

Baby Ryder and parents say ‘thank you’ for happy ending after difficult delivery

Stephanie and Tyler Mask recently sent a special “thank you” letter to Almonte General Hospital after the birth of their son, Ryder, on Aug. 29.

“We can’t thank you enough for all of the amazing work you did for our baby boy, Ryder,” the couple wrote. “Your fast response, professionalism, personal care and words of encouragement were more than we expected during a difficult time that turned out to be a happy ending, thanks to you!”

Back in August, the Masks had been expecting a safe, uneventful delivery of their first child. Stephanie was doing well and routine tests indicated the fetus was developing normally. But during a check-up with her midwife on the baby’s due date, Saturday, Aug. 27, Stephanie’s blood pressure was abnormally high, posing a serious risk to her and her unborn baby.

The midwife immediately sent the couple to AGH where the staff on duty jumped into action. Further tests led to a diagnosis of preeclampsia, a dangerous condition for mother and baby. Dr. Valéry Bohémier, one of several Obstetrics/Gynaecology specialists who help ensure 24/7 coverage in the Obstetrics Unit, induced labour, while staff initiated a round-the-clock monitoring program of mother and baby. Ryder Mask arrived on Monday, Aug. 29, at 6:37 a.m., weighing a healthy eight pounds fifteen ounces.

Stephanie and Ryder remained in the Obstetrics Unit under the watchful care of nurses and Dr. Anne Oldfield, a family doctor at AGH, until Friday, Sept. 2. Dad Tyler was



Tyler and Stephanie Mask with their son, Ryder.

allowed to stay, too. Now, weeks later, the family is back at home in Ashton. Mom and baby Ryder are happy and thriving.

The Mask family’s experience shows how teamwork is integral to excellent patient care, says Dr. Bahaa Awwad, Chief of Obstetrics

and Gynaecology at AGH. “Everyone working together — from the Emergency Department to our diagnostic staff, nurses and our medical team, housekeeping to administration, physiotherapy and after care services — ensures the best care possible for our patients,” he says.

That is how AGH’s Obstetrics Unit has earned a reputation for excellent service in recent years, Dr. Awwad adds. For two consecutive years, the Obstetrics Unit has won top honours in Maternity Care among 39 hospitals across Ontario, according to a patient satisfaction survey by National Research Corporation Canada. The AGH Unit handles more than 400 births a year, and that number is expected to increase. Gynaecological cases also are on the rise, Dr. Awwad says.

But more diagnostic imaging equipment is needed, he says, to keep pace with increased patient demand and to ensure the highest quality of care. AGH now has one ultrasound machine to serve patients throughout the hospital and outpatients, as well as AGH’s Emergency Department. Two new ultrasound machines will replace this older unit and help provide timely on-site testing for Obs/Gyn patients, as well as providing more extensive and targeted results for diagnosing patients’ problems, Dr. Awwad says.

Dr. Dave Caloia, another Obs/Gyn specialist on AGH’s full-time team, agrees. “Although obstetricians and nurses are seen as being at the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2...

New Energy. New Opportunities.

The new shared leadership team at Almonte General Hospital (AGH) and Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital (CPDMH) has been together for just over a month — and already, new opportunities are being realized.

Mary Wilson Trider is now President and CEO of both hospitals. She is joined by two Integrated Vice Presidents — Randy Shaw and Rachel de Kemp. Each hospital continues to have its own Chief Financial Officer and Chief of Staff.

“I’m still here,” Mary says, referring to her role in Almonte. “It’s business as usual — plus a little more. While it’s still early days, the team is working well together and sharing resources to benefit all of our patients.”

A great example is the digital x-ray project. Both hospitals are getting new, state-of-the-art digital equipment. The two hospitals worked together to share expertise and purchase the equipment at the same time at a lower cost. They are also providing back-up to each other during renovations so patient care is not impacted.

The shared leadership team is not a new idea and has worked well in other regions, too. “We are bringing expertise from both hospitals together,” adds Mary. “It’s a win-win for both hospitals.”

Each hospital remains a separate corporation with its own mandate and board of directors. However, the two hospitals can support each other to look for collaborative opportunities. To support this work, the Mississippi River Health Alliance has been created. It is a joint committee that reviews these opportunities and makes recommendations to both hospital boards. The goal is to work smarter together and improve care to patients.

Likewise, there are still two separate Foundations raising funds to support patient and resident care. The Almonte General Hospital/Fairview Manor Foundation’s tradition of neighbours helping neighbours continues.

“We believe that a collaborative approach can only provide better care,” sums up Mary. “We are creating a stronger voice for health care in this region.”



The new leadership team includes Mary Wilson Trider (centre) with Randy Shaw and Rachel de Kemp

CONTINUED... **Baby Ryder**

forefront of pregnancy, labour and delivery care, there is a whole team that keeps the process functioning. The ante-natal team works to identify problems before they become significant. We can’t run an ante-natal service without good ultrasound equipment. And the quality of the ultrasound machine affects the quality of our diagnosis and care.”

Dr. Awwad offers the last word on

“
*A good ultrasound
is the pillar of a good
Obstetrical service*
”

the need for ultrasound equipment. “A good ultrasound is the pillar of a good Obstetrical service,” he says.

The AGH-FVM Foundation has earmarked two ultrasound machines as necessary purchases this year, but the success of its fundraising campaign depends on community donations.

And that’s where the Mask family comes back into this story. Their letter of thanks to the AGH concluded

with these words: “It was a rough beginning for our little man and for us (as well as those involved in the Delivery Room that day) but a very happy ending thanks to the nurses, doctors and midwife. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed, and we really can’t thank you enough.” Tyler and Stephanie Mask included a cheque in their thank you and signed off with these words: “for the Obstetrical Unit on behalf of Ryder Mask.”

Patient credits AGH Physio team with quick recovery

Sharon Meilleur is delighted with her recovery from knee replacement surgery just in time to enjoy her grandchildren's hockey season. With five grandchildren living in the area, Meilleur and her husband are regular attendees at local minor league games.

"I will be in much better shape to attend the kids' games this year," Meilleur says. "I had such pain in my knee before. Now, other than a bit of tingling, which is part of the healing process, my knee is so much better."

The Almonte-area resident credits the Physiotherapy Department at Almonte General Hospital with her successful recovery. Meilleur had knee surgery on Aug. 2 at Queensway-Carleton Hospital and was released from hospital two days later. On Aug. 8, she had a physical assessment at AGH's Physiotherapy Department and the following week began a twice-weekly rehabilitation program, which she completed on Sept. 29.

"The program is excellent here," Meilleur says of the Physiotherapy Department. "The staff is so professional and friendly. I could have gone to the Queensway-Carleton for physio, but I chose to come here. I can't say enough good things about the Department."

Her recovery went so well that now Meilleur is contemplating surgery on her other knee next year. "I had originally thought it would be years before I would have the other knee done," says Meilleur. "But this experience has gone so well, I will definitely go ahead."

Meilleur is one of more than



Sharon Meilleur with Nina Mukerjee, AGH's Director of Physiotherapy.

600 patients who visited the AGH's Physiotherapy Department this year. Besides outpatients, the Department sees patients within the hospital's active care units, Medical Surgical unit, the Complex Continuing Care Unit, as well as the Day Hospital and Fairview Manor.

Nina Mukerjee, AGH's Director of Physiotherapy, says a crucial part of the AGH program is reliable and up-to-date equipment, ranging from a treadmill to strengthening equipment, electrical modalities, stationary bicycles and parallel bars. "All of our machines and equipment get frequent use," says Mukerjee. "Nothing lies around long enough to collect dust, which means we frequently need to replace them."

That's why purchasing new

equipment is so important. A new recliner bicycle with medical pedals, for instance, has become a favourite among patients, Mukerjee says. The bicycle, which was purchased with funds donated to the AGH-FVM Foundation, has a comfortable seat, can be adjusted to a patient's size, has pedals that hold a patient's feet in place, and can be programmed for different levels of difficulty and speed. "The machine's comfortable design builds self-confidence," Mukerjee adds with a smile. "Some older patients feel like they are at a gym. It's amazing how they blossom when they enjoy the activity."

A patient's attitude is critical in rehabilitation, says Mukerjee. "The social aspect is very important. Our knee replacement class, for instance,

*The program is excellent here...
The staff is so professional and friendly...
I can't say enough good things about the Department.*

can include up to five patients. The benefits of a group are that patients can chat, share experiences and encourage one another." Mukerjee says some patients referred to her Department suffer from depression. "Exercise and movement stimulate the endorphins and have great mood-altering benefits," she says.

Mukerjee is also excited about her Department's new outreach program established in partnership with Orchard View by the Mississippi, a retirement community that opened in Almonte in August. Since September Mukerjee and a physiotherapy assistant have been visiting Orchard View twice a week to provide balance and fall risk

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4...

Guardian Angels at work



The Guardian Angel program offers you the opportunity to recognize a member of the AGH - FVM team who has touched your life in a significant way.

Simply make a minimum donation of \$25 to the AGH-FVM Foundation and send along with it a completed Guardian Angel nomination form. Tell us in a few

words who your Angel is and why you feel they're deserving of the recognition. That special staff member or volunteer will receive their pin through a presentation at work in front of their colleagues.

More information: www.almontehospitalfoundation.com/volunteer/

CONTINUED... AGH Physio

assessments for residents at their request, as well as an exercise program.

"The partnership allows our Physiotherapy team to provide continuity of care to the community," Mukerjee says. "Instead of Orchard View residents coming to the hospital, we can go to them. We can ensure that community residents have access to physiotherapy treatment when they need it. And we can help with preventive measures to keep residents healthy."

Kate Gray, Executive Director of Orchard View, is equally enthusiastic about the program. "This is part of our plan to partner on many things with the AGH and other organizations that support seniors in our community. By providing professional physiotherapy services

All of our machines and equipment get frequent use... which means we frequently need to replace them.

in the comfort of their own home, we help our seniors to stay strong and maintain or improve their quality of life. Happy and healthy seniors is our main goal."

Putting the fun in fundraising

The Almonte General Hospital-Fairview Manor Foundation has teamed up with the Ottawa Senators to bring our town great savings for Sens games this year!

Through the link and promo code below - you will receive an 11%-31% savings on your tickets for the game (*savings range depending on games you choose {no discounts for gold games} and where you buy*).

To order, simply go to:

www.ottawasenators.com/AGH

and enter promo code:

AGH

(promo code letters are case sensitive)

A portion of each ticket sold goes directly back to the Almonte General Hospital-Fairview Manor Foundation!

High Times at the Heart Institute

High Times at the Heart Institute is a rock-n-roll musical comedy that sheds a light on our health care system. The show, presented by Eganville's Stone Fence Theatre, will be in Almonte, Saturday, Nov. 26, 7 p.m. at the Old Town Hall.

Tickets are \$29 and are available at the AGH Volunteer Gift Shop, 75 Spring Street, at Alliance Coin & Bank Note, 88 Mill St. or from www.StoneFence.ca

Proceeds from the show benefit the AGH-FVM Foundation.