

St Vincent's Cares

FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2021



Love Your St Vincent's

I hope you have had a positive start to 2021 and I welcome you to the first edition of the newsletter for the year. Thank you to everyone who has sent messages of compassion and support to our courageous and dedicated frontline staff over the past months. Your encouragement and concern has meant the world to them.

St Vincent's is renowned for its commitment to compassionate care alongside brilliant research and clinical expertise. The amazing work our staff are undertaking with a world-first

epilepsy treatment trial is exciting and has the potential to be life changing for many people. I trust you will find this, and our other news, stories and updates, a source of inspiration and hope.

With kindest regards,



Lyn Amy
CEO | St Vincent's Foundation



Lyn Amy, CEO St Vincent's Foundation and her staff are always happy to talk to you - phone 03 9231 3365



Dedicated to saving lives

Our highly skilled and dedicated theatre nurses play a critical role in the care of patients, often supporting surgeons to provide urgent, life-saving treatment. Ballarat resident, Herbie, owes his life to this exceptional team.

Herbie is a retired general store owner who went to Ballarat Base Hospital suffering from a sudden and severe headache. Scans of his brain revealed he had a life-threatening condition called a Subarachnoid Haemorrhage, caused when an aneurysm in his brain ruptured.

Herbie was immediately transferred to St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne where the Neurosurgery team performed emergency brain surgery. Using microsurgery, the team inserted a drain into his brain to relieve the build-up of fluid caused by the rupture. Without this surgery, he would have died from further bleeding.

Herbie spent a few days in intensive care to be closely monitored. He then spent the next six weeks in the Neurosurgery ward receiving specialised nursing care and allied health support.

Herbie has now made a full recovery.

Nikki Dennis, Perioperative Services Manager says, "As the team who provide care for patients in the period prior to and right after surgery, perioperative nurses are often unsung heroes of the hospital.

They are an integral part of the theatre team, working alongside surgeons and anaesthetists to respond to any challenge that is thrown at them. As well as providing reassurance to anxious patients."

Our theatre nurses need your support. With your help, we can purchase essential theatre equipment to assist us to care for patients like Herbie.

To make a donation, head to:
www.stvfoundation.org.au/donate

Patient receives world-first epilepsy trial treatment

The first patient in the world has been enrolled in the final stages of a ground-breaking clinical trial to treat drug-resistant seizures.

Adam Daly was diagnosed with epilepsy when he was 26 after sustaining a head injury when a water tank exploded at a work site almost 15 years ago. Since then, he has suffered severe, daily drug-resistant seizures, and has been frequently hospitalised for them, sometimes weekly.

The trial involves a pump being implanted into a patient's abdomen. An anti-epileptic drug then travels via a tube into the patient's brain. This method allows the drug to go directly to the source of the seizures.

A clinical feasibility study undertaken at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne – published in prestigious scientific journal, The Lancet – found this innovative technique is a potentially effective method of treating drug-resistant epilepsy. Patients in the feasibility study experienced a significant (77 per cent) reduction in seizures, and extended periods without seizures.

"I haven't had a major seizure since having the treatment. My wife, Kathryn, and I are both hopeful that I can return to work in the next year or so and a normal life, that everybody else often takes for granted," Adam said.

"The launch of this important Phase 2b Study has the potential to dramatically reduce seizures and positively impact the lives of patients with uncontrollable epilepsy," said Professor Mark Cook, Director of Neurology at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne.

Up to 70 patients will take part in the trial, supported by ACMD – Australia's first collaborative, hospital-based medical engineering research centre. There are plans to extend this stage of the trial to the United States and Israel. Results are expected next year.



Trial patient, Adam Daly and Professor Mark Cook, Director of Neurology at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne

You can support our innovative research projects by donating to the ACMD: www.stvfoundation.org.au/donate-acmd

Providing a lasting legacy

An increase in demand for palliative care services along with an ageing infrastructure meant there was an urgent need to rebuild the Caritas Christi Hospice.

As part of the rebuild, we are offering a unique opportunity for families, individuals and organisations to leave a lasting legacy.

Naming rooms and spaces enables St Vincent's to recognise and honour significant benefactors and contributions made to the hospice. It is an ideal way

of commemorating a friend or family member, business or community organisation.

There is a range of spaces available within Caritas Christi for naming. For the full list of naming options and to view exciting drone footage of the rebuild, head to:

www.stvfoundation.org.au/caritaschristi



Examining the impacts of COVID-19 on young adults

Generous donations received from Chair of Psychiatry, Professor David Castle's video series on making mental health a priority during COVID-19, have assisted with funding a new research project.

The study, being undertaken by St Vincent's mental health team, will examine the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of young adults aged 18 to 24.



A fond farewell to St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne's Chair of Psychiatry, David Castle

Given the vastly different lockdown experiences that occurred across Australia, young people from Victoria will be compared to those in Queensland. Critically, the team will examine which risk factors are related to negative emotions.

The expected outcomes will be important in informing policy decisions and implementing support programs specific to young adults with pre-existing and emerging mental health issues.

You can watch the video series on mental health here:
www.stvfoundation.org.au/mental-health-appeal/video-library



The St Vincent's Melbourne team is bidding a sad but fond farewell to Professor Castle, who has accepted the position of inaugural Scientific Director at the new Centre for Complex Interventions, based at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health in Canada.

He has also been appointed a Professor at the University of Toronto.

Becoming a parent during COVID-19

Becoming a new parent can be daunting, especially during the pandemic. Emma and Chris welcomed their first baby, Addison recently. Emma gave us an insight into her experience.



"I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the maternity team at St Vincent's Private Hospital, Fitzroy. The hardest and scariest time of our life was when Addison was in the Special Care Nursery and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). However, Michelle (our angel) and all my midwives (special mention to Maree) made us feel like we were a part of their family, they constantly checked up on us and made sure we were doing ok.

"Due to COVID, we couldn't have our mums or families visit for support, though I felt having the St Vincent's team around us was all the support we needed. Thank you all."



Emma, Chris and Addison

Love Your St Vincent's

"When I had my quadruple by-pass in 2014, I couldn't have been in a better place. The wonderful staff were all so caring and dedicated and the treatment was the best; so good I was in no hurry to come home. That's why I love St Vincent's."

Dorothea, former patient of St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne

A heart-felt gift

Mary Littmann's connection to St Vincent's began when her father received treatment for a heart attack when she was just 13.

Despite being one of the first recipients of a double by-pass at St Vincent's, Mary's father unfortunately continued to experience ill health. He sadly passed away in 1973 after suffering a series of strokes.

Nine years ago, Mary also needed St Vincent's. She says, "I had synovial sarcoma cancer in my left hand

where the wrist joins the arm. I had an operation at St Vincent's and I continue to see the radiology oncologist every year."

Mary decided to make her Will just after she was diagnosed with the cancer.

"It was an easy decision to include St Vincent's in my Will because they



Mary Littmann with her brother Paul

have always been there for my family and for me when I needed them," Mary said.

Include a Gift in Your Will

By including St Vincent's Hospital in your Will, you play an important part in contributing to the Hospital's future. For more information, please contact a member of the Foundation Team at foundation@svha.org.au or call 03 9231 3365.



ACMD Board Chair Australia Day award

Chair of the ACMD Board, Brenda Shanahan's exceptional achievements were recognised on this year's Australia Day Honours List. She was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to medical health research, to the business and finance sectors, to corporate governance, and to philanthropy.

Brenda's contributions are wide and varied. She has taken an active role in medical research in Australia, with roles at St Vincent's Health, St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research and the ACMD. In parallel, Brenda has also been a pioneer in the Australian financial community as a stockbroker and a member of the Australian Stock Exchange. Brenda has also supported a number of charitable organisations including through the Brenda Shanahan Charitable Foundation, focused particularly on health care, research and the arts.

On behalf of St Vincent's Foundation, we congratulate Brenda for this richly deserved honour.

Calendar of events

For more information about any of our events, please contact our Events Manager, Rebecca Martin, on (03) 9231 3287 or 0410 865 176

Love Your St Vincent's Expert Webinar Series

March Webinar: Understanding Palliative Care
12 noon, Wednesday 24th March.

Presented by Associate Professor Mark Boughey, Director of Palliative Medicine at St Vincent's Hospital and Co-Deputy Director of the Centre for Palliative Care.

To register: www.stvfoundation.org.au/get-involved/webinars



DRY JULY

FOUNDATION

Would you give up alcohol for a month if it was for a good cause?

Register your interest to participate and receive updates by visiting:

www.stvfoundation.org.au/event/dry-july-2021