

# Victoria Angel news

PUBLIC CORD BLOOD BANK NEWSLETTER | ISSUE 3 • SPRING 2016



1] Live and Let Live 2015, Casa Loma, October 2nd, 2015 2] Special guests Ammoye and Tash Lorayne 3] Leah and Mark Watkin 4] Committee members: Laura Sciacca-Di Battista, Melissa Baldassarra, Michela Guglietti, Jane and Dr. Michael Virro, Marisa Rocca and Siglia Di Battista 5] Silvana DiCenzo, Anthony DiCenzo, Carmelina DiCenzo, John DiCenzo and Leigh-Anne Chiaravalle 6] An evening inspired by James Bond 7] Guests enjoying the Blackjack and roulette tables

On Friday, October 2nd, 2015 as guests entered the beautiful grounds of Casa Loma they were transported to Monte Carlo for an evening inspired by James Bond, **Live and Let Live 2015**.

The event was a huge success, raising over \$255,000.00 and welcoming 400 guests. Fashioning beautiful gowns and tuxes, guests played Blackjack, Roulette, and Poker for incredible prizes while being serenaded by the musical duo 'ginTonic' and special guests Ammoye and Tash Lorayne. Later in the evening Leah and Mark Watkin shared their courageous story of their daughter, Sarah's fight against leukemia. Sadly, Sarah was unable to find a stem cell donor to replace her damaged bone marrow and passed away Christmas 2014 at the age of seven. Their story was a humbling reminder of why raising awareness about Victoria Angel's program is so valuable.

The event would not have been possible without the leadership of Executive Director, Jane Virro and



the fundraising chairs: Melissa Baldassarra, Carla De Gasperis, Michela Guglietti, Marisa Rocca, and fundraising cabinet members Anca Badea, Mike Baldassarra, Leslie Gallagher, Cassandra De Gasperis, Siglia Di Battista, Steve Kanellakis, Greg Leadbeater, Claudio Nalli Seminerio, Kim Naylor, Laura Sciacca-Di Battista, John Tobias, and Dr. Michael Virro

A special thank you to our title sponsor, Apotex and the other 30+ sponsors, prize donors, and supporters who made the event a **Spectre**-acular evening!

2015  
**LIVE AND  
LET LIVE**

## GIVING TUESDAY



Victoria Angel's Giving Tuesday campaign was a success! Giving

Tuesday is a global day of giving that occurs on the first Tuesday following Black Friday and Cyber Monday to help kick off the giving holiday season.

This campaign generated nearly \$4000 in our inaugural year!

Victoria Angel is looking forward to making this an annual campaign.

Thank you to our generous 2015 "Giving Tuesday Angels."

## WE HAVE RELEASED A CORD BLOOD UNIT FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT!

Victoria Angel Registry of Hope is proud and excited to announce that our public cord blood bank has released an umbilical cord blood unit for medical treatment! The frozen stem cell unit has been shipped across the Atlantic and was transplanted into an adult leukemia patient who needed a life-saving bone marrow transplant.

We know little about this patient. I like to think that he or she is surrounded by loving friends and family

who now have hope and help thanks to Victoria Angel's Canadian charity.

Special thanks to the young baby and parents who donated this incredibly special gift from a Toronto-area hospital, and sincere and heartfelt thanks to all who support Victoria Angel. We are only able to provide this life-saving treatment because of financial donations and the hard work of each of our volunteers.

— JANE VIRRO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*umbilical cord blood truly does save lives*

# WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Victoria Angel Registry of Hope is pleased to announce that the Platinum Angel Volunteer Award has been bestowed to Dr. Elisabeth Semple for her exemplary dedication to our charitable public cord blood bank.

Dr. Semple has devoted countless volunteer hours toward developing and maintaining the public cord blood program at the highest quality standard. Her ardent dedication to the charity is a key factor in our success.

This award expresses respect and heart-felt thanks to Elisabeth for sharing her time, expertise and passion for cord blood banking with Victoria Angel Registry of Hope.

Dr. Elisabeth Semple



## too precious to waste

“It breaks my heart to see people struggling with health issues. I feel compelled to help if I am able to do so. I have made it my life’s work (as a health lawyer) to help patients and families struggling with legal issues arising from health problems. I have donated my hair several times so that it can be used to make wigs for children with cancer. You could say that health is my passion. Donating my son’s cord blood was yet another way for me to help people facing a health care crisis. Victoria Angel made the process incredibly easy for us. There was not too much paperwork and they took care of the arrangements. I plan to teach my son about the importance of helping others, and look forward to telling him about the contributions he has already made.” - LISA FELDSTEIN

## OUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

In Canada, all cord blood banks are required to meet standards and guidelines set forth by CSA and Health Canada. In addition, many respected Canadian family and public banks have voluntarily been accredited by AABB (American Association of Blood Banks) and/or the Foundation for Accreditation of Cellular Therapy, (FACT).

In our last newsletter, we announced our Health Canada inspection success. Since then, we’ve completed another rigorous inspection by three international FACT inspectors and achieved the gold standard in cord blood banking globally. This not only demonstrates our commitment to quality, but it gives transplant physicians an additional level of confidence when selecting cord blood units from our bank for medical use.



Health Canada  
Inspected & Compliant



## IN NEED OF LIFE-SAVING TRANSPLANT

Aaryan Dinh-Ali is a 10-year-old Toronto boy with aplastic anemia—a type of anemia that is life-threatening without a stem cell transplant. Aaryan is in desperate need of a cord blood or bone marrow stem cell donor. His mixed Afghan and Vietnamese ethnicity is rare and makes finding a suitably-matched donor extremely difficult. Our charity is committed to increasing awareness and encouraging as many expectant parents as possible to donate their baby’s cord blood.

As we continue to push forward, we will have Aaryan and his family in our minds. Every cord blood unit we receive is

one unit closer to finding the life-saving match that these sick patients need.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/aaryan-stem-cell-1.3383790>



## VICTORIA ANGEL CARDS

We are excited to be offering blank cards for sale all year round! Each card has the story of Sarah Watkin, a young Toronto girl who lost her battle to leukemia. Visit our website today to purchase your box! [www.victoriaangel.org](http://www.victoriaangel.org)



## MARKHAM STOUFFVILLE HOSPITAL BECOMES COMMITTED PARTNER

Thanks to funding from our **Live and Let Live 2015** gala, we have been able to proceed with a unique “Committed Partner Program” at Markham Stouffville Hospital!

This new program means that each Markham doctor, midwife & nurse is now educating every patient about cord blood. Our **Too Precious To Waste** campaign allows parents to make an unbiased informed decision about the fate of their baby’s cord blood.

