



Dear Friend,

At my age, I prefer to tell it straight.

I'm 88 years old and I don't like to mess around with embellishments or exaggerations. My name is John Elston but everyone – and I mean everyone – calls me Pappy.

You may be wondering why I am writing to you today. It's because my family and I have been receiving first-class care at our Rouge Valley hospitals for more than twenty years now and I wanted to share my story with you and all of my neighbours.

The timing worked out great. You see last year, just about this same time, I had quite a scare.

But thanks to Rouge Valley and the great doctors and nurses I'm still here today and I am so grateful that I'll get to spend the holidays with my daughter, her husband and my granddaughters again this year.

Before I tell you my story, I want to ask you to help me right now and make sure the marvelous doctors and nurses at our community's hospital have everything they need to keep families like mine - and yours - healthy. Everyone from my young adult granddaughters who have grown up so fast and are just starting their path in life to me, a spry 88 year old fella, who is always ready to enjoy a good long walk, a visit with a friend or a nice family dinner (hopefully with a glass of wine!).

Since we are heading into the giving time of year, I hope you'll remember Rouge Valley this holiday season. Please join me and send your gift of health to support our hospital.

No matter the size of your donation, I'm confident that it will be carefully spent to make sure our Rouge Valley hospitals have what they need to take care of you, me and our loved ones.



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As I said a little earlier, Rouge Valley has taken care of my family and me for over two decades. Luckily, I haven't needed the hospital too much over the years, but when I have I am so glad that it has been there for me.

A couple of years ago I had quite a spill when I slipped on some ice. Dr. Allan Eckhaus, a plastic surgeon, took good care of me, patched me up and made sure my mug wouldn't scare away anyone after I healed!

I've also relied on the hospital to take care of my family. Several years back my daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer. The crack team at Rouge Valley caught it early, and she received surgery and treatment immediately. I'm thankful to report that she's doing great and that my granddaughters have a happy and healthy mum to keep them on the straight and narrow.

Rouge Valley was also there when my beloved wife fell ill and eventually passed three years ago. It's upsetting still to think about, but I can't say enough about the wonderful care and support the staff, especially Dr. Romas Stas, offered her and how they took care of me and our whole family during such a difficult time.

But I'm not writing today to make you feel sad. After all, we are coming up to one of my favourite times in the year...Christmas and the holidays!

So last year when I had a medical emergency right before Christmas I was worried about missing out on all the traditions that make this time of year such a wonderful celebration of family, friends and loved ones.

You see one day I woke up feeling not quite right. I was dizzy and just felt unwell. I usually get up early, eat my porridge, watch the news and read the paper, but that morning I stuck close to bed. By noon, common sense told me I should get someone to look at me. I called my son-in-law and told him I felt crummy.

We both decided I should play it smart and go to the hospital.

He came and took me in to the Rouge Valley's emergency department close to my house.

I was now feeling even worse.

In the emergency department they were worried because I'd started falling in and out of consciousness. To figure out what was going on, they did tests and hooked me up to monitors. And as you can imagine, it was a very tiring and stressful night for me and my family.

They were using equipment that you and I helped purchase for the hospital with our donations over the years, but at the time I was just so grateful that they were able to determine that my heart rate was low and causing me not to get enough oxygen to my brain.

Because it was my old ticker that was causing the problems, Dr. Peter Gladstone, a cardiologist, came and checked me out. I needed a pacemaker.

While they organized everything, Josee, the Rouge Valley Pacemaker Coordinator paid me a visit to make sure that I knew what was going to happen next and to answer any questions. I was then taken to the cardiac centre where I immediately had a pacemaker placed inside my chest.

I wish I could describe to you how good I felt once I woke up from the procedure! And, I got to go home right away with just a little scar as a reminder of this life-threatening event.

A few months ago, I went in for a 6-month check on my pacemaker and they told me they won't need to see me for 10 more years, when I'll probably have to have my pacemaker swapped out.

So I guess I'll have my next appointment when I'm 98!

It's remarkable to me how advanced things are these days. But thanks to you and me supporting the hospital and helping buy state-of-the-art equipment, Rouge Valley has top notch programs with highly-skilled physicians looking after us.

In fact, I found out that I was actually pretty lucky to live in our neighbourhood because Rouge Valley is the cardiac centre for our entire region (all the way up to Peterborough!). That means that if you have heart problems, like me, we don't have to go far from home to receive expert care and treatment. But I also know that this incredible program with its high-tech equipment is only there because our community supports the hospital.

You helped save my life!

Thank you for your loyal support of our hospital and for making sure Rouge Valley has what it needs to run excellent programs like the cardiac care centre. It really is donors like you that have made the difference on that, just like they have made a difference in so many areas of the hospital.

You can probably imagine though, that the pressure to keep pace with new treatments, better equipment and the latest staff training is enormous. And probably like you, I have difficulty picturing how they do it. But I do trust the good folks at our hospital to keep investing in the right stuff to be able to offer you and me and our families the best care possible, right in our neighbourhood.

That's why I decided to become a monthly donor more than 10 years ago. And that's why I hope you will join with me again this holiday season to make a special gift to our Rouge Valley hospital. Having read my story, I'm sure you understand why I want to give the gift of health to someone else.

Please show the hardworking doctors and nurses at Rouge Valley how much you appreciate their dedication by sharing a gift of health this holiday season.

Thank you again for remembering our hospital this giving season. Together, you and I will make sure the good folks at Rouge Valley can continue to take great care of our families no matter when we need them.

Warmest season's greetings,



John "Pappy" Elston
Rouge Valley patient and monthly donor



Here I am saying goodbye to some of the staff right before I left the hospital after having my pacemaker put in.