

Living Well

Fall/Winter 2026 Newsletter



Reclaiming strength

You ensure people affected by cancer can improve their fitness on their own terms

For Jay Abramovitch, getting involved with The Ottawa Cancer Foundation was a way to help people affected by cancer get access to the kinds of supports they actually need. He now sits on the Advisory Committee, bringing his lived experience as a colon cancer survivor to the role.

“I think it’s so important to hear directly from patients, caregivers, and families about what they actually want and need,” Jay explains.

Jay quickly noticed a programming gap locally following his cancer diagnosis. A lifelong athlete who loved endurance events and the outdoors, he was determined to regain his strength and return to the activities that mattered to him... But the cancer-specific fitness options he could find were all gentle and restorative in nature. Those programs have an important place. But they weren’t what he needed.

“I want to sweat again,” Jay remembers thinking. “I want to breathe hard. I want to start feeling like my body’s getting back to what I was.”

He’s a strong advocate for fitness programs that meet people where they are, recognizing there’s no one-size-fits-all approach to cancer. For one person, a meaningful challenge might be walking around the block. For another, it might be an intensive strength workout. What matters is having the opportunity to choose.

“I felt like other people were deciding what my limits were for me because of a diagnosis,” Jay explains. “A lot of people want to push hard physically as part of pushing back against cancer.”

He points to the importance of fitness in maintaining day-to-day functionality throughout treatment and beyond. “Life goes on even when you’re a patient. You want to be able to play with your kids, to walk the dog, to take out the trash. All of that depends on maintaining and building strength.”

Fitness can also provide something cancer takes away all too easily: a sense of confidence in your own body.

“You have so much taken away from you during a cancer experience,” Jay says. “Working toward a fitness goal can offer an opportunity to accomplish something again and to discover what your body can do.”

Most recently, Jay’s body allowed him to hike the Grand Canyon! He’s determined to continue testing his own limits and advocating for other people affected by cancer to have the same opportunity.

Your generosity helps adapt fitness programs for individual goals and needs. Thank you for supporting people in our community like Jay!



The Ottawa Cancer

Foundation has followed me through every step of my journey,” Jay shares. “They do such a good job of providing people with options.”

~ Jay Abramovitch,
Client and Advisory Committee member



More than movement

You're helping people affected by cancer access personalized fitness programming

While exercise is important for health during and beyond cancer, knowing where (and how) to start an individual fitness journey can feel overwhelming. A partnership with the Ottawa Cancer and Lymphatics Centre aims to change that.

"We were seeing people afraid to move, and not really knowing how to move," says Madison Malette, the centre's director and a registered kinesiologist.

The Ottawa Cancer Foundation first partnered with the Ottawa Cancer and Lymphatics Centre to offer a variety of educational workshops. When the Community Cancer Hub West opened, the organization was a natural fit to facilitate fitness programming.

"The relationship transformed from sheer education to implementation as well, which has been just an absolute joy," says Madison. "We're so honoured to be able to partner with the foundation and be a piece of that puzzle."

The Community Cancer Hub West now offers a one-hour Strength & Stretch class every Monday, where participants can build strength and improve flexibility in a welcoming and supportive environment. An experienced instructor from the Ottawa Cancer and Lymphatics Centre prioritizes safety and offers modifications to suit individual needs.

"We truly mean it when we say all levels," Madison explains. "Come where you're at. Do what you can with what you have. And we'll work with you."

Donor support ensures instructors have the expertise to meet every participant where they're at. Classes are facilitated by a kinesiologist who understands how cancer treatment can affect the body, from neuropathy and balance challenges to changes in heart rate, breathing and stamina.

Strength & Stretch classes are unique within the Ottawa landscape, offering vital community for people affected by cancer and their caregivers.

With support from donors like you, The Ottawa Cancer Foundation can continue expanding fitness programming in the future, offering more opportunities to tailor classes to individuals' unique circumstances.

You're ensuring people affected by cancer can access fitness programming that meets them where they are.



From our Kitchen to Yours

Chocolate Coconut Energy Bites

These energy bites are quick and easy to throw together, no-bake, and free from added sugar - the perfect sweet & salty snack for a busy day!

Makes: 12 bites

Ingredients:

- ½ cup pecans or nut of choice
- 15 whole pitted dates, roughly chopped
- ½ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1 tbsp coconut oil or oil of choice
- 1 ½ tbsp cocoa powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp water

Directions:

- Place pecans in food processor and pulse until roughly chopped.
- Add remaining ingredients and process until mixture starts to form.
- Using a tablespoon measure, spoon out mixture and roll into 12 balls.
- Store in the fridge in an airtight container for up to two weeks, or in the freezer for up to 3 months.



It's safe and so beneficial

to move if you have cancer or you're living beyond cancer."

~ Madison Malette, B. Sc., R. Kin, CLT, CYT200

Kinesiologist and Director, the Ottawa Cancer and Lymphatics Centre



Circle of Hope Monthly Giving Community Member Highlight

Through the lens of an employee affected by cancer

Every day I see the people who walk through our doors, each one carrying their own story. **I have seen firsthand what it means to have somewhere to turn when cancer enters your life.** Recently, cancer became part of my own story in a way I never expected.

In May of this year, I was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma. Thankfully, everything points to it being localized and non-invasive. But I have also learned that even when the news is expected to be good, hearing the word “cancer” in relation to your own health changes things.

For years, I thought what I had was simply a large mole. I eventually showed it to my family doctor and was reassured that it was nothing to be concerned about. In fact, I waited another two years before my instinct kicked in and told me I need to have it removed. It was sent for pathology, and I was completely unprepared when the results came back showing that it was cancer. I also learned that I would need more skin and tissue removed, this time with a plastic surgeon.

I could see the shock on the plastic surgeon's face when she saw that the mole had regrown so quickly since the initial removal and she made it a point to schedule me in quickly.

I have now had that surgery and am left with a four-centimetre scar, a lasting reminder of something I never expected to experience. The tissue has been sent for pathology, and now I wait again. We fully expect the results to confirm that the cancer is localized and non-invasive, and

I am very fortunate that this is most likely where my story will end. But until you hear those words, “we got it all,” there is still that worry in the back of your mind.

Every day at The Ottawa Cancer Foundation, I see people facing cancer experiences far more difficult and complicated than mine, and I would never compare my experience to theirs. But I understand a little differently now how quickly the word “cancer” can change things.

Something I want more people to know about The Ottawa Cancer Foundation is that a cancer diagnosis rarely affects just one person. It ripples through a family, affecting the caregivers who step in, the friends who worry, the coworkers who want to help, and all those who suddenly find themselves supporting someone they love through something none of them expected.

I have seen the worry it has created for my husband and how difficult it is to hear that someone you love has cancer. He is waiting for the same answers I am but experiencing all of this from a very different place.

Our programs and services are not only here for the person diagnosed with cancer. They are here for family members and caregivers too, because they can need support of their own.

I am incredibly grateful to be part of this work, both as an employee and as a monthly donor.



I give monthly

because I want people in our community to know that when cancer enters their lives, whether they are the person diagnosed or someone walking alongside them, there is a place they can turn for support.”

~ Lorraine & husband Donald
Senior Executive Assistant and Board Liaison

I invite you to join me and become a member of the Circle of Hope Monthly Giving Community. You'll

offer year-round support to anyone in our community affected by cancer.

JOIN NOW!

Scan the QR code
or visit us online at



ottawacancer.ca/monthly-giving



A Warm Welcome

Please join us in welcoming Laura-Lee Bradie to The Ottawa Cancer Foundation as our new Vice-President, Philanthropy.

Laura-Lee brings nearly two decades of experience in philanthropy and relationship building, having helped nonprofit and healthcare organizations grow their impact through major gifts, capital campaigns, and planned giving. She is passionate about building meaningful partnerships and connecting donors to causes that make a difference.

In her new role, Laura-Lee will lead our philanthropic strategy and donor engagement efforts, helping strengthen the generosity, partnerships, and support that make our work possible.

A dedicated volunteer, Laura-Lee has served on several nonprofit boards and committees and provided pro bono support to organizations across Canada. She is also a Certified Association Executive (CAE) and a Chartered Marketer through the Canadian Marketing Association.

Outside of work, you'll likely find her kayaking, paddle boarding, hiking, and spending time with rescue dogs, which hold a special place in her heart.

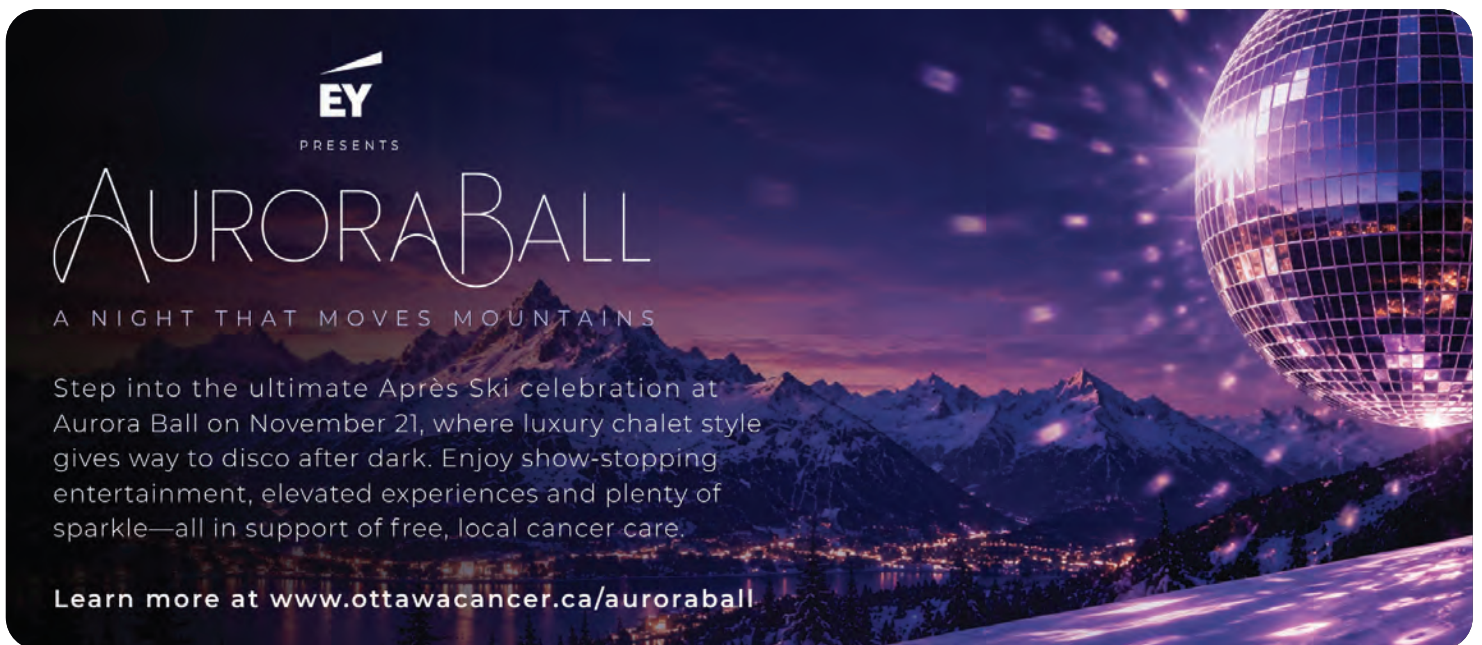
We are excited to welcome Laura-Lee to our team and look forward to the relationships, insight, and fundraising expertise she brings as we continue strengthening the network of care, support, and resources available to people and families affected by cancer across our region.



People come to

The Ottawa Cancer Foundation supports people at some of the hardest moments of their lives, and what we do for them matters enormously. It's a privilege to do work that impacts so many lives. Through my work, I hope to make sure we're always there."

~ **Laura-Lee Bradie,**
Vice-President, Philanthropy



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PRESENTS

AURORABALL

A NIGHT THAT MOVES MOUNTAINS

Step into the ultimate Après Ski celebration at Aurora Ball on November 21, where luxury chalet style gives way to disco after dark. Enjoy show-stopping entertainment, elevated experiences and plenty of sparkle—all in support of free, local cancer care.

Learn more at www.ottawacancer.ca/auroraball