

Foundations

BUILDING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH CARE



WINTER WONDERLAND A DELIGHTFUL DAY AT JOEANNA'S HOUSE

MEET THE TEACHER

'Eve' is having a big impact

TAKING ON CANCER

When you're 'the one'

STEERING INNOVATION

Dr. Taylor is choosing to drive

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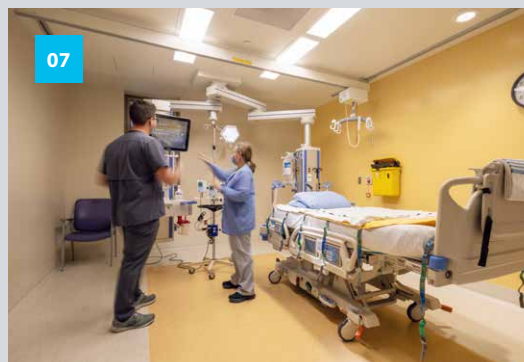
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We humbly recognize and acknowledge that Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) and the KGH Foundation operate on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the syilx people.

Cover Photo: Darlene Haslock, Director of JoeAnna's House, shows off her Better Together mittens at Winter Wonderland.



Allison (Allie) Young
Chief Executive Officer
KGH Foundation



Time and again, the theme of collaboration is woven through the stories of impact that your gifts make possible.”

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

BETTER TOGETHER

We can't do it alone.

In February 2019, one of our own was diagnosed with breast cancer. As one of the office's resident health nuts and a yoga teacher on the side, our VP of Brand and Communications, Shauna Nyrose, was the last person any of us expected to be 'the one'. Shauna became one of thousands who undergo cancer treatment in the interior each year. Which is why, in partnership with the teams providing cancer care at KGH, the Foundation was compelled to include cancer as a top priority in our *Closer to home than you think* campaign.

In this issue of *Foundations*, Shauna shares her story to help highlight the impact that we can have in the treatment of this life-altering disease.

We know this is important to you. The campaign gives us the opportunity to work together and shape the future of cancer care at KGH, specifically the diagnosis and primary treatment of cancers – breast, prostate, pancreatic, brain, stomach, colon... and many more – that touch so many of us and our loved ones.

This includes beloved KGH Foundation volunteer, the indelible Barbie Ross, who passed in the spring of 2023. In this issue we honour a woman who truly was on a mission to bring people together for the common good. Barbie's impact in our community and Kelowna General Hospital will never be forgotten.

Also in this issue, we travel back in time with one of Interior Health's most inspiring clinicians, Dr. Deanne Taylor. Her vision, knowledge and passion for partnership helped motivate a \$5 million gift from the **Jim Pattison Foundation** to establish KGH as one of Canada's only regional centres for health systems research and innovation.

Time and again, the theme of collaboration is woven through the stories of impact that your gifts make possible. Your generosity has allowed KGH's cardiac team to radically expand their capacity to take on new patients. And for some, giving comes in the form of time. I hope you enjoy our cheeky celebration of just a few of our 'first-class' volunteers.

As the bleary days of winter give way to the promise of spring, my hope is that it stokes the spark of initiative in all of us, especially you. We have work to do. And if we've learned anything these past few years it is this: ***We are truly better together.***

In gratitude,

Allie Young
CEO, KGH Foundation



Dr. Deanne Taylor

Corporate Director of Research,
Interior Health

In addition to her roles with Interior Health and the KGH Foundation, Dr. Taylor is the Senior Research Advisor for the Canadian Health Leadership Network, Scientific Director of the Rural Coordination Centre of BC and an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Health and Social Development, UBC Okanagan.

STEERING INNOVATION

Dr. Deanne Taylor is on a mission to drive the future of health care for regional communities.

In any given moment, we have a choice – to drive or be driven. For Interior Health's Corporate Director of Research, Dr. Deanne Taylor, it's never really been a choice.

Last November, Dr. Taylor stood shoulder to shoulder with KGH Foundation CEO Allison (Allie) Young, to announce the biggest gift in the Foundation's history – a landmark commitment of \$5 million by the **Jim Pattison Foundation** to establish the **Centre for Health Systems Learning and Innovation at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH)**. The gift comes as a massive vote of confidence for the Foundation's *Closer to home than you think* campaign, a \$40 million fundraising effort that aims to fund sweeping advancements to health care in the southern interior, including a \$15 million commitment to support innovation.

It was a historical day in the evolution of regional health care and health care philanthropy in the interior.

It began years ago with a vision, driven by Dr. Taylor, to establish KGH as a hub for research. Not the kind that takes place in labs with microscopes, beakers and test tubes but rather **Health Systems Research**. Dr. Taylor's primary role is to drive a **learning health system**, one that utilizes internally generated data and experience, and external proof (impact) and then puts that knowledge into practice in real-time. Health systems learning and transformation is an increasingly vital channel to address the unique needs of a given population. It's a collaborative dance involving health care providers, researchers, patients, community members, and policymakers.

Dr. Taylor has always been driven by curiosity. Her superpowers lie in translating theory and knowledge into real life practices to positively impact the experience of the people she is trying to help.

"I've always worked full-time and done academic work at the same time. I like both," says Dr. Taylor. "I'm curious about how social and health systems impact people in different ways."

With a bachelor's degree in-hand, Dr. Taylor began her career in athletic therapy. She would go on to obtain a Masters of Community Disability Studies, a PhD in Community Health Sciences, and a Postdoctoral degree and a Fellowship in Health



Dr. Deanne Taylor (front, sixth from right) and the *Closer to home than you think* campaign cabinet.

Systems Transformation. Later, Dr. Taylor's experiences as a project leader with Fraser Health in long-term care provided the opportunity to truly observe systems in action, and their impact on people. Since joining Interior Health in 2014, her extensive knowledge and experience have allowed her to effectively bridge communication gaps between academia and the health care system, facilitating the integration of research into practical implementation, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes.

Driving the vision for the Centre forward has been a remarkable undertaking.

"The Centre will focus on health systems transformation and innovation in unique ways," explains Dr. Taylor. "This includes advancing equity, accessibility, and the sustainability of health care, and enabling Interior Health physicians, clinicians and community care providers with support to not only provide world-class care but to explore what an optimal system could look like."

The conversation with the Foundation began in earnest during the pandemic. KGH Foundation CEO, Allison Young, invited Dr. Taylor and her colleague Dr. Devin Harris, Executive Medical Director of Quality and Research for Interior Health, to co-chair the clinical cabinet for a new campaign that aimed to fund both immediate needs and innovation to address the challenges the health system was experiencing.

"The *Closer to home than you think* campaign is unique in that it has a health systems perspective," says Dr. Taylor. "And I have to thank the KGH Foundation for having the courage to drive this type of change and be open to exploring how innovation and research can be supported by the community."

"The community of donors deserves credit too," continues Dr. Taylor. "Certainly, they trust the Foundation to fund much-needed equipment for the hospital. But beyond that, they are trusting the Foundation with funds that will support research, technological advancements and innovative partnerships."

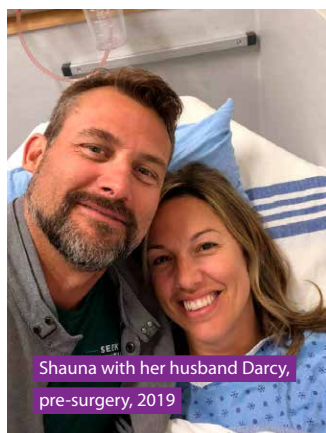
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I am grateful to the Jim Pattison Foundation, the KGH Foundation and everyone it took to get us to this stage. Now the work begins!"

— Dr. Deanne Taylor

TAKING ON CANCER

As the Foundation sets its sights on fundraising for Cancer Care at this year's KGH Day of Giving, our VP Brand and Communications, Shauna Nyrose, shares her story.



One in eight. That's how many women can expect to develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

It is often said that stats are just numbers, until you become 'the one'. I will admit, at 44 years old, with no family history, this was not a story that I ever expected to be mine.

I chose to share now because before I became a cancer patient, I had no idea what diagnosis and treatment entailed. If you've had cancer, you know. If you haven't, it's likely touched someone close to you.

It felt like a little chocolate chip. "Probably nothing to be concerned about," said my family doctor. "But let's get it checked."

That's how it began. In a tiny, dark room, with an ultrasound. In addition to being a life-saving tool for breast cancer screening and early detection, medical imaging plays a crucial role in cancer diagnosis. I had never even had a mammogram because I had not hit the magic age of 50 to qualify for screening. As I stared out the window at the grey, Okanagan winter sky waiting for the radiologist to review my scans, I had the first sense that something was wrong. It was taking too long.

That was when I first met Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) radiologist, Dr. Brenda Farnquist. What a gift to our hospital. She couldn't tell me for sure that it was cancer—a biopsy would be needed for that—but I knew by the look on her face.

Within a few days I was scheduled to see Dr. Jonathan Scheske for the biopsy, a diagnostic procedure guided by medical imaging, to remove a sample of breast tissue for testing. I received the call from my family doctor with the results a few days later. The pathology from the biopsy confirmed it was invasive lobular carcinoma (ILC), the second most common breast cancer diagnosed in Canada.

Cancer typically involves more than one treatment and requires a multidisciplinary approach, or a combination of therapies. Treatment plans often involve a primary therapy—in my case, surgery—in addition to radiation therapy, adjuvant and/or neoadjuvant therapy, like chemotherapy or hormone therapy to help increase the treatment's chance of success and decrease the risk of recurrence.

Surgery plays a crucial role in the treatment of breast cancer (and many others). Not only does it remove the tumour(s) in the early stages of disease, it helps to prevent the spread to other parts of the body and allows for the examination of nearby lymph nodes, which is necessary for accurate staging of the disease's progression.

Thankfully, KGH is home to exceptional surgical oncologists, including Dr. Andreas Kluftinger. He patiently outlined what surgery would entail and tried to prepare me for what the pathology (my tumour characteristics) might mean for future treatment. I was anxious and terrified. I'd never even had surgery before. Dr. Kluftinger was patient, knowledgeable and kind—exactly what I needed.

Soon, I would be making more friends in the KGH Medical Imaging department. Before surgery, I would need: a CT scan to determine whether the cancer had spread to other organs, and nuclear imaging where a tiny amount of



Almost five years after her diagnosis, Shauna takes a look at her scans with KGH radiologist, Dr. Farnquist.

radioactive matter is injected at the tumour site to help Dr. Kluftinger precisely locate the tumour (fun fact: it also turns the area bright blue... for several years!).

On March 25, Dr. Kluftinger performed a partial mastectomy and lymph node dissection. A few days later, he called me personally – the best call I’ve ever received in my life – to tell me the cancer had not spread and I would not require additional surgery. As Mary Miller, dear friend and donor to the KGH Foundation who passed from cancer herself in 2020, said to me at the time, ‘Answered prayers.’

It was at this stage in my diagnosis and treatment that I would finally meet the incredible oncologists and radiation therapists at the cancer centre in Kelowna. My last radiation session took place on July 9, 2019.

When you’re healthy (like I thought I was), you might not think much about cancer care. But when facing a life-altering diagnosis, it’s literally all you think about. You just hope that whatever the treatment entails, it will be the

best of the best. Without a doubt, advancing our hospital’s capacity to diagnose and treat cancers will not only save lives, but it will elevate care where it matters most. In our hospital, right here, where we live.

When it comes to cancer, it is projected that nearly half of us will become ‘the one’. Though my journey has deeply personalized what was once just a mere statistic, the KGH Foundation’s commitment to advance cancer care isn’t solely about individual journeys; it’s about driving excellence and making an impact within our community in the face of one of the greatest health challenges of our time.

— **Shauna Nyrose**,
VP Brand and Communications, KGH Foundation

Closer to home than you think is a \$40 million campaign to fund immediate needs and health care innovation in multiple priority areas of care, including Cancer Care. The goal is to raise \$3.5 million specifically to fund diagnostic and surgical advancements to treat cancers, right here at KGH.

AND THE WINNER IS...

In 2012, the KGH Foundation initiated what has become for many Interior Health staffers across the region, a primary reason to check their email every second Friday morning. Because that is when the winner of the KGH Foundation Interior Health Staff 50/50 Lotto is announced.

By all accounts, the bi-weekly staff lottery is truly a win-win. Its remarkable success over the years has helped fund services and equipment that serve tertiary programs benefitting patients across the Interior Health region. This includes \$1 million to increase Kelowna General Hospital's capacity to treat the region's most acute cardiac patients.

The KGH Foundation began its commitment to advancing cardiac services at KGH in 2013. The *Be a Lifesaver* campaign set an ambitious goal to raise \$12 million to fund the new Interior Heart and Surgical Centre (IHSC) at KGH, which had begun construction the year prior. Though the provincial government provided the capital investment required for the building, the funds raised through campaign would see that it contained some of the most advanced equipment and surgical suites in the country. In September of 2015, the IHSC opened with six fully equipped, state-of-the-art cardiac intensive care rooms.

At that time, the IHSC contained two additional rooms that were shelled in for future use, a common practice that involves constructing only the basic infrastructure of the room such as the walls, windows and doors. The room is then left empty and outfitted with equipment when the need for additional capacity arises. Two rooms were also shelled in during the reconfiguration of the Strathcona building in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU).

Going on nine years later, a growing and aging interior population meant that the urgency to outfit the shelled in rooms to serve the needs of the region's heart patients was also growing rapidly.

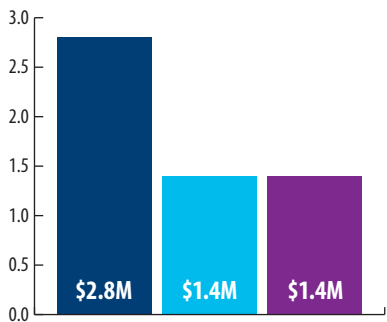
"To allow us to be responsive to the growing need for cardiac critical care, the time had definitely come to increase our capacity by outfitting these shelled in spaces," says Robyn Goplen, Program Director for Interior Health's Cardiac Services. "Finishing these spaces would significantly increase our cardiac surgery volumes as well as provide added capacity in the event of a critical care surge."

When Robyn approached the KGH Foundation with the \$1 million proposal to operationalize the shelled in space in the IHSC and Strathcona buildings, utilizing the

KGH Foundation Interior Health Staff 50/50 Lotto

The Staff 50/50 Lotto began back in 2012 with KGH staff and was expanded to include all Interior Health staff in 2020. By 2023 the lotto had 14,347 employees enrolled, helping to raise funds for projects across the Interior Health region.

2023 STAFF LOTTO FUNDS



- Raised through the lottery
- To projects in the IH region
- To healthcare heroes

\$11 MILLION RAISED SINCE INCEPTION



It's wonderful to know that participating in this lottery supports both patients and staff."

— Christina Brandy (Recent Winner)



CICU staff at KGH celebrate the additional capacity to support patients.

funds from the KGH Foundation IH Staff 50/50 Lotto were the perfect fit. KGH is the primary referral hospital serving our region's most acute cardiac patients. At any given time, one in three beds at KGH is occupied by a patient from outside the Central Okanagan.

At the beginning of November 2023, the two suites in the Strathcona CICU were equipped and began serving patients. Two additional shelled rooms that will be part of the Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care Unit (CSICU) in the IHSC will be operational by the spring of 2024.

"This expansion represents a radical improvement in accessibility in cardiac care for our region's patients, with capacity increasing by 67% from the original six rooms," explains Lauren Garvie, Cardiac In-Patient and Critical Care Manager, KGH.

The increased capacity has already had a significant impact where it matters most – patient care.

"I was flown in from Cranbrook Hospital while having a heart attack," says one grateful patient. "Thank you to all the staff and nurses and doctors at KGH who looked after me in the CICU ward after. The care I received was top notch and without you I may not have survived."

Adds Lauren, "From myself and on behalf of the team that works 24/7 in the CICU, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the staff from across the IH region who participate in the lottery. You have allowed us to not only expand our capacity, but also to provide more efficient and patient-centred care."



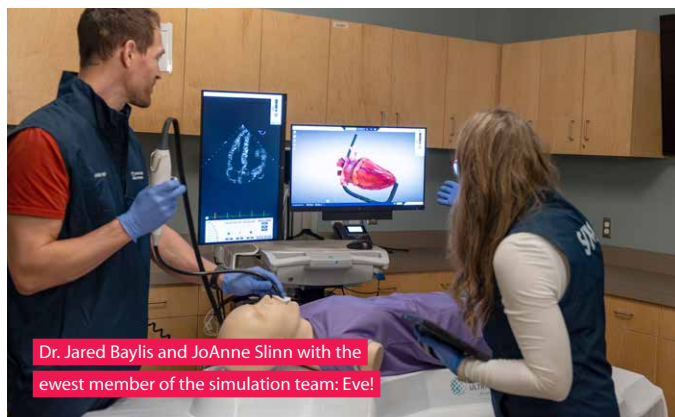
MANY HANDS MAKE FOR HEALTHY HEARTS

Stride & Glide for KGH is a community event fundraiser that started in 2021. Participants and organizers head up to the Kelowna Nordic Ski and Snowshoe Club for a weekend in February to cross country ski and snowshoe in support of world-class health care, close to home. In its first three years, the event has raised more than \$145,000 for stroke care and cardiac health at KGH. The event exemplifies the power of community support and what is possible when we work together.

To learn more about starting your own fundraising event, visit: kghfoundation.com/events.

CLOSER TO THE HEART

Introducing Eve, KGH's newest patient simulator.



The Pritchard Simulation Centre at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) is a dynamic environment where clinicians enhance their skills in a safe and controlled space. Thanks to KGH Foundation donors to the *Closer to home than you think* campaign, the Centre is excited to onboard a new member to its training team. Introducing Eve, an ultra-realistic, highly-specialized patient simulator manikin.

Eve enables KGH clinicians to simulate real human conditions and practice intricate scanning techniques, from collar bone to pelvis, with a hand-held ultrasound probe. Even more exciting is the ability to practice transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE), a delicate, life-saving diagnostic procedure that provides detailed heart assessments.

In a TEE procedure, a small transducer, a device that converts electrical energy into sound, is guided down into the esophagus to capture clear images of the heart and its structures. "TEE gives clinicians more detailed images because the probe is closer to the heart compared to a standard echocardiogram. However, it requires specific motor skills to execute with accuracy and confidence," explains Dr. Jared Baylis, a KGH Emergency Physician and Simulation Medical Director.

Dr. Baylis is thrilled with the newest member of the sim family. "Simulation-wise, there is nothing else like Eve out there," he states. Eve's realistic simulations allow clinicians to

refine their skills in manipulating the TEE probe, essential for assessing the heart's structure and function.

"Over the past two years, KGH Foundation donors have supplied our emergency department with several new portable ultrasound machines equipped with TEE probes," explains Dr. Baylis. "But few of us felt confident enough to use those probes. Now that we have Eve, we are able to practice the motor skills necessary to perform a TEE so we can use it more and more with excellent outcomes."

"It is incredibly novel for an emergency department to have this type of training. In fact, we are among the first hospitals in Western Canada to use Eve and the TEE probe in this way," says Dr. Baylis.

A 90-minute session with Eve equips emergency physicians with the crucial skills for heart imaging in resuscitation, which are perfected through practice.

JoAnne Slinn, Registered Nurse and Simulation Knowledge Coordinator for the **Pritchard Simulation Centre**, emphasizes Eve's value. "Innovative manikins like Eve are vital for training, leading to faster diagnoses and improved patient outcomes. Moreover, tools like Eve and the training offered in the Centre attract current and future health care professionals to our region. They help us recruit and retain some of the best and brightest in critical care medicine."

*Established in 2012 with a generous gift from the **Colin and Lois Pritchard Foundation**, the Centre is accredited by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada—the only accredited simulation centre of its kind in BC and one of only 22 in the world.*

"This is a state-of-the-art simulation facility," says JoAnne. "Our specialized training, made possible by KGH Foundation donors, is transformative for our staff and hospital. Thank you – your gifts help save lives and optimize care, close to home."

VOLUNTEERS

MOST LIKELY TO MAKE YOU SMILE

Our KGH Foundation volunteers, truly in a class of their own, generously contribute over 50,000 hours annually, including efforts from the Board of Directors, committees, and event volunteers. In yearbook style, we're delighted to showcase a selection from our social enterprises and JoeAnna's House, just some of the volunteer class of 2024, who are most likely to turn your frown upside down. Allison (Allie) Young, KGH Foundation CEO emphasizes, "Without our first-class volunteers, our mission for world-class health care close to home wouldn't be possible. To us, they are all... top of the class."

SUPERSTAR!



DIXIE & JOCELYNE, RUTLAND THRIFT

Jocelyne Williams and Dixie Holmes, or "Williams & Holmes", two peas in a pod at Rutland Thrift. They're feisty and fun and are most likely to start a merengue when maracas and festive hats come through the door.



CATHY LAPRISE, RUTLAND THRIFT

Cathy has been volunteering at Rutland Thrift for five years and is most likely to drown in bedding, something the store receives a lot of. Thankfully, she's able to plow through the bounty of baby blankets and plethora of pillows with ease.

OUTTA THIS WORLD!



NORMA FRICK, KGH GIFT SHOP

Norma is most likely to know where to find everything and anything in the KGH Gift Shop. She credits her impressive merchandising skills to Barbie Ross (story on p.13), always reflecting, "What would Barbie do?"

MOM



JEN HOPKIN, PERKING LOT

Jen, a true people-person, greets everyone with a sparkling smile and is most likely to know the beverage of choice of anyone in line. "Our beverages are lovingly crafted with the secret ingredients of courage, love and hope," says Jen.



FERN HIND, ROYAL BISTRO

Fern, with a health career background, finds great satisfaction in serving hospital staff, patients, and families. She's most likely to cover a shift in the Perking Lot or Royal Bistro – anywhere, any day, anytime.



NANCY DENOMME, JOEANNA'S HOUSE

JoeAnna's House volunteers are known for their compassion and empathy, and Nancy is no exception. She is most likely to cheer someone on when they need it the most and her warm smile and friendly disposition endear her to House guests.

STAR



WARM HOLIDAY DELIGHTS SERVED AT WINTER WONDERLAND

This past holiday season, the community proved that you don't need snow to revel in the joy of a JoeAnna's House Winter Wonderland. Sometimes, all you need is one another.

Over the past few years, the KGH Foundation's annual community fundraiser for JoeAnna's House had taken place in October, right around Thanksgiving. The one-day radiothon, *Better Together Day*, was a fruitful collaboration with our radio partners at **Pattison Media** that generated thousands in funds for the home away from home for the families of patients who'd had to travel to Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) for advanced care. Donations were collected mostly online, save for a few committed donors who chose to come to JoeAnna's House and give a gift in person.

We always felt like it was a bit of a missed opportunity. And so, together with our friends at Pattison, **Save-On-Foods** and many other community minded businesses, we re-imagined it! And Winter Wonderland was born.

With a promise of 'magical togetherness'—family pictures with Santa (pets too!), street hockey, local singing groups and dancers, a beverage garden, a curated offering of some of the best local holiday vendors and rare tours of JoeAnna's House itself—the hope was that Winter Wonderland would be the perfect way for families and friends of all ages and stages to kick-off the holiday season.

Indeed, as the sun rose on Sunday, December 17, our beautiful JoeAnna's House had never looked so magical. The volunteers arrived and donned their Santa hats, street vendors began to set up their trucks and tables, and the savoury aromas of warm apple cider and sweet baked treats began to fill the air.

The anticipation grew... would anyone come? Thankfully, we didn't have to worry for long. Several guests arrived even before the 1pm start time and for the next four hours, Winter Wonderland became the celebration of community connection it was envisioned to be. Royal Avenue was alight with the spirit of the season.

The **Okanagan Youth Choir** and **Kelowna Community Chorus** set the tone with beloved holiday carols and songs, and talented dancers from **The Village Dance Academy** delighted with a festive themed performance. A group of local cadets wowed the crowd with a seasonal ensemble.





Dancers from The Village Dance Academy

The biggest surprise was the raucous street hockey game! Hoards of kiddos eager to slap sticks with some famous local mascots, including the **Westside Warriors General** and **Big White's Loose Moose**, got their game on while their parents enjoyed a break with some delicious gluwwein and ciders from **The View** and craft beer from **Red Bird**.

"The only way I can really describe the day is that it was... absolutely magical," laughs Darlene Haslock, Director of JoeAnna's House. "So many people came down with their families to take part and support JoeAnna's House. It just warms my heart. I couldn't have asked for a better way to kick-off the holiday season."

Prestige Resorts and Hotels provided the title sponsorship for the event's first year, and Pattison Media stations **The Lizard** and **Beach Radio** broadcasted live on location as the exclusive radio media sponsor.

JoeAnna's House continues to rely on the generosity of the community to remain open. The inaugural Winter Wonderland raised over \$61,000.

"Will we be back next year? Oh yes!" says KGH Foundation Manager of Community Engagement and Events, Carly Malchuk. "We are just getting started!"

"Of course, we are always Better Together," says Darlene, drawing inspiration from the now iconic JoeAnna's House slogan. "We are grateful to all our sponsors, partners, and volunteers for supporting this event and are just delighted to have been able to share a bit of the magic of JoeAnna's House with so many people. Thank you to everyone who came out to support us."

BUILT BY THE HEARTS & HANDS OF COMMUNITY

In 2018, over \$8 million was raised to fund the construction and opening of JoeAnna's House. Since receiving its first guests in November 2019, JoeAnna's House has provided a safe haven for over 1,900 regional families needing a place to stay close to KGH while their loved ones received advanced medical care.



Friends from Save-On-Foods



Santa!



A touch of wonder at Winter Wonderland

TRIBUTE

SEE YA, LOVE YA

Celebrating the life of Barbie Dean Ross

When Barbie Dean Ross put her mind to something, nothing would stand in the way of her vision. She was strong, creative, charismatic and fiercely committed to serving her community.

Last May, just a few months before the launch of the movie everyone seemed to be talking about last summer, we said good-bye to our very own, real-life Barbie. After over thirty years of service to Kelowna General Hospital, the echoes of her infectious laugh and boundless spirit will live on within the walls of our hospital. Our Barbie was not just another pretty face. She was a leader, a friend and an inspiration.

Nancy Wells, Project & Development Manager with the KGH Foundation, worked with Barbie for 13 years. She says fondly, “There isn’t a day when I walk through the Centennial Lobby and don’t see a little piece of Barbie and the legacy that she helped to build. She was one of a kind and I am grateful to have known and worked with her.”

As a teen, Barbie and her family relocated to Kelowna from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. She thrived in high school, taking on leadership roles and exploring her passion for fashion and design. After high school, Barbie studied at the Bassett School of Fashion and Interior Design in Portland and returned to Kelowna where she built a successful career as one of the Okanagan’s most sought after interior designers.

Barbie began her tenure as a KGH volunteer in the early 1990’s, when she was on the founding committee for the now iconic, bi-annual, KGH Foundation Heart of Gold gala. She wasted no time putting her superpowers to good use, leaning into her leadership and design skills to create an experience for guests that helped establish a standard of excellence that continues to this day. During those early years, she dedicated countless hours to Heart of Gold, which has gone on to raise over \$7 million in support of Kelowna General Hospital. Even when she stepped away from the committee in the later years, she would always return on the event day to lend a helping hand.

“She was a wonderful force to be reckoned with and just the epitome of community,” says Lynn Archibald, current Creative Director for the Heart of Gold



“

There isn’t a day when I walk through the Centennial Lobby and I don’t see a little piece of Barbie and the legacy that she helped to build.”

— Nancy Wells

Committee. "Barbie's volunteer work for KGH and the Heart of Gold galas was invaluable. She willingly shared her knowledge and talent with all of us and I will always look back and smile at some of her hilarious stories and well...just Barbie."

"It's hard to imagine a Heart of Gold without her," reflects Lynn. "We will miss her."

Barbie is probably best-known for her role in creating legendary fashion shows, which were THE social events to be at. She took her role as show director almost as seriously as she did the role of fundraiser. All the proceeds from these wildly successful fashion shows went to KGH.

If that wasn't enough, Barbie also volunteered her time and expertise as a member of the KGH Foundation's Board of Directors from 2005 – 2011.

After her stint on the Board, she signed on to support the build of a gift shop, the Centennial Mercantile, in the new Centennial Building at KGH. Her project management skills and keen eye for design were a perfect match for the project. The new KGH Gift Shop opened in 2012 and Barbie stayed on as a volunteer buyer for over a decade, until her passing in 2023.

When asked to describe Barbie in word, Nancy takes pause before answering. "One word? That's hard. Formidable. She never took no for an answer. She was a force."

Barbie left an indelible mark on our community. It seems only fitting to give her the last word(s).

If you know, you know.

"See ya. Love ya."



A legacy that lives on...

Barbie's energy, passion, love and support for KGH are simply beyond compare. Last fall, a group of her friends and KGH Foundation donors came forward with an idea to honour Barbie in a unique and fitting way.

The Barbie Ross Service Award has been established in loving memory of Barbie, to recognize and acknowledge a KGH Foundation volunteer who embodies the values and dedication that Barbie held so dear. The prestigious award is a heartfelt tribute to a remarkable woman's legacy, honouring KGH Foundation volunteers who share Barbie's exceptional qualities and spirit in their selfless service to others. The recipient is announced at the annual Volunteer Gala.

In 2023, the very first award was given to Henk de Roos, a 20-year volunteer at the KGH Gift Shop.



COMFORT IN PLAY

Welcome to the KGH Toy HAVN

For adults, facing a medical challenge and needing to stay in hospital is tough. But when you're one of KGH's littlest patients, it can be even more challenging, so staff hope to create an environment that helps ease the stress and make things feel as welcoming as possible. Now, a new program launched this winter aims to help.

Thanks to the generosity of local real estate brokerage, **Stilhavn Real Estate Services**, pediatric patients at KGH will have access to some of the things that kids tend to love most – toys! Toys, books, crafts and games can help transport a child from the beeps and chirps of medical equipment to the world of their own imaginations.

The KGH Toy Havn, centrally located within the hospital, provides staff with easy access to these valuable resources. Jill Sinton, Director of Clinical Operations at the KGH Emergency Department, Access & Efficiency, emphasizes the significant impact of these items. "Toys, games and the like not only offer a distraction from medical tests and procedures but also help make the unfamiliar hospital environment a bit friendlier and less intimidating for children," she explains.



Thank you to the Okanagan Stilhavn REALTORS® for establishing the KGH Toy Havn and supporting the initiative with a \$100,000 commitment.”

— **Jill Sinton,**
KGH Director of Clinical Operations,
Emergency Department, Access & Efficiency



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