Foundations

BUILDING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH CARE

Winning Changes Everythin

Weston's Gift

6

Inspiring hope and success for NICU grads

Kidney Care Clinic

World-class renal care close to home

Small but Mighty

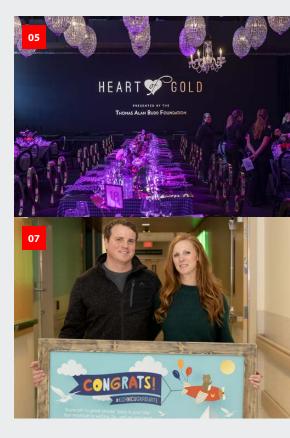
New diagnostic equipment for urology team

KGHFOUNDATION

Giving Changes Everything.

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We humbly recognize and acknowledge that the KGH Foundation operates on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the syilx people.

Cover Photo: Winners of the Lake Life Lottery grand prize dream home, Anokha Babu, Shaheen Ashraf, and their two children.



"The two most powerful catalysts for change are the belief that change is possible, and the courage to try."

Allison Ramchuk

A MESSAGE FROM CEO ALLISON RAMCHUK

THIS IS WHY IT MATTERS

Welcome to another edition of *Foundations*, the KGH Foundation's bi-annual newsletter to you, our donors.

Sharing the stories of the impact of your generosity is one of the most important responsibilities we have. Because the way health care philanthropy works is ultimately based on a promise. It requires that you believe in two things. The first is our mission - that access to excellence in health care must not be limited to those who live in Vancouver or Calgary; that here in Kelowna, we too deserve a worldclass hospital and world-class health care. Secondly, it requires faith that, together with our partners in health care, we will deliver on our promise that giving changes everything. It's a big promise. Your trust in our ability to deliver is the most valuable asset we have.

So the stories that follow matter. They validate your trust and demonstrate how our promise is being kept in real life, in real-time, for real people, every day at Kelowna General Hospital and throughout the communities we serve. Just ask the winners of our Lake Life Lottery grand prize dream home how much of their 'everything' was changed. Ask patients living with kidney disease or men with urological complications how much giving has changed everything for them. Your generosity helped build and continues to sustain JoeAnna's House, the impact of which compounds year after year. These stories also highlight future promises, such as the commitment we are able to make to patients living with neurodegenerative disorders such as dementia, Alzheimer's, ALS and Parkinson's disease, thanks to the return of the Heart of Gold gala.

The two most powerful catalysts for change are the belief that change is possible, and the courage to try.

Though the challenges we face in health care today are complicated, they are not insurmountable. This spring, the KGH Foundation will announce our most ambitious fundraising campaign in our 45-year history. A campaign that promises A New Era in health care for all who live in the southern interior region of BC. Your generosity is the enabler. It also sends a message.

You're not giving up. And neither are we.

With your faith and trust, we will deliver.

In gratitude,

Allison Ramchuk, CEO KGH Foundation

GRATEFUL PATIENT

WORLD-CLASS RENAL CARE, CLOSE TO HOME

Diagnosed with Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD) in his early twenties, Rick Giacomuzzi has required access to specialized renal health care for over 40 years.

PKD is an inherited disorder where clusters of cysts develop within the kidneys, causing them to enlarge and lose function over time.

Indeed, Rick's kidney function did decline steadily over the years. He and his wife, Cindy, suspected that he would eventually require a kidney transplant which involves replacing damaged kidneys with a healthy kidney from an organ donor.

In 2020, Rick entered into the transplant pre-transplant program. Because they share the same blood type, Cindy was ready and eager to give the gift of a healthy kidney to her husband.

But it was not to be. Tests determined that Rick had an antibody that would result in the rejection of Cindy's healthy kidney. Disappointed but not deterred, Cindy was elated to learn about a paired donation program where she could donate her kidney to another patient in need, while Rick received a kidney through a positive match in return, which is exactly what happened in the fall of 2022.

Following his successful transplant surgery, Rick requires life-long, specialized renal care. For Rick and PKD patients like him living in the southern interior of BC, having these services close to home is vital.



Thankfully, Rick and Cindy chose to retire in Kelowna, home to the Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) Renal Services Kidney Care Clinic, which cares for over 1,100 patients each year. Renal care specialists provide each patient with individualized support, knowledge, and tools they need to live full lives while managing dialysis or a kidney transplant.

"Without the Kidney Care Clinic in Kelowna, we would have had to travel to Vancouver for our appointments, which are numerous as kidney function declines," shares Cindy.

"This would have meant more time, expense, stress, and ultimately, a decrease in the quality of life for our family." As a gesture of appreciation for the exceptional care Rick has received, Cindy found a way to give back. During two years as Chair of the Sunshine Ladies Open Golf Tournament in Kelowna, she spearheaded the fundraising efforts to raise over \$4,500 to fund new equipment and a variety of patient care and comfort items for Renal Services at KGH.

Susan Hackett is a KGH RN who specializes in kidney care and knows Rick and Cindy well. "Rick and Cindy have always had a positive, engaged attitude in all aspects of Rick's care," she says. "To see them give back by raising funds to support our services at KGH is truly amazing – donors like them truly make a difference and we are very grateful."

The couple is grateful too. With emotion, Cindy says, "I look forward to a new lease on life for Rick with his new kidney."

KGH FOUNDATION CFO RETIRES

A HEARTFELT FAREWELL



On June 26, 2006, our beloved Chief Financial Officer, Lori Uzelman began what would culminate with a career just shy of 17 years with the KGH Foundation. This March, Lori will retire. She will be dearly missed by all who have had the privilege of working with her over the years. We wanted to celebrate her amazing attributes and incredible contributions. Ever humble, instead, Lori preferred to share her own personal message with all of you.

As retirement looms near I've been given the gift of saying a few words of farewell.

After almost 17 years of employment with the KGH Foundation, the message I want to leave is brief and heartfelt ~ THANK YOU!! These two words hold more meaning than I could ever express in a journey down memory lane. My years with the KGH Foundation have been filled with much gratitude, working with staff and Board members passionate about improving healthcare in our community and region, sharing that passion with our volunteers and donors whose gifts of time, talent and treasure are so incredible and selfless. Your support changes everything. You are the ones who make a difference in the lives of so many and for which I say THANK-YOU!!

Although my profession has been in Finance & Accounting all these years, occasionally I get to express a creative side so I leave you with two final thoughts: an acronym that best describes our organization and an old Irish blessing. (K)elowna – Kind (G)eneral – Grateful (H)ospital – Helpful (F)oundation - Family

"May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be ever at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face and the rain falls softly on your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of his hand."





Photos of Lori and some of her family members so eager to spend more time with her.



HEART OF GOLD GALA

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

After being postponed for two years, the KGH Foundation's iconic Heart of Gold gala returned this past September, pushing boundaries and exceeding all expectations thanks to the enduring faith and support of our generous community. At the end of the evening, a record-breaking \$1.6 million had been raised to help establish a centre of excellence in brain health at Kelowna General Hospital.

"It was perfect," says Lynn Archibald, the Creative Director for the Heart of Gold event for the past 14 years. "The theme this year was 'Pushing Boundaries', and that is exactly what we are doing."

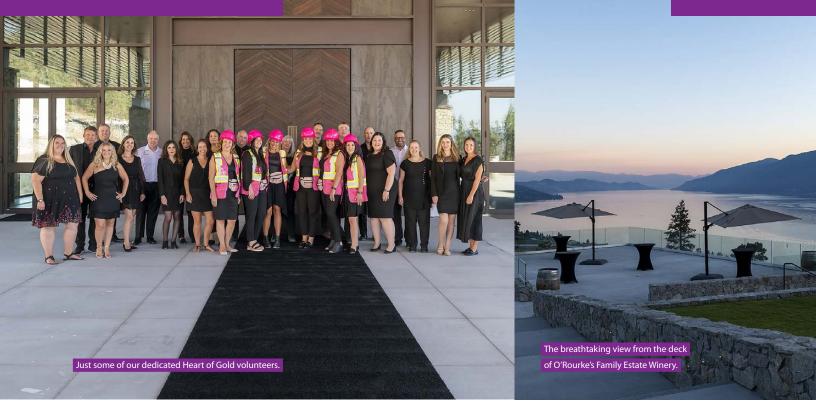
It has been four years since the last Heart of Gold gala in 2018, which took place in a parking lot that would eventually become the location of JoeAnna's House. Over \$1.2 million was raised that evening. JoeAnna's House has now been built, and celebrated its three-year anniversary in November 2022. Hundreds of families every year are now able to stay close to their loved ones receiving advanced care at KGH, thanks to the generosity of donors and in no small measure, the success of the Heart of Gold gala.

Since 2016, the Heart of Gold gala has benefited greatly from title sponsorship of the Thomas Alan Budd Foundation and its namesake, Tom Budd. A retired investment banker, Tom lost both his sons when they were young adults, and now devotes much of his time and energy to philanthropy as a way to keep their legacies alive. In addition to the title sponsorship, Tom Budd gives generously in support of Heart of Gold causes, including over \$300,000 at this year's event in support of brain health.

"I wasn't sure what I was going to say tonight because I have fear, I have uncertainty, I have less hope – but I still have faith."

Tom Budd





It is an area of health care that is vitally important. Neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's, ALS, Alzheimer's and dementia are devastating to those who are suffering, and their families. KGH is now home to some very bright and ambitious neurologists. The goal is to establish KGH as a hub for world-class research, innovation and most critically, delivery of care close to home for those in our region who are living with, or will develop, these diseases.

Speaking at the gala, Dr. Devin Harris, Executive Medical Director, Quality, Patient Safety and Research for Interior Health and also an Emergency Physician at KGH reflected, "We have learned many things over the past two years. It's time to support the overall sustainability of our health system, including the extraordinary people working in it, if we hope to move past the challenges we are facing."

In his raw, unscripted, heartfelt and inspiring speech, Tom chose to draw from his own personal story, sharing his thoughts on giving in the face of uncertainty. "In the past, giving has been my lifeline. Even as I face so much uncertainty in my own life, I hold on to faith that if we just give more than we take, we have a life worth living."

It was a timely reminder to all that despite the uncertainty we face in health care today, we must believe that change is possible. And that giving changes everything.

A STUNNING RETURN

The anticipation for the return of Heart of Gold was palpable. After years of planning and preparation, on a gorgeous September evening at O'Rourke's Family Estate Winery, Heart of Gold returned, and by all accounts, it was a stunner.

At a venue that could easily rival some of the best in the world, dozens of volunteers gathered, generously donating their time to ensure the evening was seamless from start to finish. Much of the credit for the evening's wow factor can be attributed to the Heart of Gold Committee, a group of twelve volunteers who devote countless hours to planning, coordinating logistics, setting up, and executing the event. Amid much uncertainty, their commitment, passion, creativity, expertise and professionalism shone through, culminating in an unforgettable evening.

Another group that brought some sparkle to the gala – literally – were the dedicated volunteers from RBC Royal Bank, who donned pink safety vests and hard hats, and hustled hard to sell over \$7,500 in light-up rings to guests. For years now, the incredible team from RBC has also helped at Heart of Gold with registration, coat check, valet, and management of hospitality rooms.

The stunning return and unprecedented success of Heart of Gold 2022 wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and dedication of these volunteers.



**

You're off to great places! Today is your day! You'r mountain is waiting, So... get on you'r wdy! - Dr. Seuss, On the Places You'll Gol

MY NAME IS

Perinatal Unit

(L to R): Bonnie Wilkie, RN and NICU/Pediatric Educator, James and Ashley Ross, and Alyssa Marson, RN. DAYS OLD

DAYS IN NICU

COT CO

A NICU FAMILY TRIBUTE

WESTON'S GIFT

"There is no foot too small that it cannot leave an imprint on this world."

Unknown

James and Ashley Ross experienced the unthinkable when their newborn son, Weston, passed away in their loving arms only 24 hours after he took his first breath in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Kelowna General Hospital. The hope and anticipation of welcoming their little one into the world quickly washed away in an ocean of grief.

James and Ashley though, resolved to channel a small part of their grief into a project that they hope will honour their son, add joy and bring smiles to the faces of hundreds of families each year, and express their gratitude for the care and support they received while in the NICU.

Every year, more than 1,800 babies are born at KGH, with 160 (approximately nine percent) born pre-term, or before 37 weeks gestation.* But thanks to the generosity of KGH Foundation donors through the *Giving Giggles* campaign, the NICU at KGH is the most advanced perinatal unit in the southern interior region of BC, and the main referral hospital for pre-term births as early as 32 weeks.

Being able to 'graduate' from the NICU is a big deal. It means a baby is big and strong enough to be on their own, disconnected from specialized equipment like an incubator, ventilator, and/or oxygen hood. They get to go home. For any parent who has experienced life in the NICU, graduation day is a day they never forget.

And that is what inspired Weston's gift to the NICU. James and Ashely wanted to make a graduation sign that parents could personalize for their baby and take a photo in front of when they are able to go home.



"We wanted to inspire hope and future success for NICU graduates, stemming from our deep love and a way to honour Weston, promoting positive life-long memories of him for our family," explains James. "Alyssa Marson, an amazing nurse in the NICU at KGH, helped us develop this idea. It was a team effort and her thoughtfulness has been inspirational."

"As a NICU nurse, I work very closely with parents over the course of their stay. It is very special to be a part of their emotional journey, through the highs and lows," says Alyssa. "People like James and Ashley are one of the many reasons why working in the NICU can be so rewarding."

The Ross' chose to make a donation to the NICU at KGH and Alyssa approached the KGH Foundation for assistance with the design and production of the sign.

James, a carpenter, built a beautiful wood frame for the sign, completing the project. And if you look closely, there is a little 'W' on the airplane on the sign – a tribute to Weston.

"Honouring Weston in this way has assisted our family through an extremely difficult grieving process," says Ashley. "It also acknowledges the amazing support and empathy that we received from the doctors and nurses who cared for our family in the NICU."

Ashley continues, "Weston instilled a love and strength in us that we didn't know existed."

The Ross family can take comfort in knowing that their dear Weston will always have an imprint on this world, not only in their hearts and memories but for years to come as a part of every KGH NICU baby 'graduate'.

*2021/22 data from Interior Health

LAKE LIFE LOTTERY

"THIS FEELS LIKE A DREAM."



A young family of four from Kelowna has traded in a two-bedroom apartment for a \$1.75 million dream home after winning the KGH Foundation/ YMCA of Southern Interior BC's first-ever Lake Life Lottery grand prize. Anokha Babu and her husband, Shaheen Ashraf, along with their two young children, took possession of their new four-bedroom, lake-view home on January 25.

Anokha found out her name was drawn on December 15, in the final draw of the 2022 lottery. "It's an incredible blessing for our entire family," she says. "This feels like a dream. We have been trying to get a house for so long."

kha Babu, her husband, Shaheen Ashraf, and their two children in front of their new home.

FROM DISAPPOINTMENT TO DISBELIEF

Just the day before the Lake Life Lottery grand prize draw, Anokha and her family learned they were not successful in an offer they had put on a home they desperately hoped for. "We've struck out finding a house within our budget so many times over the last year that my son, Abdullah, had been praying for a place to call our own every night."

The very next day, the call came. Abdullah's prayers had not gone unheard. "After learning we won, my son was the first person I told," says Anokha. "I said, 'Your prayers were strong!"

Lake Life Lottery is the only dream home lottery whose proceeds benefit local, Okanagan charities serving the interior region. Anokha says she doesn't usually purchase lottery tickets but was compelled to contribute to the inaugural Lake Life Lottery, which represents a unique partnership between the KGH Foundation and the YMCA of Southern Interior BC, supporting physical, social and mental health initiatives in the region. Both Anokha and her husband work in the IT Department for Interior Health, and felt a personal connection to the cause.

A PLETHORA OF PRIZES

The lottery offered more than \$2 million in prizes, including the dream home, a 50/50 pot worth more than \$500,000, a luxury speedboat, a Mustang EcoBoost Convertible, and getaways to destinations including New York, France, Italy and Hawaii.

Young Abdullah promised his mother that if they finally found a home, he



would donate all his saved pocket money to charity.

"We were beyond thrilled when we learned that our dream home had been won by a family that would benefit so greatly," says Allison Ramchuk, CEO of the KGH Foundation. "Launching a new dream home lottery took more than a little faith and courage. We hoped our communities would support a locally based home lottery. And clearly, they did! So many of our winners hailed from right here in the interior." Abdullah is also planning to make good on his promise by making a donation to the KGH Foundation.

Lake Life Lottery will return in 2023! Tickets will go on sale this summer. Be sure to get yours... next year we could be telling your story!



SUPPORTING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Sign up for the Lake Life Lottery newsletter and be first to learn about the cause, when ticket sales open, and of course... the prizes!

Sign up at lakelifelottery.ca

Have you hugged your urologist today?

Dr. Jennifer Locke, Urologist, KGH

If you've ever found yourself in need of this kind of specialist, chances are they are at the top of the 'hug' list. That's because suffering with a challenge 'down there' is, at best, annoying and at worst, debilitating.

DIAGNOSTIC ADVANCEMENT IN UROLOGY

LITTLE THINGS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Urology is a medical specialty that addresses diseases and complications that compromise the good-working order of the organs of the male and female urinary tract including the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra. Urologists are also medical specialists in the male reproductive organs (testes, prostate and penis). Being able to access advanced care within the specialty is absolutely critical as it can have a significant impact on one's quality of life.

Ask any Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) urology patient and they will tell you, the urologists at KGH are second to none. Since 2021, KGH has been home to Dr. Jennifer Locke, a brilliant urologist with subspecialty training in reconstructive urology. Soon after her arrival, Dr. Locke noted that a critical piece of equipment could make a big difference for her team and their patients.

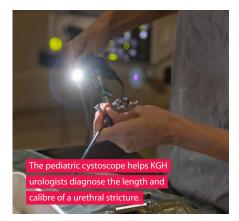
From sinuses to arteries to urethras, abnormal narrowing or constriction of a body passage is generally not a good thing. The urethra is a tube that carries urine from the bladder so that it can be expelled. Narrowing of the urethra restricts this flow and can cause a variety of medical problems in the urinary tract, including inflammation or infection. Narrowing in the male urethra is known as a male urethral stricture and if left untreated, can cause serious problems including bladder and kidney damage and infections caused by the obstruction of urine flow.

When Dr. Locke joined the KGH urology team, patients in the southern interior of BC with symptoms of urethral stricture were referred to the Lower Mainland for diagnosis and treatment. Dr. Locke reached out to the KGH Foundation seeking funding for several pediatric (referring to the size) cystoscopes – diagnostic tools so small they can be inserted into a six to eight millimetre tube, the diameter of the average male urethra. Acquiring these special scopes would allow KGH urologists to diagnose the length and calibre of the stricture and avoid sending patients to the Lower Mainland.

Last year, an estate endowment to the KGH Foundation provided the funding required.

"The utility of having access to these pediatric cystoscopes is immense," states Dr. Locke. "I am now equipped to do the appropriate work-up and all types of surgical treatments for men from across the Interior Health region. This absolutely improves patient comfort and urethral repair outcomes."

Dr. Locke explains, "Two of my patients had been in and out of the hospital with UTIs (urinary tract infections) and sepsis, secondary to urethral strictures. One of them developed endocarditis and the other had life-threatening heart arrhythmias triggered by episodes of sepsis. Because we were able to accurately



diagnose the urethral strictures here at KGH, in both cases, we performed urethroplasty (surgery to repair a urethral stricture) and my patients have been infection free since."

Since acquiring the cystoscopes, Dr. Locke and her team have diagnosed and performed urethroplasty on dozens of patients, many from out of town, not only improving the quality of life for these patients but also allowing them to stay closer to home for treatment and avoiding travel and accommodation costs to receive care at hospitals in Vancouver or Calgary.

"Our patients have told us that they feel like their life has been given back to them after urethroplasty surgery," shares Dr. Locke. "They are grateful that they don't have to live with tubes in their bellies or urethras, which makes for a significant quality of life improvement. And I am forever grateful for this support and look forward to serving my community."



JOEANNA'S HOUSE

WHAT'S COOKIN' AT JOEANNA'S HOUSE?

They volunteered for a new program called Share-a-Meal, with the intention to come to JoeAnna's House and cook a warm, nourishing meal for the out-oftown families staying there while their loved ones are receiving advanced medical care at Kelowna General Hospital.

But what's really been cookin' at JoeAnna's House on Wednesday nights is more than just dinner.

It turns out that on these special evenings, dinner is just the catalyst for so much more. Prepared, cooked, served and then shared, our volunteer chefs enjoy the meal together with JoeAnna's House guests, staff and volunteers. There are stories, laughter, and sometimes, a few tears. But mostly, there is the joy that comes from human connection. The kind of connection that warms the heart and inspires hope.

Share-a-Meal was launched by the KGH

Foundation in late 2022. The program allows a group to prepare and share a meal with guests currently staying in the home, from grocery shopping to the last load of pots and pans sterilized and put away.

"For so many families wanting to maintain a presence at KGH for the period of their loved one's treatment, the travel and lack of affordable short-term accommodation in Kelowna add significantly to their hardship," says Darlene Haslock, Director of JoeAnna's House. "Often people arrive with no personal belongings, completely overwhelmed because of their loved one's medical situation. Providing a stress-free meal for these folks can be a little bright spot in what is a very challenging time."

"Whether it's a group of friends, colleagues, or members of a service club or team, Share-a-Meal is a way to give that ends in a healthy, nutritious meal for our guests. And so much more."

NEVER TOO MANY COOKS IN THE KITCHEN!

In late December, six chefs from the Okanagan Chefs Association (OCA), along with friends Bernie Ryan and Emily McDonald from Fluid Power Solutions, arrived at the JoeAnna's House kitchen. With seasonal music playing, they cooked and poked fun at one another, performing jovial jigs between the freezer, the ovens and the countertops while chopping, mincing, and mixing. They worked together like a family in the kitchen. It took less than ten minutes for delicious aromas to begin wafting through the house.

"When my friend Bernie Ryan shared this opportunity to support JoeAnna's House, I was 100 per cent on board," says Brent Durec, OCA President. "And within five minutes of sending the call-out to our members, I was inundated with responses to join in." "Volunteering our time and helping our community is something we are all passionate about," continues Brent. "This is such a super supportive and amazing crew, I just love these folks."

A HEARTFELT CONNECTION

One OCA member chef who participated that evening was Adam Relvas, owner of Relvas Catering. He came to JoeAnna's House that night in high spirits. Behind his warm brown eyes and quick wit, Adam has a particularly heartfelt reason for supporting JoeAnna's House.

In 2016, shortly after he had opened up a new café, Adam's three-year-old son was diagnosed with cancer and required treatment at BC Children's Hospital in Vancouver.

"We spent a year and a half at Ronald McDonald House," shares Adam. "My wife was there full-time and I would drive back and forth from Kelowna. It was really tough but fortunately, we had a lot of people to help us out."

Adam's son completed treatment, is cancer-free, and turns ten years old in February. "We are so grateful and determined that we would pay back in some way... and do it in the same way in which we had received support."

"I know what it's like to be uprooted from home and need a safe and comfortable place to stay," says Adam. "It's on our hearts to do our part."

At JoeAnna's House, you can never have too many cooks in the kitchen.

Because we are always Better Together.

For more information about Share-a-Meal at JoeAnna's House, contact Darlene Haslock at darlene.haslock@interiorhealth.ca or 250-470-0100. We'd love to have you in our kitchen!





YOUNG PHILANTHROPISTS

THE NEXT GENERATION...

They say more is caught than taught. Though we might not always be aware of it, our children are watching. And thankfully, they are watching YOU! Meet just a few of the next generation of health care philanthropists.



KNOX K. – 8 YEARS OLD

"Knox came to me one day and said that he wanted to donate 25 per cent of sales from his Pokémon cards to help the hospital," shares Ria, Knox's mom. "He said that giving to the hospital made him feel like a good person by helping his community and 'helped give someone a chance to be healthier'. His wish for the kids at KGH is that, 'they get better and that there are more donations to help them."



ADALYNN A. - 8 YEARS OLD

Adalynn celebrated her birthday in December. Instead of using her birthday money to buy herself a gift, she decided to pay it forward and help her community by donating it to the KGH Foundation in support of the paediatric unit at Kelowna General Hospital.

We are grateful to Knox, Adalynn, and so many other young donors who are building a practice of philanthropy and who choose to support health care and their local hospital through the KGH Foundation.



Giving **Changes** Everything.

KGHFOUNDATION



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