

# Because of You

December 11th, 2014 by Penelope Burk

In an operating theatre, Dr. Grant is up to his elbows in someone's intestines. Dr. Grant saves lives and makes a very comfortable living doing so.

The first time he thought about becoming a doctor was in high school. A guest speaker, a heart specialist, had come to his private school on Career Day to talk about what it takes to get to the top of his profession. Dr. Grant was enthralled. His young imagination took flight and he was hooked. Career Day took place in the school's new auditorium (part of a recent campus-wide expansion) and generous corporate sponsorship covered the cost of the event. You raised the money for both.

Dr. Grant applied himself in high school, helped substantially by access to state-of-the-art labs and excellent teachers. Your fundraising made them possible. He applied and was accepted to a prestigious university. While the fees were substantial, they represented only a portion of what his education actually cost. The rest was quietly subsidized by donors whose generosity and foresight reached back over two hundred years. Their willingness to give was a product of your encouragement; their action a result of your diligence. Dr. Grant's university education was made easier along the way by several scholarships. You raised that money, too.

Through his undergraduate and graduate degrees, internship and residency, you were there, working invisibly alongside him to help Dr. Grant accomplish his goal. Your fundraising built the residence he slept in, the library he studied in, the classroom he learned in and the campus hospital in which he practiced.

Twenty years later, here he is in Operating Theatre Six in the Northeast Wing of a world-class hospital, deep into his work. You raised the money for Theatre Six as well as Theatres One through Five. You raised the money to build the Northeast Wing and, come to think of it, the entire hospital.

On the table lies the unconscious but soon-to-be-grateful patient. She has been through a lot lately, but conclusive evidence from a CT scan has put her here today. Her life will be saved. You raised the money that paid for this equipment. Surrounding Dr. Grant is a plethora of machines, devices and tools keeping his patient alive and making his work possible – all thanks to your fundraising efforts.

Surgery goes well and Dr. Grant transfers responsibility to his five-member team, all of whom got to where they are today because of donors – and you. He's thinking ahead to tonight and a well-earned diversion. He's going to see a new play that's generating a lot of buzz. Tickets were very hard to get. When he sinks into the unexpectedly comfortable seat (donor's name on the back – you did that) in the newly refurbished historical theatre (you again), he'll read the program while he waits for the curtain to rise. You found the sponsors for this publication, sold the ads, and negotiated the printing at cost.

The play will not disappoint. Shouts of "bravo" and three curtain calls will bring the newly discovered playwright and his director to the stage. The director will make an impassioned, off-the-cuff speech about encouraging young talent; the playwright will talk about his inspiration and the intricacy of his dialogue. No one will mention the equally intricate grant application you wrote that raised the money

that launched the New Playwrights Development Program that brought these two artists together that made tonight possible.

When the evening is finally over, Dr. Grant will step out of the theatre into a night that will be colder than expected. He will turn up the collar of his coat and quicken his pace towards his car. Without noticing, he will pass under a sign that reads, "Global Environment Association, Foundation Office".

Three stories up, a light will still be burning.