



# **BYTOWN FIRE HOCKEY LEAGUE INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT BENEFIT FOR BOWKER DEREK'S STORY**



**Our brother Derek has faced a series of complex and serious surgeries over the past few years due to vascular issues, specifically with his aortic artery.**

**In late August, Derek was admitted to the hospital after experiencing severe chest pain. Following numerous tests, he was paired with a specialized vascular team who developed a plan to address his condition. After two weeks at the Civic Hospital, his team decided Derek needed a fifth major surgery—this time involving the insertion of a 100% synthetic aortic artery to eliminate the risk of future aneurysms.**

**The surgery was an extensive 12-hour procedure led by four doctors, who were pleased with the outcome. However, they made it clear there were serious risks involved, including the potential for paralysis. During Derek's recovery, blood flow to his spinal cord was compromised, causing a spinal cord infarction that has left him paralyzed from the waist down.**

**Following his surgery, Derek spent over a month in the ICU at the Heart Institute before being transferred to the Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre. He will be there for the next few months, working tirelessly with therapists and specialists who are helping him regain strength and independence. Despite everything, Derek remains positive and motivated, setting ambitious goals for himself and making steady progress.**

**Derek has been incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support from friends and family since his surgery, as well as the care provided by the dedicated doctors and staff who have supported him every step of the way.**

**Many of you know how much Derek has given to others over the years, especially through his work with CHEO (Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario). He organized the "Hockey for Little Hearts" firefighter charity tournament for many years, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to support this incredible cause. Now it's our turn to give back to Derek in his time of need.**

**Members of the Ottawa Fire Service and the Bytown Fire Hockey League are proud to announce our second annual hockey tournament at the Slush Puppie Centre in Gatineau in Derek's honor. All proceeds will go toward supporting Derek's recovery, including equipment and services he may need to continue building his independence.**

**We would love for you to join us in celebrating and supporting one remarkable man. Derek was thrilled to hear about the tournament and is looking forward to being there in person. Let's make this event unforgettable!**

**We hope to see you in February!  
As Derek would say, "This truck don't get stuck."**