

SUMMER 2020

KGHFUNDATION

Giving Changes Everything.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

TENDING THE VINEYARD

After working in healthcare for over 40 years, I have never experienced anything like the pandemic. Seemingly as quick and efficient as a cycle of breath, COVID-19 arrived in our community. And immediately, literally, threatened to take that breath away.

Much has changed in such a short time. Part of this experience has required that each of us clearly examine what we are prepared to stand for.

With this thought in my mind, I read through this edition of our newsletter. It occurred to me that most of the stories can be stitched together along a common thread. One that I think is worth considering in light of our current situation. Stewardship.

I was recently asked, what does it mean to be a good steward of something? Anything? The environment. Healthcare. Breakfast. A quick Google search nets a definition that reads something like ‘the thoughtful and careful management of resources and relationships.’ For me

though, stewardship is less functional and more personal. It feels more like an intentional nurturing of what is important that occurs out of a deep caring – and something I feel I stand for.

Whenever I hear the word stewardship for some reason I always think of a saying by Grant MacEwan that has provided tremendous guidance to my life; “I am prepared to stand before my Maker... with no other plea than that I have tried to leave things in His Vineyard better than I found them.”

There is a more than a hint of legacy embedded in this understanding of stewardship. When the history books are written about the COVID-19 pandemic response in our little region, what will our legacy be? It gives me great pride to think about the myriad answers to this question.

I have had the privilege to bear witness to the excellence that is embedded in every aspect of our healthcare system. The courage demonstrated by our local healthcare staff is worthy of every white

heart that now lines the hallways of KGH, thanks to you. Stewardship is rooted in recognition and acknowledgement. It’s saying to the unseen, unsung heroes in our community – we see you. It’s taking action and showing leadership in the face of challenge to protect that which is most vulnerable. It requires the belief, right down to the core, that it is in action that we make a real difference.

I am proud to be able to witness and, in a small way, be a part of a community so committed to protecting that which is fundamentally important to us all – our health and safety; willing to tend to the Vineyard with such great care.

I hope you enjoy the stories to follow.

Stay well,



Doug Rankmore, CEO
KGH Foundation

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

LOVE LETTERS FROM JOEANNA'S HOUSE



Leading the team of JoeAnna's House staff and volunteers are Nicole Hughes (left) and Darlene Haslock (right).

On March 9, just four months after officially opening its doors, JoeAnna's House faced the grim reality brought on by COVID-19. It was early days in the pandemic, but KGH was already deep into adapting operations. In the coming weeks, local hotels and other hospitality properties would close.

JoeAnna's House provides much-needed accommodation for families of patients from outside the central Okanagan. If the house were to close, these families would have nowhere to go. And so a commitment was made to stay open and do whatever needed to keep guests safe while being close to their loved ones in hospital.

The stories that follow offer a small snapshot into life at JoeAnna's House during COVID-19.

..... Cindy McBurnie, Vernon, BC

Cindy arrived at JoeAnna's House on January 24, two days after her husband, Kevin, was transferred to KGH from Vernon Jubilee. He was in a coma suffering acute respiratory distress. His chances of survival were low. Cindy stayed a total of 42 days before Kevin's condition stabilized enough for him to be transferred back to VJH. "I can't even put into words the depth of my gratitude for JoeAnna's House. I know COVID-19 challenged everyone in health care, but I just wanted to be close to Kevin. I'm so thankful for the superhuman efforts of the staff to maintain the service JoeAnna's House offers. I don't know what I would have done without it."

..... Allie & Clay Rasmussen, Creston, BC

Allie and her mother, Sylvia, arrived at JoeAnna's House on March 13. Allie's high risk pregnancy required her to stay close to the neonatal intensive care unit at KGH. They stayed just over a month until little Jeremiah was born on April 19. Allie's husband Clay says, "Our stay here provided such relief! Knowing that we could stay here for such a long time without worry directly impacted Jeremiah's birth in such an amazing way. The entirety of the BC interior is truly blessed by JoeAnna's House and its staff."

..... Bonnie Oicle-Chale, Cranbrook, BC

As Bonnie made her way to Kelowna, she found herself navigating treacherous weather conditions on HWY33. It was late at night, raining, with deer all around. She was overwhelmed with worry for her husband Jim, who had just experienced a massive heart attack. "Jim was airlifted to KGH. I quickly threw a few things in a bag and started driving. As I got close to Kelowna I realized that the pandemic was impacting my ability to find accommodations. Thankfully, I was welcomed to a beautiful, warm environment at JoeAnna's House. The team was caring and friendly. It made a very stressful situation so much easier. Thank you, thank you!" After having three stents put in his heart, Jim made a speedy recovery and was discharged after only three days in hospital.

..... Shirley Jones, Montrose, BC

After having a stroke, Shirley's husband, Wayne was transferred to KGH from Kootenay-Boundary Regional Hospital. "I had the privilege of staying at JoeAnna's House for 33 days while my husband was being treated at KGH Rehab Centre. This beautiful sanctuary full of warm, often scared, guests has been a blessing. The staff and volunteers are very special and the location is such a treasure; steps from the hospital, views of the lake and wonderful walking paths. Being able to stay at JoeAnna's House meant so much to me and my husband. With the pandemic causing hospital lockdowns, non-essential closures and physical distancing, JoeAnna's House was a refuge when I needed one most."

STAFF PROFILE: JAYMI CHERNOFF

CODE PANDEMIC

When the history books are written, March 12 could very well be the documented day the COVID-19 pandemic response officially began in British Columbia. Late that afternoon, in her address to the province, BC's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, strongly advised against all non-essential travel, detailed self-isolation protocols for those returning from outside the country and introduced a practice that many had never heard of before – social distancing. Just six days later, on March 18, the province would officially declare a state of the emergency.

Jaymi Chernoff, newly appointed
Executive Director of Clinical Services, KGH.

On that same day, March 12, Jaymi Chernoff officially accepted the job as the Executive Director of Clinical Services, Kelowna General Hospital. She had been fulfilling the role on an interim basis for less than 2 months. Prior to that, Jaymi had been demonstrating her rising potential for organizational administration and leadership as the Program Director, Cardiac Services for Interior Health. She's also a mother to two children under seven years old.

The new title is significant, carrying with it the responsibilities of managing all aspects of hospital flow, logistics, scheduling and capacity. Imagine the role as akin to that of a conductor of a large orchestra. Skill, timing, a highly tuned 'ear' and effective communication are the hallmarks of excellence. Under the conductor's direction, the individual musician's efforts give way to the symphony – each instrument doing its part to contribute to become something even more extraordinary. On the other hand, should the conductor lose her way, the result can be disastrous.

When she was offered the job permanently, Jaymi couldn't have known the full measure of what was to come, but she knew the score just got a lot more complicated. And still, she felt ready. She said yes.

In hospitals around the world, coordinated emergency response has been made more efficient through the establishment of Codes. Code Red – Fire. Code Blue – Cardiac Arrest. Code Pink – Pediatric Emergency. To initiate Code protocol, three chimes tone over the hospital intercom, followed by the code, which then activates the dedicated response team and a strict protocol. The codes are extremely important, allowing trained hospital personnel to respond quickly and appropriately to various events while also mitigating concern or panic by visitors and people being treated at the hospital.

But there is no Code Pandemic. Jaymi, along with hospital department managers and the health authority, would have to literally write the score and conduct the orchestra while the musicians were playing.

Jaymi originally trained as a Registered Nurse, a job which she credits for giving her the fortitude to be able to think clearly and act decisively in times of crisis.

"As a registered nurse, when something like this happens, the adrenalin kicks in and your training takes over. You just do what needs to be done," she says. "There was a lot to do and a lot to learn. This was something we had not faced before. It required an incredible team effort. The key was to our ability to stay on top of the disease and work together – people working in harmony with groups they had never worked with before. New collaborations were created and they really came together as one."

"When something like this happens, the adrenalin kicks in and your training takes over. You just do what needs to be done."

Jaymi Chernoff

Preparations were made for a large surge of patients at KGH. Staff were mobilized and in some cases, redeployed. New protocols to manage infected patients were developed. Physical environments in all areas of the hospital were adapted.

While the community dutifully complied with 'stay home' recommendations from the province, Kelowna General continued to provide services to hundreds of patients every day.

It became increasingly apparent that new equipment and patient care items were urgently needed to both avoid cross-contamination and address unanticipated gaps that were arising as a result the pandemic.

Jaymi's role includes working directly

with the KGH Foundation to enlist the help of the community to fund these unanticipated, urgently needed equipment requests. The establishment of the Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund provided a way for the community to directly support their local hospital and health care staff.

"Our teams continue to treat people with cardiac disease, cancer, stroke and everything else the hospital deals with on a daily basis. Managing what we experience every day, plus what we need to do to stop the impact of the pandemic has been the real challenge. That is where our community has provided the most valuable support. As this is new for us we never know what will be the next thing we need, but the community through the KGH Foundation has been with us every step of the way, providing much needed equipment and supports as the need is identified."

While she may be new to the conductor's role, Jaymi knows first-hand the calibre of talent she is dealing with. "I am so proud of everyone at KGH," she states. "Just thinking about their superhuman efforts fills me with emotion. From food service workers, housekeepers, and administrative personnel to nurses and physicians and every part of the hospital and Health Authority, our staff has stepped up. The people of the interior should also be proud of the people who work every day to keep them safe and to help them when they need it."

Unlike most other hospital codes, Code Pandemic can't be resolved in a few minutes, hours or even days. It's becoming widely understood that the health and lifestyle changes brought on by COVID-19 will remain for some time, and may have permanently altered the way in which our health systems are managed.

When asked about how the past couple of months in her new role have affected her personally, Jaymi needs no time to consider her response. "I'm inspired. I love my job. I love this community, this hospital and especially the people who work here."

"We've got this."

STAFF GIVING AND THE WINNER IS...



Winners, Julie Aviani (left)
and Keith Youngston (right)



For many KGH and now Interior Health staffers, the email that comes every second Friday with these words in the subject line produces an instant hit of excitement. And in that split second before opening the email, a flutter of anticipation...

'Is it me?'

In the body of the message, a name - the bi-weekly winner of the KGH Foundation Interior Health Staff 50.50 Lottery. Then comes the total amount won, a sum that is growing increasingly larger since the expansion of the lottery this year to include staff members from other hospitals in the Interior Health region. In fact, the current jackpot hovers around just over \$28,000! That's no small sum. That's a new car. A down payment on a home. University tuition.

The Lottery was initiated in 2012 to raise funds for medical equipment and patient care and comfort items. The first-ever winner claimed just \$1,600. Since then, the staff lottery has netted a staggering \$3.4 million in revenue. That's \$1.7 million in winnings for local healthcare staff, and a matching amount in proceeds going right back in to local healthcare.

In 2020, the Lottery's eligibility requirements were extended from the Central Okanagan to the whole Interior Health region. The launch of the IH wide program has been an overwhelming

success. Now, nearly 2,000 entry forms are processed per draw, compared to the 100 -150 received in past years. The result has been a massive jump in winnings since January of this year – up a whopping 59%!

Lottery proceeds are used to fund services and equipment that serve tertiary programs benefiting patients across IH. As much as possible, funds support needs that have been recognized by staff themselves. For example, every quarter, frontline workers are invited to submit applications for the KGH Foundation's Patient & Family Centered Care (PFCC) grants. Last year, 29 PFCC grants were funded through the staff lotto program, including a much-needed refurbishing of the family room located in the Intensive Care Unit at KGH.

The most fun, without question, is the reactions from the winners themselves! Foundation staff find great joy in calling the winner on Friday mornings. The responses are usually a combination of tears, laughter, shock and lots of gratitude. Many of the winners have used their winnings for home renovations projects, weddings and much needed vacations.

But the best part about the Staff 50.50 lottery?

We all win.



GRATITUDE PROJECTS

A REASON TO SMILE

Elizabeth (Liz) Tremblay is a Kelowna photographer, mother, and a long-standing friend and donor to the KGH Foundation. Over the past eleven years, Liz has initiated several creative projects uniting photography and philanthropy and her small business, Aviva Studios, has contributed over \$56,000 to support the staff, patient care and equipment needs at KGH. In her own words, she shares about her most recent project in support of the KGH COVID-19 Relief Fund.



By Liz Tremblay

I've been a photographer for over 25 years and have been in Kelowna for 12 years now. I am a portrait photographer and I'm continually inspired by the people I work with. There is a level of intimacy that develops through our conversations before and during the shoot. It not only gives me great joy to do what I do, but I am also honoured. Behind each photo is a story – a life, a love, a person.

After the threat of COVID-19 hit our community and we were asked to isolate, I felt compelled to do something to support healthcare staff and Kelowna General Hospital. When my daughter was born, she needed neonatal care. I saw first-hand how important having world-class care so close to home was. I've been a loyal supporter of the KGH Foundation ever since. I feel blessed to have such an amazing hospital in my city and I feel it's important to support our community. I also know our hospital wouldn't be what it is without community support.

I wanted to help fill the void felt in our community as a result of social distancing, especially in those early days. I think we were all feeling unsettled. And alone.

And that's how the 'Isolated but not Alone' front step project was born. The concept was simple. For a minimum \$30 donation, family portraits would be taken on their front step, 100% of all donations would support frontline healthcare workers. Families together, at home. A common purpose – if not literally, figuratively – to support our local hospital when so many of us felt like we wanted to help but didn't know how. I hoped the project would also provide families with a distraction from a frustrating situation and give them something to look forward to.

Like so many aspects of our lives these days, the logistics of the shoots had to be re-thought. Precautions were taken to ensure social distancing was honoured at all times. All forms were filled out online. Donations were only accepted by email transfer. Upon my arrival, I would text the family and then stay well over 6 feet away at all times while taking photos. I used my longest lens (200 mm) which forces me to stay at least 8.5 feet away.

So far I've had over 50 families participate! The response has been wonderful. The smiles are real. I think we are all realizing that there are silver-linings to this pandemic, not the least of which is being able to reimagine our connections with those closest to us

It's been an honour and a privilege to offer families an opportunity to give back, and a reason to smile.

LEGACY GIVING SUPPORTING FUTURE GENERATIONS



Joe and Molly Degrazio

On August 4, 2019, Molly Degrazio passed away peacefully at age 88. She joined her partner in love and life, Joe Degrazio who left his body nearly five years prior. Before

their passing, the couple made a decision to give a gift in the form of a life insurance policy for which the KGH Foundation was the designated beneficiary.

The choice to leave a philanthropic gift in one's Will is often rooted in motivations that are deeply personal. Molly Degrazio worked as a public health nurse for many years in Golden, BC before she and Joe made their way to Kelowna, which would become their forever home. When the time came to make plans for their estate, the Degrazios wanted their legacy to be rooted in advancing healthcare. In particular, they wanted to make provisions for the people working in healthcare and their continued education.

With the proceeds of their insurance policy, an endowment was established in Joe and Molly Degrazio's name. Each year, the interest earned from the endowment supports continuing education for hospital and medical staff. The goal is to enhance the caregivers' ability to provide excellent service and patient care at Kelowna General Hospital.


For many, leaving a legacy gift to the KGH Foundation is a meaningful and important chapter in one's life story. With a little planning and reflection, it is possible for that final chapter to signal the beginning of a new chapter for many others. It is the true meaning of a leaving a legacy, and one we are honoured to be a part of.

Giving Changes Everything.
Learn more at www.kghfoundation.com

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