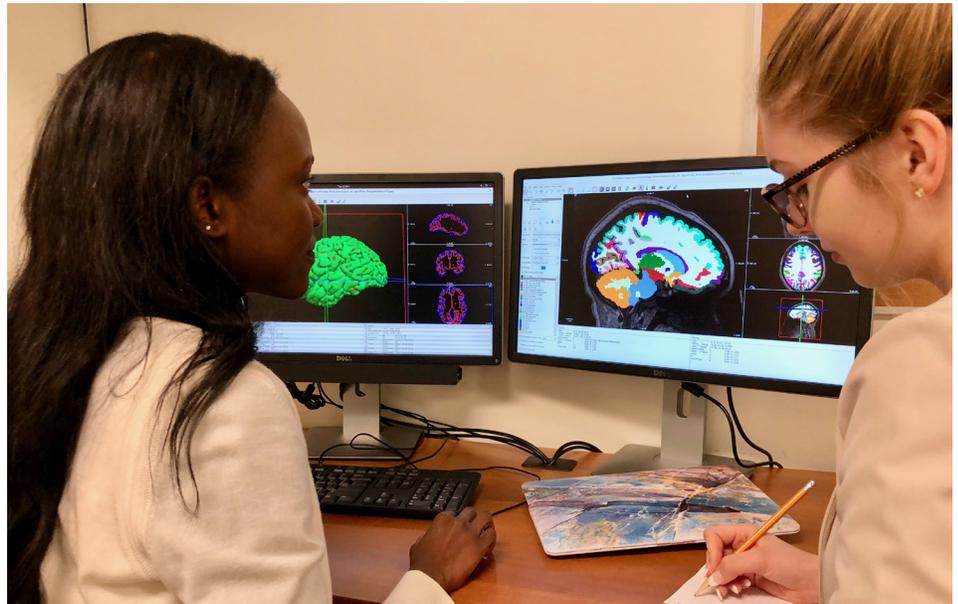


# Better research leads to better treatment



## The Royal receives \$1.5M anonymous donation for mental health research

**F**unds will help scientists explore biomarkers for suicide ideation, advance treatment for major depression and study the impact of COVID-19.

A transformational gift of \$1.5M from anonymous donors through their fund at the Ottawa Community Foundation will help three key research initiatives at The Royal's Institute for Mental Health Research (IMHR) make profound advancements to improve mental health.

### The donation will support research on:

- Examining physical indicators in the brain called biomarkers to understand the biological underpinnings and consequences of depression and suicide.
- The mental and physical toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare workers.

- Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) as a new treatment for people with persistent depression.

“As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, and as the stigma around mental illness slowly dissipates, more and more people are reaching out and asking for help. We want to make sure the best possible care is there for them. Research plays a key role in that,” says Joanne Bezzubetz, PhD., President and CEO, The Royal. “The Royal's new strategy is focused on co-creating access, hope and new possibilities. We are grateful for this generous gift that will help drive innovation and research that are integral to achieving this vision.”

“The Ottawa Community Foundation is very pleased to be part of the ground-breaking research this gift will make possible,” says Bibi Patel, Vice-President of the Foundation. “The donors who are making this generous donation have given much

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## One year later...



Just days off the 2020 Inspiration Awards, the Royal Ottawa Foundation team packed up notebooks, laptops and courage and headed home for what was considered to be a few weeks of working from home.

One year later, everything has changed and nothing has changed at the same time.

In this unprecedented year, the Royal Ottawa Foundation wants to acknowledge the multitude of sacrifices made by the donor community. Continuously inspired by the reinvention and resiliency required to allow this dedicated team to continue their mission of raising money and mental wellness awareness.

Despite the annual work plans that had to be re-written, budgets recast and revenue hoped for forecasted - the Royal Ottawa Foundation held to the mission to support and serve the community. With this optimism, there were several opportunities to adapt and innovate.

New platforms were adopted for virtual events and engagement (with

record results!) and patients began to receive their care online (a thank you to Telus for their partnership with tablet donations).

This led to over 30,000 virtual visits since April, which does not include those done over the telephone.

Despite the need for mental health services increasing, most services were forced to temporarily close.

To meet the rising demand, the Royal Ottawa Foundation put out a rallying cry to support a new rapid access clinic, known as “C-PROMPT” at The Royal to quickly address those urgent mental health needs. The clinic ended up serving over 900 patients in four months.

This clinic has now evolved to become the Prompt Care Clinic, which is based around a similar model to C-PROMPT. This clinic will provide specialized mental health assessment and therapy for individuals with a mental illness. The services are complementary to other hospital and community-based mental health services and are available by referral from a family doctor or psychologist.

You've read the headlines; there is every indication, both internationally and across Canada that there will be a higher demand for mental health services long after the pandemic has ended. As a result, to help address this need, The Royal has launched a new five-year strategy, reflecting input from hundreds of clients, families, physicians, clinicians, scientists, staff and community partners.

The pandemic road has been long with ongoing and unexpected turns. As we move into the spring season and a vaccination strategy in Ontario coming together, there is renewed optimism. However, we must remain vigilant and steadfast in keeping one another safe.

The Royal Ottawa Foundation is proud of all we have accomplished and hope you will continue to put your faith and philanthropic dollars in mental health care and research where, together we focus on providing better mental health access, care and new possibilities.



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

# The Upside of supporting mental health care



**N**iraj Bhargava is a serial entrepreneur with a passion for making a difference in his community. He is the founder and CEO of The New Energy Group and NuEnergy.ai. As a leader in artificial intelligence (AI) governance, his company creates solutions to navigate the challenges of delivering ethical and principled AI. In addition to measuring the trustworthiness of AI applications, Niraj also volunteers his time as a member of The Royal's Board of Directors, and Chair of the Innovation Committee.

*“There’s so much more we can and should do for mental health in our community. Supporting The Royal is a way to support our friends, family, colleagues and ourselves.”*

“Like so many others, I look to do what I can to support our community,” he says. “When my best friend died by suicide five years ago, I knew that I wanted to support The Royal and mental health. There are many people in our community who are not getting the support they need and deserve.”

One way that Niraj is hoping to make a difference and further his support for patients and families at The Royal is through an organization called The Upside Foundation.

The Upside Foundation enables founders of early-stage, high-growth Canadian companies, to build social responsibility into their business by pledging equity to the charity of their choice, and joining a community of like-minded entrepreneurs. The team at NuEnergy.ai are inspired by giving back to the community as they work hard to build a start-up success.

Niraj hopes to encourage other entrepreneurs, like himself, who are building companies and want to make a difference in the world, to consider working with The Upside Foundation and choosing a charity that resonates with them.

“The concept of sharing a piece of your equity pie as a contribution is unique and resonates with me and many other founders,” explains Niraj. “Asking us for a big financial donation from our start-up companies isn’t likely in the beginning, but with The Upside Foundation, a gift to our charity of choice could ultimately be much larger in the end.”

The Upside Foundation connected these dots and has created a win-win for both socially conscious entrepreneurs and charities. “Mental health touches all of us,” says Niraj. “There’s so much more we can and should do for mental health in our community. Supporting The Royal is a way to support our friends, family, colleagues and ourselves.”

We are so grateful to Niraj for his volunteer work with The Royal, for caring about mental healthcare in our community and for planning a meaningful gift to The Royal in this unique way.

For more information about designating a gift to The Royal, in this or other ways, contact Cynthia Little, interim President and CEO, the Royal Ottawa Foundation for Mental Health, at **613-722-6521 x 6874** or email [Cynthia.little@theroyal.ca](mailto:Cynthia.little@theroyal.ca).

## Donations at work

Here are just a few examples of how donations have enhanced the lives of clients at The Royal:

1. Provides vital training for staff in areas like CBT, DBT and autism. This training helps staff to better care for the youth patients.
2. Many scientists in the IMHR are able to fund ground-breaking research studies that are changing and improving the ways that we care for patients.
3. Purchased important equipment, like pressure relieving mattresses and wheelchair cushions, in addition to DVD and CD players, wall murals, and outdoor furniture and flowers for the Geriatric program's courtyard.
4. The Brockville Mental Health Centre was able to open a client-run café to equip clients with life and work skills to help them transition back into the community.
5. Important equipment that has the ability to transform the lives of patients is now available. Some examples include picnic tables in the various department courtyards, a ping-pong table and exercise equipment for all departments to use.
6. Provides life skills in the Occupational Therapy kitchen, where patients run the Bakeology Program, and Occupational Therapy Computer Lab, where patients can complete their education while receiving care at The Royal.
7. Purchased holiday gifts and special meals. Feelings of loneliness and isolation during the pandemic are real for many patients.
8. Purchased hundreds of resource materials and books for our youth patients and their families. These additional resources are helping to better care for youth patients.
9. Helps transform the lives of patients with art therapy workshops, gardening therapy, and providing grocery gift cards for patients with limited income.
10. Hosting the important "Is It Just Me?" program, that educates secondary school students about mental health.
11. Renovated two Brockville patient and family visiting rooms, creating a more comfortable and uplifting environment for patients and their families who use this space daily.

*The staff at The Royal are so grateful to donors for helping take care of our community each and every day.*





## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

# Importance of mental health in the Muslim community

**S**adaf Ebrahim is the President of the Canada Pakistan Association (CPA) and the Outreach Coordinator for the South Nepean Muslim Community (SNMC). She is also a passionate advocate for The Royal.

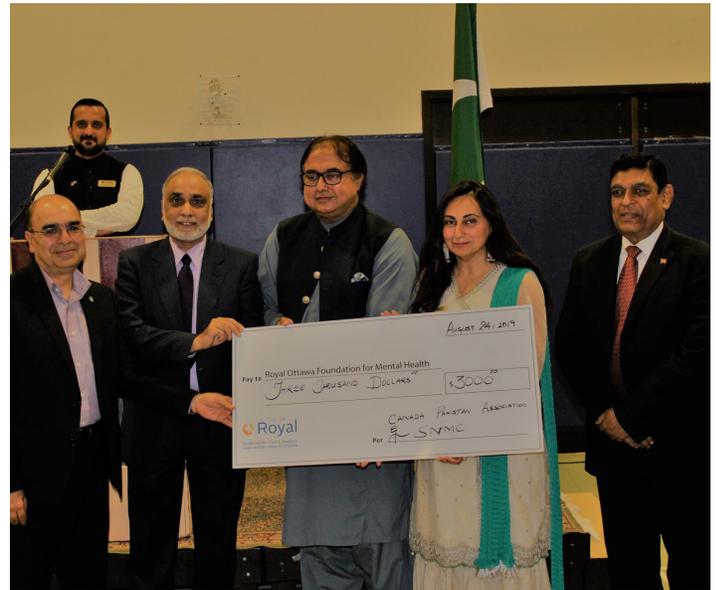
Her goal is to create more awareness and less stigma around mental health within the Muslim community in Ottawa. “Mental illness is still taboo in my community and many people who are suffering don’t want to talk about it,” says Sadaf.

Sadaf recounts her own childhood living in Pakistan with a mother who lived with untreated mental illness.

*“Mental illness is not a shameful thing and the work being done at The Royal is important for our community.”*

“I remember when I was around 10 years old, my mom suffered with severe depression and anxiety, and because it was untreated, my siblings and I also suffered,” Sadaf recalls. “I was the oldest and had to miss school often to take care of my siblings when my mom wasn’t able to.”

Prior to COVID-19, Sadaf was organizing various events for several years through both organizations, in support of The Royal, including the annual CPA Eid dinner. Their mandate is to celebrate, preserve and promote the cultural and religious identity of Pakistan, while being positive contributors to the multicultural mosaic of Canada. SNMC offers many social, educational and spiritual services to the community, while operating within the objective of cooperation to develop the Muslim



*Thank you Canada Pakistan Association*

contribution to the Canadian community. Both organizations are committed to improving our community.

Sadaf talks about mental illness to inspire other people who might feel the stigma and are nervous to reach out for help. “Now I have the courage to talk openly,” she says. “Mental illness is not a shameful thing and the work being done at The Royal is important for our community.”

We are so grateful to Sadaf, the South Nepean Muslim Community and the Canada Pakistan Association for their longstanding support of The Royal and for changing the conversation around mental health in the Muslim community in Ottawa.

## COVER STORY: cont'd

thought and consideration over a period of years to finally come to a decision that would mark their legacy gift to our community. We are honoured to work with donors who believe in making positive, systemic and sustainable change that would benefit the increasing number of people battling mental health issues, especially as we grapple with the profound

impact the current pandemic will have on so many.”

“There is still so much about the human brain and mind we don’t understand, both in health and in illness. As our understanding grows, it will improve our ability to provide patients with more personalized and effective care. That is where research comes in,” states

Dr. Florence Dzierszinski, President of the IMHR and Vice President of Research at The Royal. “Innovative research in mental health and addictions is bringing us closer to finding answers to some of the biggest questions that currently exist within the mental health and addictions care landscape.”

# Celebrating inspiring mental health leaders



Host Rick Campanelli celebrates five community leaders, including the president of Carleton University.

**M**ore than 450 people came together virtually on March 4, 2021, with host Rick Campanelli to honour individuals for their contributions to mental health advocacy and awareness. This event celebrates the passion of people committed to making the world better, the determination to triumph through hardships, the courage to speak up, and the resolve to help break down the stigma.

**The Royal was proud to highlight:**

- **Transformational category:**  
*Dr. Benoit-Antoine Bacon*
- **Community category:**  
*Michael Dixon*
- **Personal category:**  
*Charlotte Smith*
- **Youth category:**  
*Samantha Nadon*
- **Young researcher:**  
*Dr. Jennifer Phillips*

The Inspiration Awards are made possible thanks to many generous sponsors, including presenting sponsor TD.

“At TD, we have been a proud partner of The Royal Ottawa for the last seven years and are thrilled to continue our work with the foundation through the Inspiration Awards this year,” said Tara-Lynn Hughes, Senior Vice President, Greater Ontario Region, TD Bank. “Support for mental health is needed now more than ever, and the work being done to recognize and celebrate people committed to breaking down the stigma around it is so important.”

Over the past 18 years, the Royal Ottawa Foundation has recognized more than 90 individuals and groups who are breaking down barriers, being community builders, and increasing awareness of mental health.

When asked about the ceremony, interim President of the Royal Ottawa Foundation, Cynthia Little

stated that, “Annually, the Inspiration Awards recognize some incredible people in our community who are working to make life better for those living with mental illness. Every year, we come away inspired and proud of the support for The Royal and the cause of mental health. This message of community expresses that no one has to be alone in their mental health journey.”

This year’s 18th annual Inspiration Awards, presented by TD, raised over \$415,000 in support of patient care, comfort, and much needed research at The Royal.

## 2021 VIRTUAL INSPIRATION AWARDS



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## Meet a Run for Women leader



**Let's raise  
some help**

Let's walk or run for women's mental health.  
[runforwomen.ca](http://runforwomen.ca)

NATIONAL SPONSORS



**M**any of us have had the intention of touching base or reaching out to friends more often than we actually do. On January 25, 2019, Debbie Beresford-Green, assistant deputy minister at Health Canada, had an intuition to reach out to a friend she had not heard from or seen active on Twitter in a while. She knew he was still healing from an accident and had suffered a concussion.

Her intuition helped save her friend's life.

He now calls her his 'energy angel' – for he had been contemplating ending his life on that very day. Instead he contacted The Royal and began his journey towards healing.

When The Run for Women, brought to you by the LOVE YOU by Shoppers Drug Mart program™ went virtual last year, Ms. Beresford-Green felt it would be a great way to support mental health and empower her team at Health Canada.

In 2020, the Ottawa Health Canada team had 272 teammates participate in the event and raised over \$11,000.

Debbie says, "With the COVID-19 crisis affecting every aspect of our lives, now more than ever, our mental health matters. Women are disproportionately 'bearing the brunt' of coronavirus crisis. Last year I joined 26,000 Canadians who participated in the Run for Women, brought to you by the LOVE YOU by Shoppers Drug Mart™ program, by joining the Health Canada team. Physical health – walking, running, moving at any speed, contributes greatly to our mental wellness. On July 11, I look forward to again supporting Canadian women living with mental illness, as well as my personal mental wellness. I invite all Canadians to join me. Together we are unstoppable!"

The Women's Mental Health Program at The Royal is an innovative program that addresses the unique way women experience mental illness, treatment and recovery because of differences in biology and social roles.

**Walk or run for women's mental health on July 11.**  
*Join 2021 Awesome Royals at [runforwomen.ca](http://runforwomen.ca)*



# SAVE THE DATE

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2021

*If you would like to join hundreds of community leaders as a Breakfast Table Captain, please email [events@theroyal.ca](mailto:events@theroyal.ca) for more info.*



## We are The Royal

If you have never been inside this beautiful building, enjoy this short video and meet Team Royal, we bring the hope.

[www.theroyal.ca/WhyWeNeedYou](http://www.theroyal.ca/WhyWeNeedYou)

## A day in the life of a community health nurse

This winter, we armed seven community health nurses with phones and selfie sticks and asked them to capture a typical day in their world. This seven-part series captures a small sense of the incredible work being done for those in need in our backyards and rural areas. A great deal of our Royal care is delivered far beyond our three sites.



[www.theroyal.ca/communitycare](http://www.theroyal.ca/communitycare)

## Join us for an hour of engagement, education and inspiration!



**April 22: 7 p.m.**

**Dynamic Dads**

*Tips for being an emotionally healthy father.*

**May 26: 7 p.m.**

**You've got to move it, move it!**

*The benefits of exercise and your mental health.*

There are many ways to stay connected to the Royal Ottawa Foundation and learn about the care and research you support.

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