

Dear Friends,

In late 2006 I found myself in the QCH emergency room with my mom, who in late stages of Alzheimer's, had just taken a bad fall. As a West Ottawa resident, QCH had always been 'my hospital' but it wasn't until this acute episode with my mom that it registered how valuable this asset was to me, my family and our community. The care and compassion provided to us both left an imprint on my heart.

It was this experience that motivated me to consider a move in 2007 from my role at the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation to QCHF. Timing is everything and with the case for the Care Grows West Campaign being built I soon found myself being interviewed by then Ex. Dir Eric Dean, QCH CEO Tom Schonberg and Foundation Board Chair Carey Garret for the role of Campaign Director. Care Grows West was to be the largest fundraising campaign QCHF had ever undertaken and would transform our hospital. Looking back I can honestly say those were some of the best, most challenging and most fun days of my career!

A few years later with great passion and drive I was thrilled to take on the role of the Pres. and CEO and lead the foundation. I have had the privilege of working with some of the finest board members, donors, volunteers and staff, all of whom have worked with such dedication and commitment with the single goal of enhancing patient care and services at QCH.

It has been a joy to watch staff (my work family) literally grow up in the foundation, marry and have children, to nurture donors into philanthropists, to learn from experienced heart centered philanthropists, to watch medical staff demonstrate with pride new surgical suites or life saving equipment and to share those moments of 'removing barriers' with the donors who supported them. Partnering with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Cancer Care Ontario, TOH, ORCF and QCH to bring the Irving Greenberg Family Cancer Centre to QCH was a rare and unique experience, one that I am so proud to have been a part of (and who knew then I would benefit from!).

Then there was the ACE Unit. I worked with incredible passion on that project with my mom's QCH experience as my driver. Our QCH staff, foundation volunteers and donors rallied around the vision of the ACE Unit more than almost any other project I have ever worked on. It continues to be heartwarming to hear the many stories of care from patients and families who have been touched by the special brand of care provided there. Originally part of the Care Grows West plan, much needed renovations to the mental health unit got bumped due to the increasing budget pressures brought by the rising cost of construction and technology required to complete the physical transformation of the hospital. In 2016 with Care Grows West completed, finally there was an opportunity for our mental health unit! This was one of Tom Schonberg's finest hours!

Tom stood shoulder to shoulder with the community and rallied support from the Ministry to bring long awaited modernization, healing spaces, and dignity to our mental health community! Hopes Rising was born and I understand we are very close to securing the funds to make this long awaited dream a reality. After so many conversations with our program staff, and meeting patients and family members who have been through the unit, my fire was lit and our donor's passion fueled my flames.

My goodness I could write forever. My career with Queensway Carleton Hospital Foundation and the opportunity to serve in my leadership role alongside Tom from 2007, under six Board Chairs, two Campaign Chairs, an amazing dedicated and professional staff team, the amazing QCH hospital staff, our thousands of donors and community supporters, has been a dream and I am endlessly grateful to have had the opportunity to serve our community in this very meaningful way.

As many know I stepped away on a health leave in July 2017. It was quite incredible to be on the 'other' side of the care and my appreciation of our donors, local research, specialized equipment and medical/hospital staff took on a whole new meaning - the work we do truly is lifesaving and the impact is tangible with a ripple effect that we can never know. Never lose sight of that.

I have been away from my role for over a year now. I am overjoyed to share my status of "no evidence of disease" and am feeling amazing! It is with that gift of time and personal reflection that has brought me to the decision to step away from my role as CEO with the QCH Foundation. It's time to step into my first retirement!

Thank you to everyone who made these years some of the most meaningful in my career. The hospital is only a building. The people and stories inside that building are part of the fabric of our community, woven together creating a tapestry rare and beautiful. I am beyond humbled to be a thread in the masterpiece.

Always with gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Adams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, elegant loop at the end of the name.

Melanie Adams