

CLAN

AUTUMN 2017



Tackling Guillain-Barre Syndrome

The ancient Gaelic word, Clan describes a close group of families or friends, and it sums up St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital's community-centred approach, with an additional nod to the hospital's Scottish heritage.

Andrew Barron, General Manager



Welcome to your first edition of Clan for 2017. Clan keeps you up to date on the latest advancements, achievements and milestones at Spring Hill's St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital – a not-for-profit 250 bed facility.

We hope you have had a great start to the New Year. For our hospital, we have lots in store, with our health services continuing to grow from strength to strength, our public events kicking off again including ANZAC Day, which every year attracts hundreds of people and exciting new projects.

In this edition, you will be inspired by the story of one of our former patients and volunteers, Dejonn Simons. Dejonn almost lost her life when she was unexpectedly struck down by an autoimmune disease in 2008. Her road to recovery has been a long one that has involved our hospital's outpatient services in rehabilitation including occupational therapy and

physiotherapy. The rehab team has been privileged to have worked with Dejonn whose strength and determination has been unlike any other. The Caboolture resident found her bi-monthly visits to St Andrew's all worth it – it allowed her to walk again. In addition to her treatment, Dejonn found volunteering at St Andrew's a way of finding her confidence again to re-entre the workforce after suffering a long illness. Stories like Dejonn's never cease to amaze me of the human spirit and tenacity that allows one to make a huge comeback from adversity.

In addition to Dejonn's story, learn about the excellent achievements of our various health programs, innovative projects to boost patient outcomes and staff achievements. At St Andrew's we have a strong ethos to not only improve the quality of our patient care but to also share our knowledge and expertise with other hospitals for the benefit of the wider community.

St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital can expand upon its important health services and achievements for Brisbane and rural and regional Queensland with the help of generous donations from members of our community like you. Without these donations, serving those at their greatest time of need would not be as possible. We look forward to joining forces with you this year. Happy reading.

Andrew Barron
General Manager
St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

Message from Pastor Theo

As a chaplain, people do from time to time, ask us how our work must have an impact on us.

Yes there are trying scenarios and situations that we face, and of course there are times that we do get weathered.

But I have to say as a chaplain here for the last six years, sometimes quite the opposite occurs.

When you see the kindness, compassion and care provided by staff, both clinical and nonclinical, it is a real affirmation of the goodness and hope that I believe resides in all.

We have five shared values in this organisation being ... compassion, respect, justice working together and leading through learning that we use as a platform here in the hospital to provide care.

And whether people realise it or not, the staff and volunteers in this organisation really do try to espouse those values.

It's a bit like people walking the talk but without having to use lots of the words.

And mind you, when words are used they often provide additional comfort and assurance.

All of this comes from a rich history and heritage that we have with this hospital being formed by the vision and mission of the Presbyterian Church in Queensland.

In saying that, we are also really thankful for the contribution of sponsors, supporters and donors. While they may not be here pounding the floors in the corridors, their contribution is huge help in making things happen.

Creating awareness on domestic violence against women



Pastor Theo with Dr Forde

A leading gynaecologist from St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital actively raises awareness in the community on the health impacts of domestic violence on women.

"Women who experience physical and emotional trauma suffer the side effects of low self-esteem and poor self-worth, but we want to break down this stigma and urge them to seek the help they need," Dr Forde said.

"Many female patients at St Andrew's Pelvic Medicine Centre do find it takes courage to seek medical help for conditions that feel 'embarrassing'.

"Urinary incontinence implies lack of control of the bladder which leads to feelings of shame and reluctance to seek help for many women.

"Women living in violent situations are even less likely than other women to go to their GP or friends about common and 'embarrassing' health conditions like urinary and faecal incontinence.

Dr Forde takes part in many community awareness campaigns on this issue and most recently joined up forces with the Zonta Club to engage local Brisbane business support in promoting the elimination of violence against women.

One of our major donors recently gave us the funds to buy a Transoesophageal Echocardiograph Probe Testing Kit. Transoesophageal echocardiography (TEE) is a test that takes pictures of your heart.



The team with the new equipment

TEE uses high-frequency sound waves (ultrasound) to make detailed images of your heart and its connecting arteries. These images appear on a video screen. Our doctors use TEE when they need more detail than a standard echocardiogram can give them. As a not-for-profit hospital, all donations to us go directly to improving and enhancing our health care services for you and all members of the community. St Andrew's is always appreciative of your donations however big or small and we thank you all for your generosity.

Patient feedback

Our family would like to thank your staff for the care and attention for our daughter Sheena on her recent admission. As parents we can "handpick" the surgeons; we cannot handpick the nursing staff; we had been happy with a previous admission to St Andrew's. Sheena is not an easy patient; her special needs make her very anxious and at times uncooperative. Your staff dealt with her issues with flexibility. It was clear that staff in recovery found her anxiety difficult. The staff in Ward 3D, especially Liz and Christie were very caring, flexible and found processes to deal with most of her anxieties. So, thanks to staff.

I wish I could say our experience once we had her home was plain sailing – she played the drama queen with vomiting (once home!) and her acute low blood pressure successfully ageing her parents very quickly!

We will recommend St Andrew's to our network!

God Bless, Alison

Determined Dejonn makes a comeback after nearly dying

It was June 2008 and Dejonn Simons of Caboolture was returning home late one winter evening when she noticed subtle tingling in her toes and fingers.



“I thought the tingling was slightly unusual but because it was winter I put it down to the winter cold,” Dejonn said.

Early next morning Dejonn knew something was really wrong. “I got up in the morning and my legs nearly collapsed out from underneath me. I told my husband I need to go to hospital,” she said.

“We ended up at hospital at 3pm and I

fully paralysed. The only thing that moved on me was my eyes,” Dejonn said. “Even though I couldn’t move I still could hear.” Dejonn heard the intensive care doctor tell her husband to prepare for the worse. “As soon as I heard those words, I told myself I was going to make it,” she said. Her condition worsened where she struggled to breathe and was placed on a ventilator.

“My ambulance broke down on the side of a busy highway. As they were trying to transfer me from the highway, they realised my stretcher would not fit into the first ambulance that responded. At that time, ambulances had different types of stretchers. I had to wait for a second ambulance”

had grown weak and could hardly stand.

“The local hospital immediately admitted me to the emergency centre. By evening I had lost all feeling in my legs and the paralysis started to rise up my body and reach my hands.”

Medical staff made the call to transfer Dejonn to a Redcliffe hospital as her mystery illness began to take hold of her entire body. The transfer, however, was met with mishaps. “My ambulance broke down on the side of a busy highway. As they were trying to transfer me from the highway, they realised my stretcher would not fit into the first ambulance that responded. At that time, ambulances had different types of stretchers. I had to wait for a second ambulance,” she said.

When she arrived at the hospital she was admitted immediately into intensive care. “By this point, I had become

Dejonn was 41 years old at the time and was diagnosed with a severe case of Guillain-Barre Syndrome - a rapid-onset muscle weakness caused by the immune system damaging the peripheral nervous system (the nervous system outside the brain and spinal cord.)

The severity of the Dejonn’s disorder meant that many of her nerves would not grow back. The prognosis was a lifetime in a wheelchair. “I was determined to learn to walk again.”

After being hospitalised for more than a year, trying to learn to sit up, talk and walk again, Dejonn’s neurologist referred her to St Andrew’s War Memorial Hospital. Since 2010, Dejonn has been an outpatient at St Andrew’s receiving Occupational Therapy and physiotherapy a couple days a week every one or

two months. It was here she focused hard on milestones to get back on her feet.

"There were plenty of tears. Some days, it felt so painful trying to improve my ability to walk. Cramping would engulf my whole body. When you cramp, it releases in stages, it feels like a big muscle that tightens really tight and then it gradually releases, releases, releases and then it's out. When you're all cramped up and you can't do anything you are literally stuck in a position," she said.

"I can dress myself now, I can walk unaided on flat ground at home. Outside, I can walk on crutches and use a wheelie walker. Once before I couldn't cook or shower for myself, so I can be almost totally independent again – and that's what the OTs and physios at St Andrew's really helped me with."

Dejonn said while St Andrew's rehabilitation ward helped her physically, it was the hospital's volunteer program that helped her recover emotionally.

"My husband worked in the city and he would come in and drop me off at 8am first thing and then come pick me up at 6pm. There was a lot of waiting before and after my physio sessions at the hospital," she said.

"I did grow tired of reading books, newspapers and magazines, and I got to the stage that I started watching the receptionist, watching the number of staff coming in and out, and which doctors parked their cars out the front for longer than 10 minutes, how many nurses washed their hands when they came in the door and then I started counting how many people used certain machines – and I use to say these things to the OTs and physios and they said, 'why don't you just try to apply to be a volunteer and you can work for a couple of hours doing filing'," she said.

Dejonn said that's when St Andrew's volunteer coordinator Cathy Cash came into her life. "I applied and then I spoke to Cathy and she saw me in one physio session," Dejonn said.

"I volunteered for over a year and one month at the volunteer helpdesk. I'd come in at 8am and work through to 3pm and then go do my physio and OT. Then I'd go home. And it was wonderful.

"When you've been on your own and not working for a long period of time, you lose your confidence in your ability to relate and communicate with others. Volunteering at St Andrew's helped be rebuild my self-confidence and ability to interact with others.

"Cathy really supported me, giving me tasks to help me readjust back into the world. I also found because I had been a patient I could easily relate and understand the patients and their family that would come into the hospital feeling anxious, scared or upset.

"The volunteering also gave me a wonderful way to give back to St Andrew's for all the help that I received in my long road to recovery."

"When you've been on your own and not working for a long period of time, you lose your confidence in your ability to relate and communicate with others. Volunteering at St Andrew's helped be rebuild my self-confidence and ability to interact with others."

With her new found confidence, Dejonn also began volunteering her time at BlueCare at Morayfield, which eventually led to full-time paid work on a six month contract that started in October 2016.

"For me, it (volunteer work) was a stepping stone. My first goal was to get in and do a bit of volunteer work and then get into paid work whether that be one or two times a week. It is beyond my imagination that I'm now back into full-time work," she said.

"I try to make a positive life for myself and a positive life for others. St Andrew's, BlueCare and UnitingCare Queensland have really helped me with that. They are very community-minded, always trying to help people as much as they can in any way that they can. They are a great organisation, I can't thank them enough."

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Artist in residence



Dr Ali Bezer, Artist in residence

My creative practice explores how sound concepts and experiences can be expressed through visual art. I work in different mediums (e.g. painting, sculpture, installation) depending on the type of sound that the art expresses. For my residency at St Andrews War Memorial Hospital I have the

opportunity to spend time recording soundscapes from different areas of the hospital, such as waiting rooms, wards and operating theatres. In these spaces a variety of noises occur which I will translate into collage drawings and paintings. The aim is to try and re-contextualise some of the meaningless, mundane and harsh noises that staff are exposed to into something more aesthetically pleasing and meaningful through works of art to be exhibited in the hospital.

'We Are Family'

Teamwork and collaboration are especially essential to the care of patients and reduces issues that lead to burnout. At St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, a strong emphasis is placed on building a culture of camaraderie among all staff including our various departments and clinical and non-clinical teams. To celebrate this team spirit the hospital recently released a music video clip where they put their own spin on the Sister Sledge classic 'We are family'. With representation from right across St Andrew's, including senior executives, nurses, physicians, cleaners, kitchen staff, chaplains, volunteers, patient accounts and theatre orderlies the singsters showed off their lip syncing abilities in this fun display of hospital camaraderie and team spirit. The video has been viewed more than 13 thousand times on our Facebook site. Get your daily dose of good vibes and view 'We are Family' on the video section of our Facebook site at www.facebook.com/StAndrewsWarMemorialHospital



Part of the St Andrew's family

Speaking out about vein health at world-leading orthopaedic conference



Sheila Gilritchie

St Andrew's nurse manager Sheila Gilritchie recently discussed the prevention of venous thromboembolism (VTE) at the 11th International Congress of Chinese Orthopaedic Association in Beijing.

The prevention of VTE has been recognised in Australia and worldwide as a priority patient safety issue because evidence has shown that VTEs are often preventable with strategies that stop the development in people "at-risk".

Sheila has been championing VTE prevention for more than a decade. VTE is a dangerous and potentially deadly medical condition that includes deep vein thrombosis, the formation

of blood clots in the vein usually in the leg and pulmonary embolism, the result of the clot breaking loose and travelling to the lungs.

"I aim to assist clinicians and St Andrew's as well as other hospitals implement VTE prevention programs," Sheila said.

"VTE Prevention Programs help hospitals improve their processes around VTE risk assessment and appropriate prescribing for disease prevention."

Treatment typically includes blood-thinning medication to break up clots and prevent new ones from forming. In rare cases, surgery may also be needed.

UCH Innovation and Excellence Awards

The exceptional level of service and innovation across all UnitingCare Health facilities including St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital was showcased at the 2016 Innovation and Excellence Awards late last year.

St Andrew's cardiac intensive care team won the Excellence in Patient Outcomes awards for its work in optimising blood management during cardiac surgery. Attention to top quality blood management of a patient during surgery can help in cost reduction and improved patient outcomes especially for patients undergoing major surgery. Our team of intensive care cardiac surgeons has developed strategies to boost haemoglobin and reduce bleeding with specific methodologies to minimise blood loss and reduce the use of blood transfusions during a patient's surgery. They are now sharing their methodologies for improved patient outcomes with sister hospital The Wesley.

Also Dr Mark Dalton, one of our Emergency Centre doctors, was recognised at the awards as a finalist in Excellence in Living Values. Dr Dalton was particularly noted for his work at the Solomon Island's Helena Goldie Hospital. He volunteered his time when the hospital was struggling for months without a doctor. He performed many emergency operations with minimal equipment and setup and helped transport patients via boat.



Dr Ian Smith receiving his award

Helping people with autism join the workplace



The Honourable Paul de Jersey AC and Lyn Greener

The Governor of Queensland recently presented a St Andrew's War Memorial hospital manager with an award for helping people with autism achieve success in a workplace environment.

His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC awarded Lyn Greener the Professional Achievement Award of the 2016 Autism Queensland Creative Futures Recognition Awards on 2 December 2016.

The award recognises a person who has made a significant contribution in the Autism Spectrum Disorder field through their professional activities.

As St Andrew's Patient Administration Manager Lyn manages a team of 49 of which two members are individuals with autism.

"It is wonderful to get this acknowledgement. I feel proud to be supporting people with autism in the workplace," Lyn said.

"To mentor people with autism, who need patience, strong people skills to connect with their minds and family and compassion."

"Luke who has autism has been working in my team for about 15 years. He is tasked with collecting and distributing all mail for the hospital and for the doctors who have their practice within the hospital," she said.

"Connor who also has autism works as the administration clerk and carries out various duties including filing medical record charts and topping up of brochures."

As part of UnitingCare Queensland, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital strives to support and recognise people with disabilities gain employment.

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Thank You 

How you can make a difference

Donate

Your gifts are one of the best ways for St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital to enhance our services, keep up-to-date with technology, expand our clinical capacity and update our facilities. Thanks to the generosity of people like you, we can continue to improve the highest quality of clinical care for our patients. Donate online at standrewhospital.com.au/donate

Regular giving

You decide the amount and the frequency of your donation which can be altered or paused at any time.

Include us in your will

The inclusion of St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital in your will is the ultimate gesture of gratitude and perhaps the greatest compliment that you can pay the hospital.

Our mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and their families. We differentiate ourselves by living out our values to optimise patient care and experience, every day. Donations over \$2 are tax-deductible and a receipt will be sent to you.

For more information on how you can support our life-saving endeavours, please contact our donor care team on 1800 001 953 or by email fundraising@uhealth.com.au

To learn more about any hospital project or service, please contact our team on 07 3834 4444 or visit: standrewhospital.com.au

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