

Dear Friend,

We credit Alana's brothers with possibly saving her life – by coaxing her into playing high school rugby! Let us explain ...

Alana injured her knee during a rugby game and required surgery at the Ross Memorial to repair it. The surgery went well, but the night after she was released from the hospital, she began to feel nauseous. A mother's instinct told me to keep a close eye on her, so we curled up together on the sofa bed to watch television.

That's when it happened. Alana was having a seizure. The paramedics arrived and she was rushed to the Ross Memorial's Emergency department. We thought she was having a reaction to the medication she'd been given for her knee pain. But that wasn't the case.

The doctor ordered a CT scan. It was a test that would change Alana's life. Although the spot on the image was small, the implications were enormous. Her doctor ordered another CT, in the hopes of getting a better look.

The test showed what was either a tumour or an arterial venous malformation (AVM). Alana was transferred immediately to the Hospital for Sick Children, where one of the top paediatric neurosurgeons in Ontario confirmed that Alana had an AVM in her brain.

An AVM is a congenital, tangled knot of veins and arteries which affects both the blood flow and pressure. In Alana's case, it was the size of a loonie. The stress of surgery had aggravated the AVM and caused the seizure. We were told that, usually, people don't know they have an AVM until it ruptures, causing a bleed on the brain that can be fatal if not treated immediately. Alana was lucky.

That diagnosis began a heart-wrenching marathon of appointments and worry, explanations and decisions. Six months to the day after Alana's trip to the Ross, she underwent surgery to have the AVM removed at the Toronto Western Hospital. It was the first day of school; Alana was supposed to be starting grade 12.

Alana's courage inspired us all that day. But it was the radiant faces of the neurosurgeons coming out of the operating room 8 hours later that we will never forget. As a team, they had accomplished all they set out to do, and we were over the moon with gratitude and cautious relief.

I'll always remember the neurosurgeon who comforted us following the surgery, saying "Alana will be just like Sleeping Beauty; she'll sleep for a couple days, and then it will all be fine." To our great relief, like Sleeping Beauty, Alana's story also has a happy ending. She is back in school and back in the saddle!

I describe our journey as a trip down the yellow brick road. We travelled from our family room in Lindsay, to the Ross, through the Hospital for Sick Children, to eventually consult with the Wizards – the team of neurosurgeons

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at the University Health Network in Toronto. The 'wizards' used all the technological tools available – CT, MRI, cerebral angiograms – to consider and plan every detail of the surgery that successfully removed the AVM and avoided any negative affects on Alana's brain function.

For us, technology made all the difference. That CT scan at the Ross set us off on the right path, quickly. ***It's technology that allows doctors to identify and repair problems like these before it's too late.***

Now, the Ross Memorial Hospital needs to replace its CT unit, due to its age. The current model is ten years old; the technology is outdated, and after 80,000 scans, the machine has reached the end of its useful life. **With your help, we can replace the aging CT at the Ross Memorial with a new machine that can take more detailed images in a fraction of the time.**



Computed Tomography (or CT Scan) plays a crucial role in the quick diagnosis of acutely ill patients in the Emergency department, identifying those who need urgent surgical attention. By replacing its **4-slice CT** with a **128-slice unit**, we can provide physicians with a complete, 3-dimensional, unobstructed view inside the body. *That can make all the difference in the world to patients like Alana.*

A new day is dawning at the Ross. With better technology, the new CT will better identify such conditions as trauma, cancer, stroke and blockages in the heart. With the exquisite detail provided by a 128-slice CT, patients of all ages can be diagnosed without invasive procedures, without being asked to hold their breath for long periods, and with significantly less radiation exposure. The new CT will play an important role at the Ross, as it begins the transformation of its Diagnostic Imaging department. ***Diagnostic imaging has become key to diagnosis and treatment.***

When Alana's future was uncertain, we put every ounce of our energy into believing that she would be alright. Now our energy is focused on helping others. We hope our story will encourage people like you to help support the purchase of a new CT unit for the Ross Memorial Hospital. Please consider making a donation to help us to replace this invaluable equipment. Every gift makes a difference.

On behalf of our family and the Ross Family, we wish you a safe and happy spring,

Catherine Miller Murray & Doug Murray

P.S. For your convenience, the Ross Memorial Hospital Foundation now accepts online donations. Please visit our website www.rmh.org for details.

P.P.S. Should you receive another appeal delivered to your home in the near future, we would like to ask for your understanding. We are delivering unaddressed appeals in many areas so that we can give local residents the opportunity to show their support for Ross Memorial. Despite our best efforts, this process occasionally delivers more than one letter per household; however, we thank you for your patience.

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