

# Greetings from the Kids!



Ben & Jiesheng Boutilier Editors In-Chief, IWK Foundation Good News Report

## GOOD NEWS REPORT A NEWSLETTER FOR IWK DONORS 2021

Hello to all the good people out there that help women and kids at the IWK. Allow us to introduce ourselves. We are Ben and Jiesheng Boutilier and we have been patients at the IWK for most of our lives.

Last year, we were selected as the 2020 Children's Miracle Network Champions which gives us the amazing opportunity to share our story to inspire the many supporters and friends of the IWK. As Champions, we've brought together a few of our

friends to share some IWK Good News about how donors, like you, have helped support the IWK.

We hope you have a few minutes to read this update that we've put together for our IWK VIPs. Pssst...VIP stands for **Very Important Person** and in this case that's YOU!

**Editor's Note:** Learn more about our story here: [www.iwkfoundation.org/meet-our-heroes/ben-jiesheng-boutilier](http://www.iwkfoundation.org/meet-our-heroes/ben-jiesheng-boutilier)

## Breaking News!

### DONORS BUY 95 NEW WIRELESS SMART BEDS FOR THE IWK



By: Kendra & Kinsey Fader, IWK patients, aspiring Child Life specialist & veterinarian

Hours, days, and weeks—that's how long some IWK patients will spend in their hospital beds. One of those patients is Becky Jeffries. Last spring she needed surgery to help welcome her sweet baby son Liam. She was thankful to spend time afterwards recovering in a new donor funded wireless smart bed, cuddling her little boy on the IWK's Family & Newborn Unit.

More than a year ago the IWK Foundation asked the Maritime community to help the IWK

replace 95 of its aging beds. At a price tag of \$15,000 each it was a big ask, but one that saw incredible supporters of the IWK rise to the occasion.

We are happy to announce that because of donors like you, that goal has been reached and the IWK will now have their new fleet of smart beds—incredible! These new wireless smart beds are at the frontline of patient care, providing comfort and better outcomes for the women and children who use them. Becky couldn't agree more.

"After I had a Caesarean section, I needed bed rest while nursing my son," says Becky. "The new wireless smart beds had features that allowed me to adjust it to be as comfortable as possible so that I could focus on the joy of being Liam's mom."

Becky told us she is thankful to all of the donors who helped fund the new beds and knows how important they will be to other patients. We couldn't agree more! Thank you to all of the donors who helped make the IWK's dream of having new wireless smart beds a reality.



## Exclusive Update with Ronda



By: Josh Côté, IWK patient, outdoor enthusiast

Born with sickle cell-anemia, Ronda Bamanga became a patient of the IWK after his family moved from the Congo to Moncton, NB when he was young. We last heard from him during the 2019 IWK Telethon and he recently shared an update with us on how he's doing now.

"After I graduated, I moved to Vancouver, BC in the fall of 2019 to learn more about food and making delicious meals people love to eat. It has been so much fun and I'm learning how to become a chef.

*I miss the IWK. I'm so grateful to the team there and to all the donors that have supported my care by supporting the purchase of a lot of the medical equipment I relied on for my treatment."*

- Ronda Bamanga

**Editors' note:** Fun fact—Ronda's favourite food to make is fried rice because it's fun, easy to make and leaves him with lots of leftovers. Watch Ronda's past story here:

[iwkfoundation.org/meet-our-heroes/ronda-bamanga](http://iwkfoundation.org/meet-our-heroes/ronda-bamanga)

## A Brand New PICU



By: Katie Hallett, past IWK PICU patient, future journalist

As someone who has had more than 40 surgeries at the IWK, I was excited to learn about their new Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) where the most critically ill patients go. It's a really cool space that has calming colours and fun artwork on the walls, brand-new specialized tools and technology, and, get this, now every patient has their own private room! It truly provides the healing and comfortable space that's needed for children receiving critical care.

So far it's been 100 per cent funded by donors. It's hard for me to imagine but I think that must have cost millions. Thank you to every donor who has helped make this possible—it will be so important to IWK families who need it, like the MacKinnon family from PEI.



*"Our fifteen-year-old son Ryan suffered a complex trauma injury that sent him to the IWK's PICU for more than a month. He was one of the first patients to receive care in the new unit."*

*From our family to each one of the donors that have given, thank you. When we see the progress Ryan is making every day we know you're part of it."*

-Darren & Dianne MacKinnon, Ryan's parents

**Editor's Note:** While COVID-19 didn't stop the building and the opening of the new PICU, it did impact the IWK Foundation's ability to raise the final dollars needed to finish the project. If you can, please give to help raise the remaining funds needed for PICU. Visit [iwkfoundation.org/picu](http://iwkfoundation.org/picu) to learn how.

# Check-In with Rylan Taylor



By: Nevaeh O'Connell, big sister to IWK patient Evander, future Paediatric Physiotherapist & Sport Physiotherapist

When we last saw Rylan Taylor from Cape Breton, NS it was on the 2015 IWK Telethon. As a baby, Rylan had been diagnosed with a life-threatening and rare auto-immune disease and needed a bone-marrow transplant to live.

Today, Rylan is now six years old and he is happy and healthy. His mom Kelly says he's now completely cured of his condition. He has no limitations and does not let anything stand in his way!

Way to go Rylan!



Rylan, 2015



Rylan, today

**Editors' Note:** Once a year Rylan goes to the IWK for appointments and his favourite part is checking out the fish tanks that are funded through donor support of the IWK. How cool is that?!

## A Conversation with the President & CEO



By: Skylar Côté, IWK patient, future actress & activist

The following is my interview with Jennifer Gillivan, President & CEO of the IWK Foundation.

**Skylar:** Jennifer, 2020 has been an extraordinary year in the wake of COVID-19. How has it impacted the IWK Foundation?

**Jennifer:** I love how warm and giving our community is and I always feel humbled at how generous people are. COVID-19 has been hard on everyone and yet, in times like this, you see people rise and you see leadership and generosity. We continue to need support and funds and we know IWK donors here in the Maritimes and beyond, will never let our women, kids and families down. When they can help, we know they will.

**Skylar:** You have a huge responsibility. What motivates you in your job?

**Jennifer:** Great question! The part of my work that means the most to me is meeting patients and their families. It allows me to see firsthand the collective power that all of us as donors can make through our support in helping kids and families. I feel sometimes like I am a warrior, a champion, fighting to get the best for women and children—that comes naturally to me and gives me the greatest sense of pride in what my team and I do.

**Skylar:** What's your dream for the IWK?

**Jennifer:** My dream is to continue to work alongside our incredible donors who are reading this report, to ensure that we continue to be there for children and for women in the future. It's my passion to do what we can to help others live the best life that they can.

**Skylar:** Incredible! IWK donors really are the best. Thank you Jennifer!

**Jennifer:** Thank you Skylar! Donors truly are the foundation of the IWK and we wouldn't be here without them. We are incredibly indebted to them all.

# Circle of Donor Support



By: Van Bernard, IWK patient, future lawyer & sports agent and Jeric Mullins, IWK patient, future YouTube star



Born with a rare congenital heart defect, Ava Blenus needed surgery to increase her chances of survival. On her six-month birthday in January, 2018 she had an 11-hour open heart surgery—her parents, Becca and Evan, were worried the whole time. This past November Ava, now three-and-a-half years old, needed a second open heart surgery and this time her mom and dad knew she'd come through it just fine.

Donors, like you, have made a direct impact on IWK patients just like Ava through your support of the most urgent priorities at the IWK. See how donated dollars have helped support the purchase of new equipment, advanced technology, programs and new facilities that she's needed on her IWK care journey.



Equipment such as anesthesia machines and smart pumps, have been needed for Ava during and after heart surgery.



Child Life programs like Music Therapy and the Therapeutic Clown Program help provide a welcome distraction and laughter for patients like Ava during their inpatient stays.



Technology like the neonatal echo cardiogram, infant scales, and heart monitors were all used during Ava's initial diagnoses.



The state-of-the-art Ron Joyce Operating Suite was used for both of Ava's surgeries.



Ava recovered as an inpatient in a new wireless smart bed after she was discharged from PICU.



New facilities, like the recently redeveloped Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), provide a private space for comfort and healing during the delivery of critical care needed after Ava's last surgery.

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