



MEDIA RELEASE

Date: December 11, 2019

A Million Reasons to Celebrate

In the WDMH lobby, there is giant Christmas tree adorned with ornaments representing each gift to the annual Judy Lannin Christmas Wish Tree program. On December 10th, the tree was officially lit while guests were serenaded by the Seaway Valley Singers.

This year, Mary Ellen Van Dongen was invited to flip the switch. "Mary Ellen is the author of the beautiful story that appeared in The Judy Lannin Christmas Wish Tree appeal letter," explained Managing Director Kristen Casselman at the ceremony. "She tells the story of her mother who passed away on Christmas Eve at WDMH in 2015. Mary Ellen shares her family's experience and talks about the comfort and support that they received from the compassionate nursing staff. We are so thankful to Mary Ellen for sharing this special story with everyone."

A highlight of the evening was the announcement that The Judy Lannin Christmas Wish Tree total donations will surpass the one million dollar mark this year. This program has raised over one million dollars since it was started 22 years ago by Judy Lannin. "I have the best job in the world," said WDMH CEO Cholly Boland. "And it's partly because of generous donors like you. With this year's donations, we have reached an incredible milestone and I want to thank everyone for your support."

"We are grateful to everyone in our local communities – for the many individuals, groups and organizations who give; for all those who decorate our tree every year in memory or honour of someone; and to the volunteers for your special acts of kindness," noted Bruce Millar, WDMH Foundation Board Treasurer. "It is only because of all of these people that we are able to ensure that the WDMH team has the right tools needed to care for patients and families – so close to home."

The Judy Lannin Christmas Wish Tree program provides an opportunity to make a donation in memory, or in honour, of someone near and dear to your heart. Proceeds from the program go to the Family Care Fund to help ensure that WDMH can continue to provide compassionate, excellent health care – close to home.

Special thanks to the many sponsors of The Judy Lannin Christmas Wish Tree.



Cutline: Guests were serenaded by the Seaway Valley Singers.



Cutline: Mary Ellen Van Dongen (left) flipped the switch to light up the tree. Here, she is joined by Kristen Casselman, WDMH Foundation Managing Director; Dr. Brian Devin, Chief of Staff; Cholly Boland, WDMH CEO; and Bruce Millar, WDMH Foundation Board Treasurer.

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