

# PROFILE

## Grateful Patient Helps Shape the Future of Healthcare

Jerry Krueger is grateful for the dual cochlear implants he received at Sunnybrook – so grateful in fact he has decided to leave a gift to the hospital in his Will to advance the science behind these innovative devices.

A small, complex device, a cochlear implant provides a sense of sound to people with severe to profound hearing loss from inner-ear damage. Unlike a hearing aid, it bypasses the normal hearing process and replaces it with electric signals that stimulate the auditory nerve. Recipients learn to interpret those signals as sound and speech.

For Jerry, his cochlear implants changed his life in many big and small ways, including discovering a newfound love for The Beatles only just a few years ago.

Since childhood, Jerry had hearing difficulties. “I got through school by lip reading,” he says “and only got hearing aids after I married.” While hearing loss has its challenges, Jerry always coped well, thriving both in his work as a property manager and in his family life as a devoted husband to his wife Marzena, and, father to his daughters Catherine and Victoria.

It wasn't until 2006 that Jerry began to

experience severe ear pain. An avid diver, Jerry developed an inner-ear infection while scuba diving in the Cayman Islands. Visits to two physicians did not resolve the issue. It was only after seeing Dr. Julian Nedzelski, a head and neck surgeon in Sunnybrook's Department of Otolaryngology that the actual problem was diagnosed and rectified. At that time, 'Dr. Ned,' as Jerry warmly refers to him, told Jerry he was a good candidate for a cochlear implant. Jerry was nervous about the procedure, but he knew he was in good hands. The implant was a success and, after a year of therapy, he learned how to interpret sounds and his hearing really came into focus. Jerry received a second implant in 2013 — enabled through a lottery system at the time. That implant was a success, too.

Since then, Jerry has discovered a love of music in stereo, something he couldn't hear well before. For several years, he also mentored others who received cochlear implants. Today, Jerry feels his hearing now is better than ever. Jerry is clear: “There isn't a day that goes by that I don't benefit from my implants!”

Many times, Jerry has expressed his gratitude to Dr. Ned, who is now retired,



Jerry Krueger and wife Marzena.

and his current physician at Sunnybrook, Dr. Joseph Chen. But Jerry wanted to do more, so he decided to remember Sunnybrook with a gift in his Will.

Jerry has designated his future legacy gift to the area of cochlear implants. He wants his gift to help advance cochlear technology and enable shorter wait times for those who need implants. As Jerry says, “I know my gift won't affect me directly, but it brings me comfort to know I'm investing in the future of health care. It feels rewarding to be making an impact.”

Today for Jerry, life is good. He is approaching retirement, enjoys time with his wife and daughters. He is a World War II history buff and continues to enjoy reef and wreck scuba diving as often as he can.

Working with Jerry to shape his future gift was simply an honour and a delight. Sunnybrook is enormously appreciative of the foresight and generosity of donors like Jerry who enable the hospital to continue to invent the future of health-care.

*Submitted by  
Sunnybrook Foundation*