

Thank you for giving me hope!

This Fall, I'm heading away from home to go to university for fashion design. It's a big, exciting (kinda scary!) step for me. I know in my heart I wouldn't be doing this without the support I got from Children's Hospital.



Thank you so much for giving from your heart to help sick kids like me. I know it might be easier to see how your gifts help a small kid with cancer, or a teenager who's been in a car accident. But I want you to know that mental illness is just as serious.

It was absolutely terrifying during my anxiety attacks. My mom called it "spiralling down the rabbit hole", and that's kind of what it felt like. My brain would fixate on a "danger" that anyone else could write off as ridiculous.

I describe it now as the spam folder in my brain being broken. Most people's spam folders catch all those pesky thoughts and write them off as nothing to worry about, but mine wouldn't catch them, so my brain would be flooded with worries, and I would be unable to tell which worries were important and which ones weren't.

So, as a result, my fight or flight response would be triggered multiple times a day. Let me tell you, that is exhausting!

Keep reading ->

I finally got to see a doctor at Children's Hospital just after my eleventh birthday. My mom and I found ourselves in an office filled with children's drawings surrounded by three women.

One of the women introduced herself as Dr. Julie, and the others were Dr. Hall and a western student studying under Dr. Julie.

Dr. Julie didn't treat me like a little kid.

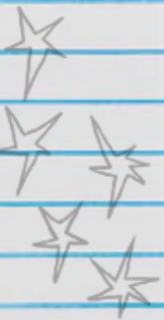
She listened to me answer her questions about my life without interrupting. She spoke very matter-of-factly, without sugar coating things, while still making it understandable for me. I liked that. I watched her write down what she deemed important on yellow note paper on her desk, which had a sort of organized chaos to it.

This lasted a few hours, and sometimes I would get too emotional and just stop talking altogether until Dr. Julie moved on to another question. I told her everything I could.

The meeting ended with a formal diagnosis. **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder**. More commonly known as OCD.

My mom and I already suspected that. But finally, a formal diagnosis by a psychologist and psychiatrist.

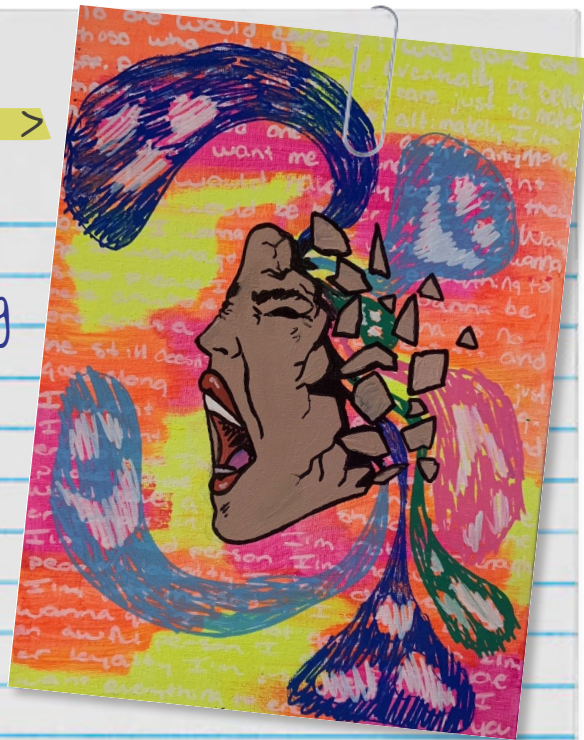
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I call this piece, "Mind Full" >

Exposure therapy with Dr. Julie's student in the following months worked well.

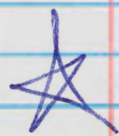
It was a lot of hard work, to put it lightly. It was geared towards a younger age group, so I grew used to terms like 'elevator breathing', 'bubble blowing visualizations', and 'safe place', which was a personal favourite of mine.



The main component of therapy was essentially making me face my fears, to prove to my brain that most things aren't threats. In just a few months, I made strides.

Although the worst of my OCD is gone, my struggles with mental health remain. I've had more diagnoses as I've grown older, and gone through therapy time and time again. I've had to accept that I will always have obsessive thought patterns, and that I will always be a compulsive person.

You can catch me pulling my hair - a disorder that often comes along with OCD - or zoning out as my heart pounds in my chest.



But I have to tell you, overall I am feeling pretty great these days! Better than I've ever felt.

Turn over -->

And, it's the middle of a pandemic. I'm looking forward to heading off to school - and Dr. Julie is going to help me find the support I need there.

I am one of the lucky ones.

I'm so very grateful to have the support systems I do. Many of my friends and peers are not so lucky. There are so many kids and youth out there struggling right now - and there just isn't enough support for them.

I want to thank you so much for giving me the help I needed to get better. I hope you'll continue to give to the Children's Hospital so other kids can get the help they need - whether it's treatment for cancer or a painful injury - or a mental illness like mine.

You really do make a difference!

Thank you,

Charlotte

Charlotte



Mail date

<Addressee>
1234 Generous Street
Anytown, ON. XoX
oXo

Dear <Rachel>,
You know the first thing I noticed?

It was eerily silent.

Normally, you hear all kinds of hums, clicks and beeps in an operating room. The tell-tale *ker-chunk* of the X-ray machine scanning a patient.

But not today.

<Rachel>, I just got back from an urgent visit to the OR. **A vital piece of equipment broke down and we need to replace it ASAP.**

It's called a C-Arm. It's a mobile X-Ray unit used for several types of urgent surgical procedures, including stabilizing bone fractures and performing joint replacements. I'll explain more in a minute, but first I have to ask:

Will you help us purchase a new C-Arm? It has a hefty price tag of \$198,000, but I know we can raise the funds if everyone pitches in to help.

In fact, if you and every person reading this letter gave \$35 right now, that would cover the cost. Now, if you could give \$<ASK2> or even stretch it to \$<ASK3> then we'd be that much closer that much faster!

It won't be quiet in the OR for long. We'll get a loaner machine to help

Please turn over...

Special Reply for:

<Ms. Addressee>

<Addressee> -MAIN
1234 Generous Street
Anytown, ON. XoX oXo

ConstID/Appeal-Seg Code

Yes, Jacqueline! I'll help you purchase a new C-Arm machine ASAP. Here's my gift of:

\$XX \$XX \$XXX *or* \$198,000

I have enclosed my cheque, payable to St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital Foundation.

OR

I prefer to make my gift using my   

Card Number:..... Expiry Date:.....

Name on Card:.....

Signature:.....

Telephone #:.....

Email:.....

New regulations from VISA may require us to contact you by phone to confirm your CVV. If you choose to give using your VISA, please include your telephone number. Thank you!

ConstID/Appeal-Seg Code

Due to COVID-19, we are asking our donors and supporters to please consider giving online at [ItsOURHospital.ca](https://www.itsourhospital.ca) or by calling Amanda Campbell (Amanda loves to hear from donors like you!) at 519-631-2030 ext. 2282.

treat patients until we can purchase the new one.

You may not realize this, because I didn't either, but when someone falls and breaks their hip – they need surgery within 24 hours!

And, you guessed it, the C-Arm is an essential part of a hip joint replacement surgery.

In fact, I had no idea just how vital this piece of equipment really is. It's used just about ***every single day*** in our Emergency Department!

When someone falls and badly fractures their wrist or ankle – the C-Arm is used by the orthopaedic surgeon to help insert the pins and screws that keep it together.

When someone has a kidney stone, gallstone or cancer related blockage the C-Arm is used during an urgent surgical procedure to remove it.

I've included a little more information for you – as well as a photo of the C-Arm we're looking to purchase. And, we're also getting the one that broke down fixed. That means we'll have two of these machines in use – which is best practice in case one breaks down again in the future.

Can I count on you today?

Please send your gift as soon as you can to help purchase a new C-Arm for your community hospital.



With gratitude,

Jacqueline Bloom

Jacqueline Bloom, CFRE
Chief Executive Officer
STEGH Foundation

PS: Please don't delay – fill out your reply form ASAP and send it back in the postage paid envelope.

We receipt gifts over \$20 unless otherwise requested.

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