

*For Immediate Release*

## **Foundation Seeks Items for Revamped Fundraiser**

**LONDON, Ont.** – London Health Sciences Foundation is heading into the final weeks of its acquisition drive for items to be auctioned off at the 21<sup>st</sup> Country Classic Auction on November 8. The impending closing date will allow time for design, printing, and distribution of the auction's catalogue.

“Contributors first and foremost are interested in helping the community,” says Barb Farr, who works with the foundation’s sponsors. “We like to point out that it also gives their companies or organizations exposure to a select audience.”

Items donated to date include: unique paintings, collector watches, diamond jewelry, yard and garden equipment, fabulous trips to places like Banff, Hawaii and Paris, platinum seats to a Maple Leaf game, and box seats to a Toronto Raptors’ game. However, it’s not just the auction that will be the attraction this year. The foundation will be promoting an entertainment experience that should lead to a sellout crowd.

“We are still accepting auction items, but time is running out if a business or individual wants to donate,” says Laura Trewartha, CCA Project Manager. “We have to begin creating the catalogue by the first week in August.”

The annual event has grown over the years and now attracts about 1,000 philanthropic-minded attendees. This foundation signature event is as far from the conventional black-tie fundraiser as you can imagine. The casual dress code, including optional jeans and cowboy boots has been a big hit over the years, and it fits the venue. For the first 20 years it was held at Birnleigh Farms, north of London. This year it moves to the Western Fair’s Agriplex in the heart of the city.

“The auction is getting a facelift, and not just with the change of venue,” Trewartha says. “We are keeping the best of the lively auction atmosphere while increasing the entertainment and fun-factors with activities like dancing and mechanical-bull riding. It will be an evening you won’t want to miss.”

All this excitement has a purpose – the evening’s proceeds will support cutting-edge, minimally-invasive surgery at LHSC. The hospital has achieved 14 Canadian, North American or world firsts since 1997 involving minimally-invasive surgery, including the first Canadian totally endoscopic, closed chest, robotic-assisted by-pass surgery on a beating heart in May 2007.

“Patients in southwestern Ontario benefit from the great skills of all our surgical teams and we share our advances worldwide, but we couldn’t achieve what we have without the support of our donors,” says Dr. John Denstedt, Chief of Surgery, LHSC. “This event gives us a chance to let hospital supporters know about the benefits and the needs of minimally-invasive surgery.”

Among its many benefits, minimally-invasive surgery can reduce trauma, reduce the chance of infection, and decrease patient recovery time.

Colin Nash is a volunteer member of the event's steering committee. He has recently experienced the benefits of minimally-invasive surgery while having damaged cartilage repaired in his knee. Even before his surgery Colin, and his parents, were longtime LHSC supporters. Nash Jewellers has donated auction items to previous auctions and this year is one of the event's sponsors.

"We are very lucky in London. I'm sure that in LHSC is one of the best hospitals in Ontario - if not Canada or North America," Nash says. "Ensuring they have the best equipment, advanced technology and can attract the best doctors is something we feel is important to support."

Anyone interested in supporting the event by donating an auction item can contact Laura Trewartha at London Health Sciences Foundation at 519-685-8409, or by visiting the foundation's website at [www.lhsf.ca](http://www.lhsf.ca) and clicking on the Country Classic Auction icon.

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**London Health Sciences Centre** has been in the forefront of medicine in Canada for over 130 years and offers the broadest range of specialized clinical services in Ontario. Building on the traditions of its founding hospitals to provide compassionate care in an academic teaching setting, London Health Sciences Centre is home to Children's Hospital, South Street Hospital, University Hospital, Victoria Hospital, two family medical centres, and Lawson Health Research Institute - a joint research initiative with St Joseph's Health Care, London. As a leader in medical discovery and health research, London Health Sciences Centre has a history of over 30 international and national firsts and attracts top clinicians and researchers from around the world. As a regional referral centre, London Health Sciences Centre cares for the most medically complex patients including critically injured adults and children in Southwestern Ontario and beyond. The hospital's 10,000 staff, physicians, students and volunteers provide care for more than one million patient visits a year. For more information visit [www.lhsc.on.ca](http://www.lhsc.on.ca)

**London Health Sciences Foundation** is a Better Business Bureau accredited charity, linking our community and health care experts—including physicians, allied professionals, researchers, staff and educators—together in pursuit of medical excellence at London Health Sciences Centre. Established to strengthen London Health Sciences Centre's ability to provide the highest quality health care for patients in Southwestern Ontario and beyond, we offer opportunities to support discovery and innovation in research, education and patient care at our hospital. To see how donations create positive moments changing the lives of patients, their families and friends, and to see how you can support patient care and innovation at London Health Sciences Centre, visit [www.lhsf.ca](http://www.lhsf.ca).

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For more on medical achievements and minimally-invasive surgery at LHSC visit [www.lhsc.on.ca](http://www.lhsc.on.ca)