

CRITICAL CARE Appeal



Hello, my name is Kathryn Johns,

Kathryn Johns and her loving family.

I am living proof that critical care can save lives. At 38, you never think a heart attack could happen to you, yet here I am.

I never imagined I'd be writing this letter and sharing my story with you, but I feel compelled to do so because of the immense gratitude I have for the treatment I received at Barwon Health.

The equipment, expertise, care, it all came together to give me, not one but two, second chances at life.

It all began on a summer's morning in 2018, just days before my 39th birthday. I woke up at 4 am to my two-year-old son Ollie crying, and as I went back to bed I felt an uncomfortable pressure in my chest. I thought it was indigestion, something I could wait out. But after 30 minutes, the pain wasn't going away. I knew something wasn't right. I woke my husband, Darryl, and we decided I should go to the hospital just to get checked. I even drove myself to Barwon Health's Emergency Department, not fully understanding the seriousness of what was happening.

Within hours, I was in the Cath Lab, and a stent was placed in my heart. I couldn't believe it. I was a young, healthy and active woman, with no major health issues and I was having a heart attack. I had two beautiful children at home, a loving husband, and a fulfilling career as a nurse, at the very hospital I had been admitted to in fact. But there I was, lying on the table, with my heart being fixed before I had even fully grasped the situation.

In the cardiac world there is a saying 'time is muscle', the longer the tissue is without oxygen, the more cardiac muscle damage occurs. I was lucky to have time on my side.

I was so fortunate to have received the care I did, and I went on to live my life. Back to work, back to my family, and back to what felt like normal. But I never stopped thinking about what could have happened if I hadn't been able to get the right care, right when I needed it most.

Then, 14 months later, it happened again.

It was the same time of night. I knew what was happening this time. I could feel it in my chest. We called an ambulance and when we arrived at University Hospital Geelong, it was confirmed. I was having another heart attack. This time, things were much worse. The stent from my first heart attack had blocked off completely, and another artery was severely narrowed. I needed surgery, and I was terrified.

But Barwon Health's critical care team were there. Every moment mattered, and because of the advanced equipment, the rapid response and the skilled professionals who were by my side, I survived once again.

Put simply, I wouldn't be here without the care I received at Barwon Health.

Now I'm back to spending time with my family and I'm living my life. I'm able to watch my children grow up, attend their events and be the mother and wife I always hoped to be.

I often think about how close I came to losing all of that. If the equipment and expertise weren't available to me in those crucial moments, I wouldn't be here today. I wouldn't be able to witness my children's milestones, like my daughter's primary school graduation, or cheer my son on in his first footy game. I wouldn't have seen the joy on their faces when I returned home from the hospital.

That's why I'm writing to you today. Barwon Health needs our help. The Critical Care Appeal is raising funds for vital medical equipment that will continue to save lives. Lives like mine. This equipment is essential for providing the best care, when it matters most.

I'm asking you, from the bottom of my heart, to donate today. Your contribution will help ensure that more people can receive the same lifesaving care I did.

My biggest fear during this experience was that I might not get to see my children grow up.

My wish is for more lives to be saved so more people get the chance to watch their children grow up. To be there, to guide them, support them and teach them, and to help them be the best versions of themselves they can be. I am only one story of so, so many.

What I do know is that if University Hospital Geelong was not at our doorstep and I didn't get the care I received in such a time efficient manner from such highly skilled staff, I would not have the outcome I had. I am 100 per cent confident of that.

Barwon Health didn't just care for me, they saved my life.

And now, I'm asking for your help to ensure that others get the same chance I did - twice.

Warm regards,

Kathryn Johns

Kathryn Johns today.

