



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CuddleCot campaign “story of love” for local mom

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Monday, May 2nd, 2016—A fundraising campaign launched this summer has come full circle with the delivery this month of the long-awaited focus of its effort— a “CuddleCot” for Northumberland Hills Hospital’s birthing suite.

Championed by local mother Melissa Chapman, the campaign was, in her words, “a story of love” and her way of turning personal tragedy into something positive.

In August 2015 Chapman was expecting her second child when, without warning, something went wrong and the pregnancy ended.

The stillbirth of her daughter Avery at Northumberland Hills Hospital, and the grieving process she experienced in the days and months that followed, led Melissa on a campaign to help build further supports for families coping with tragedies like her own. In the course of Chapman’s reading she discovered a customized product in the United Kingdom called a “CuddleCot,” uniquely designed to give grieving families more time in hospital to say goodbye to their infants. Among the challenges the cot addresses is the need to keep the body cool.

“You’re experiencing so much at that time,” said Chapman, “and the support, the care and the compassion starts in the hospital. This cot will help with that, giving parents more of that very special time to say goodbye to their babies, and giving the staff the ability to let them do that.”

Through a GoFundMe social media campaign and private donations Chapman raised the funds necessary to support the specialized cot and related accessories and, working with hospital and Foundation staff, the items were procured.

“More than thirty donations came in for the CuddleCot through the NHH Foundation,” confirmed Rhonda Cunningham, Executive Director of the NHH Foundation, “and the balance, approximately 35 donations, came in to us through Melissa’s GoFundMe effort.”

“I can’t thank the donors enough,” said Chapman. “Most were from Northumberland, but some donations to this came from outside the area, from people in Toronto, Newfoundland and even the UK.”

The Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) reports that, of the total in-hospital births in Ontario in the latest full year for which information is available, 1113, or 0.8%, were stillbirths (Source: CIHI, Discharge Abstract Database (DAD) fiscal year 2014/15).

“While the vast majority of the births we support annually at NHH are positive, happy occasions, special procedures are in place to care for mothers and families who, sadly, experience loss,” explains Anna Marie Sutherland, Program Director of the Maternal/Child program at NHH. “With

input from patients like Melissa, and further development of provincial best practices in this area, hospital and community supports are continually improving. We welcome any opportunity to enhance and improve support for parents. The addition of the CuddleCot to our unit is another good step forward, and we're very grateful for Melissa for making this recommendation and helping to make it happen."

Further information on infant loss:

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness, Research and Care Act, 2015 – Initiated as a private member's bill (Bill 141) by Eglinton-Lawrence MPP Mike Colle, the bill received royal assent in December 2015. Among its actions is the official designation of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day, which will be recognized annually on October 15. For more information on the Act see: http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=3575

Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Network – The PAIL Network was formed in 1992 and is the recognized leader in Ontario for pregnancy and infant bereavement care, helping families and healthcare professionals for almost 25 years. Previously known as the Perinatal Bereavement Services Ontario, the organization was founded by four bereaved parents who realized that special community support services were needed for families who had experienced the tragic loss of a pregnancy or infant. To access their resources visit www.pailnetwork.ca or call 1-888-301-7276.

NHH media contact: Jennifer Gillard, Director, NHH Communications and Community Engagement, jgillard@nhh.ca or 905-377-7757.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

About Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation – The Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation is a dedicated team of enthusiastic volunteers and staff who are passionately committed to improving health care and the quality of life in our communities.

Our mission is to foster philanthropic support to benefit the patients of Northumberland Hills Hospital.

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