

# FOUNDATION

## Meet **BRIANA EDMUNDS**

The month of October brings a lot of different things for different people. For most people in Tallahassee, October brings football games, cooler weather and Halloween. For Briana and Jesse Edmunds, it brought in the opening of their new restaurant, Hawthorn, and a new level of scary that wasn't Halloween.

It was Friday, October 13, 2017, and Briana Edmunds had been having on and off again stomach pains for about a week. As she and her husband, Jesse, were still fairly new business owners in Tallahassee, they weren't in a position yet to afford a self-employed health insurance plan – and being just 28 years old and young and healthy, didn't think they would ever really need it. At 2 am on that Friday morning though, Briana's stomach pains became debilitating and she decided to go to the Tallahassee Memorial Emergency Center-Northeast. Naturally, the first thought that came through Briana's head was that she didn't have health insurance.

"I immediately told them I didn't have insurance, so I asked them what can I do and what can I expect, but it was clear that was not their priority and that my health was instead," said Briana. "They just told me 'Don't you even worry about it – we're going to take care of you first and then we can deal with that afterwards.'"

After being seen by a doctor, it was determined that Briana would need to have her gallbladder removed. She was referred to meet with Lucas Watkins, MD, general surgeon at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH), the following Monday so they could schedule her surgery. Briana met with Dr. Watkins and his team who explained to Briana that her surgery would be a simple outpatient procedure as long as nothing progressed rapidly.

"From that Monday to Thursday though, it just got exponentially worse each day," said Briana. "I got really sick and couldn't keep a thing down. It went from just a stomach pain to just horrible, horrible symptoms that affected everything to the point where jaundice started to set in by Thursday."

When Briana, who had to be wheelchaired in to her pre-op appointment Thursday, got back to see her nurses, it

only took one look at Briana for them to tell her she needed to be taken care of immediately and would be admitted. After getting checked-in and hooked up to IVs, Dr. Watkins determined that she had gallstones that had left her gallbladder, and they would have to do an endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) – a procedure that allows an endoscope to go down her throat to retrieve the loose gallstones – and then would follow up with the actual gallbladder removal the next day.

"That Friday morning I had the ERCP procedure where they actually found and removed three gallstones, and

then we moved forward with the gallbladder removal that Saturday," said Briana. "I think I was so sick and dehydrated even before going in to either of the procedures that I wasn't surprised when I still felt awful when I woke up afterwards. I really don't remember much of those two days, but I started vomiting up blood the next day on Sunday, so they took me down to the ICU (intensive care unit)."

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The next day, Dr. Watkins, along with Michael Mangan, MD, gastroenterologist, found that there was a tiny area in Briana that was refusing to clot, which was what was causing Briana to throw up blood, so they performed a quick procedure right there in the ICU to cauterize the bleeding.

“After that, I was in the ICU for four days, but the staff there was incredible. Ms. Connie was my nurse for three of my four days, and I don’t think I’ll ever forget her. She made me feel like I was one of her daughters, and she took care of me like that,” said Briana. “And I can’t say enough about Dr. Watkins. He was amazing through the whole entire process and through every bump in the road we would hit.”

When Briana moved out of ICU and back up to her regular room, she and Jesse were hopeful they would be going home in a few days. That Friday morning though, Briana’s enzyme levels were up, she couldn’t keep down her food,

and her doctors told her they weren’t comfortable discharging her yet and would need to do more tests to figure out what was going on.

Briana’s doctors found that her bile duct was constricted a bit which caused bile backup – meaning her pancreatic enzymes weren’t escaping the way they should have been and fluid was pocketing around her pancreas. On Sunday, she had a drain put in to help get rid of the fluid.

It wasn’t until Wednesday that they were able to remove the drainage tube and Briana was finally able to start eating/drinking a little on her own.

“I remember finally being able to have Gatorade and a popsicle – and it was the best popsicle I’ve probably ever had,” said Briana. “From there, things finally started getting better. I started having blood work done again to make sure my levels were getting back to normal, met with a dietician because I had lost 40 pounds, and was doing exercises to get my strength back.”

There is always a small, miniscule percentage with every procedure where patients may not respond perfectly, no matter how flawlessly the procedure may go. For Briana, she ended up being that tiny percentage every step of the way. When all was said and done, Briana ended up having a 19-day stay at the hospital.

“Briana’s experience showed us some of the good and the bad of medicine. We saw the natural complications of a disease we encounter everyday like gallstones. We saw the severity of illnesses that can be caused by a disease and treatments. And we saw how significant illness can impact a young, healthy individual for an extended period of time,” said Dr. Watkins. “But we also saw how TMH helps the people of the community. We saw the care and compassion of all the people in the hospital. And most importantly, we saw how a patient’s drive to fight and recover can lead to great outcomes.”

For Briana, it was a combination of both her drive to get better to return back home to her family, her dogs and her work, and also the indispensable support she received from both her family and TMH.

“It was no doubt a tough time, but there were two things that really helped us along the way – one of which was how TMH didn’t hesitate to help me even though we didn’t have insurance. It wasn’t even a priority at all for them, so it allowed me to just focus on getting better,” said Briana. “The second part was Animal Therapy. It was the best day of my life when I got a visit. I was at a point where I mentally felt like I was good enough to go home, but I knew that my lab work was saying I wasn’t ready – so when this beautiful black lab came in, I just bawled happy tears. When Animal Therapy was there, it didn’t feel like a hospital anymore.”

Just a few months later, Briana is completely healthy again, and she and Jesse have only focused on the good that has come of Briana’s health scare. Knowing how important it was to have TMH on their side when it came to providing care and working with them on their insurance, the Edmunds’ – who employ many people through Liberty Bar & Restaurant, El Cocinero, The Hawthorn, Liberty Catering & Events and Liberty Farms – want to make sure their employees feel the same level of reassurance and peace of mind that TMH provided them. The Edmunds’ are currently in the process of getting a company healthcare insurance plan for all of their employees – something that many know is very rare to come across in the restaurant industry.

“The entire staff – and not just the doctors, nurses and personal care attendants (PCAs) – but every single person I interacted with was just so compassionate, caring and generous. You really felt that they loved their job, loved working there and just wanted to get you better,” said Briana. “Every single person made such an impact on me and made it memorable for all the right reasons. I felt so loved from everyone and am so grateful for the care I received while there. And now we’re so excited to be involved with TMH and the Foundation so we can start giving back.”



If you’re a grateful patient and are interested in sharing your story or learning how you can get involved, please contact the TMH Foundation at [Foundation@TMH.ORG](mailto:Foundation@TMH.ORG).

# GG

## Golden Gala XXXV

Tallahassee's premier black-tie event, Golden Gala, took place this April 19 featuring the No. 1 best-selling duo in music history, Daryl Hall & John Oates. From securing top-tier talent and curating a culinary experience, to handcrafting floral displays and steaming linen, countless hours went into this event that proved to be an energizing – and immaculate – one for all involved.

Thank you to all who attended, sponsored and supported Golden Gala XXXV, which is hosted by the Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) Foundation and supports TMH's vision of transforming care, advancing health and improving lives.

Head over to [TMH.ORG/GoldenGala](http://TMH.ORG/GoldenGala) to view an image gallery and full recap of the night.



Benefiting the D. Mark Vogter, M.D. Neuro-Intensive Care Unit  
at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare

## THE TALLAHASSEE TENNIS CHALLENGER

Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare and its Foundation want to thank everyone who helped make the 19th annual Tallahassee Tennis Challenger another wildly successful event. With 46 matches that drew professional tennis players from all over the world, this sold-out event benefitted the Tallahassee Memorial Vogter Neuro Intensive Care Unit – the only neuro intensive care unit in our region.

Patients in the Vogter Neuro ICU receive treatment for everything from advanced stroke care, aneurysms and traumatic brain injuries to memory disorders, spinal cord injuries and more. The Tallahassee Tennis Challenger has raised more than \$750,000 throughout the years to directly benefit patient care in the Vogter Neuro ICU. A special thank you to all of the attendees and sponsors who helped make this happen.

For the final results and a full recap including winners and photos, visit [tallahasseechallenger.com](http://tallahasseechallenger.com).

# WHY I GIVE

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## STEPHEN TAYLOR

Stephen Taylor, a devoted father and 2017 Tallahassee Magazine Top Single Honoree, selected Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare's (TMH) Children's Center as his chosen charity. The Top Singles event raises thousands of dollars for various charities, with \$2,500 going to the Children's Center, a place Stephen has been personally connected to since his daughter, Kaelyn, was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia at age four.

"In a word, her diagnosis was tough. You never think it will happen to your own kid," said Stephen. "I never could have imagined my own daughter being diagnosed with cancer, especially at such a young age. I didn't even know what Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia was."

Kaelyn was treated at UF Health Shands Children's hospital in Gainesville, and received blood transfusions and other intermittent treatment at the Kids Korner in TMH's Children's Center. The only unit of its kind in Tallahassee, the Kids Korner is a special outpatient area for young patients that offers lab work, blood transfusions, endocrine studies, IVs, pre- and post-operative care, and recovery from procedures requiring sedation.

"Going to the Kids Korner was great. It was so nice not to have to travel all the way to Gainesville, and it's such a beautiful facility that it makes doctors appointments a breeze," said Stephen. "The Children's Center did so much for me and my family."

After seeing how much TMH's Children's Center helped him and his daughter through an incredibly difficult time in their life, Stephen knew he wanted to figure out how he could give back. When he was selected to be a Tallahassee Top Single, Stephen knew exactly who he would choose for his charity.



"It was a no-brainer choosing Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare. They have given my daughter and I so much, the least I could do is give back," said Stephen. "TMH is a true pillar in our community, and I had such a great time raising money for them that I now try to do more even after the event has ended. My whole experience at TMH was amazing and I'm glad that I can now help them in return."

Stephen and his daughter, who is now 11-years-old, are back to their regular, cancer-free lives. Stephen and Kaelyn come back to the Kids Korner a few times a year to do blood work and regular check-ups.

"If I could give advice to other parents going through a child's cancer diagnosis, I would tell them to never lose faith," said Stephen. "There is a light at the end of the tunnel and you can never give up hope. Know that the doctors and nurses are there for you, and they will help you every step of the way."

**For more information about the Tallahassee Memorial Children's Center or how you can give back, please contact Judi Wills at [Judi.Wills@TMH.ORG](mailto:Judi.Wills@TMH.ORG) or 850-431-5904.**

# THE PEGGY AND RAY MUNROE, SR. FAMILY CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO THE 5TH ANNUAL “HAVE A HEART” CELEBRATION

100% OF DONATED FUNDS FROM THE EVENING WILL BE DESIGNATED FOR  
THE RAY B. MUNROE, JR. PHD ENDOWMENT AT THE TMH FOUNDATION  
TO BENEFIT THE TALLAHASSEE MEMORIAL HEART & VASCULAR CENTER

MAY 10, 2018 | 6:00 P.M.  
MAYS-MUNROE SHOWROOM  
2791 CAPITAL CIRCLE NORTHEAST  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32308

Admission is complimentary. Donations of any amount welcomed at the door.

Enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres, espresso martinis, beer, wine, soft drinks  
and music while participating in:

- ~ Live Auction ~ Silent Auction ~ Raffle Items ~
- ~ Presentation by cardiologist Frank Greidler ~

Valet parking will be available.  
Further information at [info@Mays-Munroe.com](mailto:info@Mays-Munroe.com) or 850-385-9495.

Be sure to like the Mays-Munroe Facebook page and/or follow [maysmunroe](#)  
on Instagram for updated auction items and event information!



THE RIDE FOR HOPE

## The Ride for Hope - In Memory of Lou Farrah

June 9, 2018 at the North Florida Fairgrounds



- A fun-filled cyclist and wellness event for all ages, where proceeds will benefit the Tallahassee Memorial Cancer Center.
- Provides four distance rides ranging from an 11-mile to a 68-mile metric century through the rolling hills and canopy roads of Tallahassee.
- Features music, food, face painting and fun for the whole family.

Visit [TheRideForHope.com](http://TheRideForHope.com) for registration and more information.



**Mickey S. Moore,**  
TMH Foundation  
President

“Nurse managers are one of our key groups of colleagues that greatly impact the very reasons we are all here.”

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

At Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH), we recently began a new program designed to showcase the roles individual departments play in the organization – we call it “A Day in the Life.” As a recent participant in the program, I had the honor and pleasure of spending an entire day shadowing our nursing operations team, nursing supervisors and the transfer team, and walked away with a more in-depth understanding of just how special their work is.

At the beginning of every day, the care of our patients starts with aligning and positioning our nurses to service all floors of the hospital to the very best of our ability. Considering all that is involved – the patient census, the alternating arrivals/discharges/surgeries, and not to mention the expected, but unpredictable, daily changes – it is a challenging task to maneuver the pieces in place to reach high patient satisfaction. I was so impressed with how so much information was received, charted, tracked, adjusted and shared. It is clear communication is key to their success.

Nurse managers are one of our key groups of colleagues that greatly impact the very reasons we are all here – the quality of care. I witnessed one of their morning huddles and all were welcoming, warm and focused. The topics they reviewed ranged from discussing staffing and supply levels, to Joint Commission and therapeutic duplication. Granted, a lot of it went above my non-clinical head, but the one thing I noticed was how to-the-point and high-paced everything was – they had no time for inefficiency. It was obvious to me that they strive to do the very best for our patients within the rules and regulations provided.

As the morning progressed, I transitioned to a rotation with our nursing supervisors – a group of amazing multi-taskers and communicators. I observed over and over again how they fervently – yet with composure and focus – received, tracked, managed, moved and coordinated any and all information pertaining to our patient placement. My first thought was how impressive they were. My second thought was ‘how do they keep up this pace and not lose their minds with all of this information?’

They shared that one secret to their success was being anticipatory – especially when planning patient movements around surgery and for downgrades (when the patient is getting better). Unfortunately, the patient upgrades (when the patient is getting worse) come unexpectedly and often – thus, another success secret shared was being adaptable. Our transfer team, who are constantly answering the calls for help from around our community and region, deserve the utmost gratitude and praise. Through their “switchboard,” so many lives are dependent on their timeliness, accuracy, composure and compassion for a safe arrival at TMH.

I then ended the afternoon completing rounds with one of the nurse supervisors. From a big picture perspective, the first half of the day, they spend all their efforts to place both nurses and patients in the best possible quality of care situation they can, based on the prior evening and current census. Then, as they put it, the rounds in the afternoon can be a sort of “trauma tango” – a tense, and sometimes hurried, exercise of balancing resources to meet ever-changing needs of patients and departments. Together we walked every floor of the main hospital (by stairways, not elevators) and at times were fast-walking like those racing in the Olympics – I could barely keep pace (says a sub-three-hour marathoner). The care and commitment for patients was evident everywhere I went, and our nursing supervisor consistently executed a welcoming approach to each engagement.

As I ended the day back in the operations office, I committed to continuing to visit with them now and then, and commended all of them for their work. As a colleague, I am a proud member of the TMH team, and this entire group truly inspired me. Since coming to TMH, I have wondered many times just how all these moving pieces come together – EMS, surgeries, in-patient, out-patient, upgrades, downgrades, pre-op, post-op, staffing, discharge, to name a few. I have now seen the light – and it shines brightly on nursing operations!

The TMH Foundation Update is produced by the Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare Foundation  
1331 East Sixth Avenue, Tallahassee, FL 32303 | 850-431-5389 | Foundation@TMH.ORG

To make a secure online donation, we invite you to visit [TMHFoundation.ORG](https://www.TMHFoundation.ORG).

