regional cancer centre for my treatment. And because it is local, I can be at home when they return from school. Their big hugs at the end of the day make all the suffering worth it.

My son had a friend come over after school, and I overheard him say, 'I am not worried – my mom is strong.' Some days, I am not sure I am strong. I don't know what will happen after my surgery in February.

One week of this journey was just too much for me. I was sick with worry for my beautiful sons, and I missed my appointment. The nurses and the doctors called me. They wanted to know if I was OK and ready to continue. They made me feel supported, not ashamed.

In my weakest moment, BGH was the rock I needed. I returned to treatment for my next appointment."

Can you be there for families in their weakest moments? Please give today.

Erin added: "Cancer will touch every family. You never know when. I thought I was young and immune to cancer. I was wrong.

In the months ahead, I will need every resource the hospital offers – the surgery team, the regional cancer centre, and the staff I adore – so I can return home to my family.

Please give today to help me – and for when you and your loved ones need local health care."

I think about Erin often because she needs our help every day through this holiday season.

Our community needs BGH to be ready to spring into action if you or your loved ones need medical care. Your gift today will ensure that BGH remains the best place to get local cancer care. In your moment of need, you need BGH to be the rock for your family.

This holiday season, you can be an Angel and give the gift of hope to families touched by cancer.

All the best to you and yours this holiday season,

Steve Cook
Executive Director
Belleville General Hospital Foundation

P.S. Cancer will touch every family. You never know when. Please send your Holiday Angel gift today to help support our Regional Oncology Program.



BE A CHRISTMAS
Angel

