



MEDIA RELEASE

Date: December 19, 2024

You've Got Mail!

Watch for the Judy Lannin Christmas Wish Tree Letter in your mailbox soon!

Annie's tail is wagging with excitement as she thinks about everyone finally getting the Judy Lannin Christmas Wish Tree letter – written by Debra McLean (with Annie's help!). Every year, we share a donor story about how Winchester District Memorial Hospital (WDMH) has made a difference in their lives. And Debra and Annie's story is a special one. Debra is a volunteer at WDMH and brings her dog Annie with her to provide comfort and support to both patients and staff.

The Wish Tree letter includes tree ornament tags and invites our generous donors to give with heartfelt donations in memory, or in honour, of their loved ones. That letter is now on its way!

"The postal disruption has had an impact on the annual Wish Tree tradition, but we know the Wish Tree spirit will continue over the next few weeks," notes Interim Executive Director Cindy Ault Peters. "There is still time to make a donation in memory or in honour of your loved ones."

And more good news. The beautiful tree in the hospital lobby will stay up in January and all names submitted with donations will be placed on ornaments and hung carefully by Foundation staff and hospital volunteers.

There are many ways to give:

- Donors can securely donate online at <https://www.wdmhfoundation.ca/onlinegiving/donation/campaign> or call the Foundation office at 613-774-2422 ext. 6162 or 6172 to make a credit card donation.
- Visit www.wdmhfoundation.ca/wishtree to read the letter and download a donation form.
- Visit one of the many local businesses who have the letter and donation forms for pick-up. These businesses are listed on www.wdmhfoundation.ca/wishtree.
- Donors are also invited to stop by the Foundation office in the hospital's front lobby to give.

Proceeds from the Wish Tree go to the Family Care Fund 'to support families just like yours' and to help ensure that WDMH can continue to provide compassionate, excellent health care – close to home.

Happy Holidays everyone!

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November 14th, 2024

Dear

When I think of the holidays, I'm reminded of how a single moment can change everything. As survivors, Annie and I have learned to turn challenges into strength and hope, using our experiences to inspire, give back, and spread joy.

My name is Debra, and I'm honoured to share how Annie and I have found purpose and connection through giving back to Winchester District Memorial Hospital (WDMH).

My journey with WDMH began in March 2019, when my world was turned upside down by a Stage 2 breast cancer diagnosis. Although I was a bit anxious about having never been to the hospital in Winchester, the unwavering support and compassion of WDMH's team became a lifeline. Their kindness and expertise not only guided me through my treatments but also inspired me to give back once I was well.

Today, I am happy to say I am five years cancer-free.

Now let me introduce my beloved dog, Annie. Annie is a purebred Shetland Sheep Dog, otherwise known as a Sheltie, who is VERY cute. When she was just ten weeks old, I rescued her and brought her home. Annie was born with a Grade 3 heart murmur and was given only 12 to 18 months to live. Over the next few months, I spoiled her rotten, letting her get away with just about everything. Miraculously, Annie surpassed the 18-month mark and has been going strong ever since, thanks to her heart medication which she takes twice a day to help manage her condition.

Together, Annie and I stand as survivors, committed to making a difference.



In 2020, my dog Ceilidh (pronounced Kay-lee) who I trained to be a therapy dog, and I began volunteering at WDMH, and it was an incredibly rewarding experience. After a short break, we returned with Annie, who at two years old embraced her role as a therapy dog. Ceilidh, who had worked with me for nine years, played a crucial role in training Annie. Like Ceilidh, Annie quickly proved to be a natural.

Annie and I have been volunteering at WDMH for the past year and a half, supporting families, patients, staff, nurses, and physicians alike.

Above: Shannon Horsburgh, Debra, Annie, and Ceilidh sharing smiles and joy at WDMH.

With our volunteering, Annie and I have visited various departments at WDMH, including oncology, emergency, and pharmacy. Each visit is a chance for Annie to offer her special brand of comfort—whether it's through a soothing cuddle, a playful interaction, or her famous "Annie Hugs." They always bring smiles and tears of relief. The warmth we receive in return is a testament to the deep connections we've built at WDMH, and the assurance that together we are making a difference.



"Thursdays have become a little brighter in the HR Department thanks to our dear friends, Debra and Annie. Their visits are something we look forward to each week, bringing comfort, warmth, and conversation that feel like a breath of fresh air. On those especially stressful days, their presence has a way of making everything else fade away. Debra and Annie are not just visitors—they are a true gift to our patients and staff, spreading joy and calm wherever they go. We are grateful to have them as part of our work family."

Brenda Fancey, Corporate Manager – Recruitment, Compensation & Benefits



"I was told to keep this short and simple...but that's a hard thing to do when there's so many great things to say about Annie and Debra! The whole pharmacy department looks forward to our weekly Annie snuggles (and chats with Debra). Thursdays have been named "Annie Day". They have both become part of our pharmacy family. My fondest memory was sharing a cake for Annie's birthday! While writing this I am anticipating my next visit with Annie and Debra."

Peyton Bradford,
Pharmacy Technician



"Everyone in the chemotherapy unit lights up when Annie and Debra come through the doors. Patients and staff alike enjoy the relaxing snuggles from Annie and wonderful conversation with Debra. They bring a lovely distraction to the challenging journey of cancer and its treatment. Some patients have gone so far as to request changing their treatment days to fit with Annie and Debra's visit schedule! It is such a pleasure to have both of them in the unit."

Sarah Potestio RN,
Brian Hough Chemotherapy Unit

The WDMH team always welcomes Annie with open arms, often kneeling down to greet her, as she eagerly runs to them, tail wagging. Time and again, they share that seeing Annie has "made their day". It's moments like these that remind me how deeply our presence is appreciated.

Annie is now more than just a therapy dog—she's truly part of the WDMH family, with her own little ID badge as an official team member. She is so adorable with her little badge on too!

During the holiday season, Annie's presence at WDMH is more important than ever. While the holidays are a joyful time for many, we are reminded that it's not always the best time of year for everyone. By spreading Christmas cheer, Annie provides much-needed comfort and joy to those who need it most.

As we celebrate this season of giving, Annie and I are especially mindful of the Judy Lannin Christmas Wish Tree. This beautiful tradition allows us to honor and remember those who have touched our lives.

Please consider making a donation in memory of a loved one or in honour of someone special, including a beloved furry friend. Your gift will support WDMH's exceptional care and embody the spirit of giving that we hold dear.

Thank you for your support and for being a part of our journey.

With Heartfelt Gratitude,

DEBRA McLEAD



Debra & Annie

P.S. Annie and I are deeply grateful for your support and wish you a joyful holiday season. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those at WDMH. Thank you for being a part of this special tradition.

P.P.S. If you ever visit WDMH, be sure to get an "Annie Hug"—they're the best!

Annie spreading joy on her birthday by bringing cake to the amazing WDMH staff!



How the Program Works

There are many people who have touched your life and we invite you to make a donation to the WDMH Foundation's *Family Care Fund* in their memory or honour – a parent, spouse, sibling, veteran, volunteer, doctor, nurse or anyone near and dear to your heart.

Write the name(s) of those you wish to commemorate on the tags provided – there are two 'in honour of' tags and four 'in memory of' tags. Please send the tags to go on our tree with the ornament. Feel free to hang any leftover tags on your tree at home.

Complete the Donation Card at the bottom of this page.

Include the tags with your Donation Card and donation in the return envelope provided, and either mail it or drop it off at our office. You can also make your donation online by visiting our website at www.wdmhfoundation.ca or by calling our office with a credit card number at 613-774-2422 x 6162 x 6172, or x 6769.

Once your donation is received, we will place each tag on a Christmas ornament. All ornaments will be hung on our Christmas tree, located in the main lobby of WDMH. The tags and ornaments will be on display for the month of December.

You're Invited

Join us for our cherished tradition! Attend the Christmas Wish Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 10th at 5:00 pm in the main lobby of WDMH. Enjoy light refreshments and listen to a choir sing your favourite holiday songs.

Should you wish to attend, please RSVP to Justine Plummer at 343-543-0069 or at jplummer@wdmh.on.ca

You and your support help to ensure that WDMH can continue to provide compassionate, excellent health care, close to home. Thank you!

In Memory of

In Memory of

In Memory of

In Memory of

In Honour of

In Honour of

Donation Card *Yes, I want to make a gift in memory or in honour of someone special.*

*Donor Name (person who paid for donation) _____

*Address _____ *City _____ *Prov _____

*Postal Code _____ *Telephone _____ Email _____

Yes, I would like to receive quarterly e-updates about the Foundation and have provided my email address.

* Please complete these fields so that we may issue you an official income tax receipt for your gift.

I would like to give the amount listed below:

\$105 \$80 \$55 \$30

_____ is the best donation amount for me.

Enclosed is a cheque made payable to the WDMH Foundation.

Enclosed is cash.

By donation of shares or securities, please contact the WDMH Foundation at 613-774-2422 x 6769 to discuss

Please bill my Visa Mastercard Amex

Card Number _____

CVV _____ Expiry Date ____ / ____

Name on Card _____

Cardholder Signature _____

This is a corporate credit card

You can also make your gift online by visiting www.wdmhfoundation.ca – click on 'Donate Now', then choose 'The Judy Lannin Christmas Wish Tree' option, or you can call 613-774-2422 x 6162, x 6172, or x 6769 to make a credit card donation.