



**Belleville General
Hospital Foundation**

In support of Quinte's Regional Hospital

September 2026

Dear friend,

There are moments in life that change you forever.

For my family, one of those moments was the birth of our second daughter, Annette (Annie) in early 2025. Like every expectant parent, my wife and I imagined welcoming Annie into the world, bringing her home, and beginning an exciting new chapter together.

Instead, what began as an ordinary evening quickly became every expectant parent's worst nightmare. After feeling unwell, my wife was admitted to the hospital, and after a week of uncertainty, **Annie arrived two months early, weighing less than 1,300 grams (just under 3 pounds)**. She needed specialized care that wasn't available close to home, so she spent the first few weeks of her life in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in Kingston.

Like all parents, we simply wanted to be close to our baby. Instead, we found ourselves balancing time at Annie's bedside with work, family responsibilities, and caring for our four-year-old daughter back in Belleville. We did everything we could to be there for Annie while keeping life moving at home, but the constant travel, time apart, and uncertainty were incredibly difficult.

Thankfully, our story has a happy ending. **Thanks to incredible care (and credit to little Annie's toughness), Annie grew and was finally able to continue her care at Belleville General Hospital and, later, go home.** The relief of sleeping in our own beds, sharing a home-cooked meal, and being surrounded by family and friends again is impossible to describe.

It also reminds me that, while every family's journey is different, every parent wants the same thing: to be with their child when they are needed most.

Each year, around 1,300 babies are born at Belleville General Hospital. Most begin life healthy and strong. But for some families, like mine, those first precious moments reveal how vulnerable life can be and how much we take being home for granted.

Last year, 317 babies required care in our NICU. For 38 of those newborns, like Annie, the specialized care they needed wasn't available in our community, so they had to be transferred to Kingston, or another hospital further from home.

Together, we can change that.



Quinte Health Belleville General Hospital is working toward expanding its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit so more premature and medically fragile babies can receive specialized care close to home.

This isn't simply about purchasing equipment. It's about giving more families the chance to stay together during one of the most vulnerable times in their lives.

Your gift today will help equip our NICU with specialized incubators, infant warmers, cardiac monitors, neonatal ventilators and phototherapy systems, giving our healthcare teams the tools they need to care for more vulnerable newborns close to home.

As the new Chair of the Belleville General Hospital Foundation Board of Directors, I am honoured to support this important effort.

Today, Annie is a happy, busy little girl who loves to chat and smile. It's hard to believe that not long ago she was fighting for every breath inside an incubator. Each laugh is a reminder to me how fortunate we were to receive the care she needed. **My hope is that, with your support, more families will have access to that same exceptional care without leaving the community they call home.**

Please consider a gift of \$25, \$50 or even \$75 to help bring more specialized neonatal care to Belleville General Hospital and keep families together when they need each other most.

Thank you for your compassion and generosity.

With sincere gratitude,



Lorne McDougall
Chair, Board of Directors
Belleville General Hospital Foundation

P.S. Last year, 38 newborns had to leave our community to receive specialized care. **Your gift today will help equip our NICU so more babies can receive the care they need close to home, surrounded by the people who love them most.**

