

# Foundations

BUILDING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH CARE



## REMEMBERING DR. DOUG COCHRANE PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

### PEOPLE LIKE ME

Cancer touches all of us

### KGH DAY OF GIVING

Eight years and over \$5M raised

### YOUTH LEAD THE WAY

From crisis to connection



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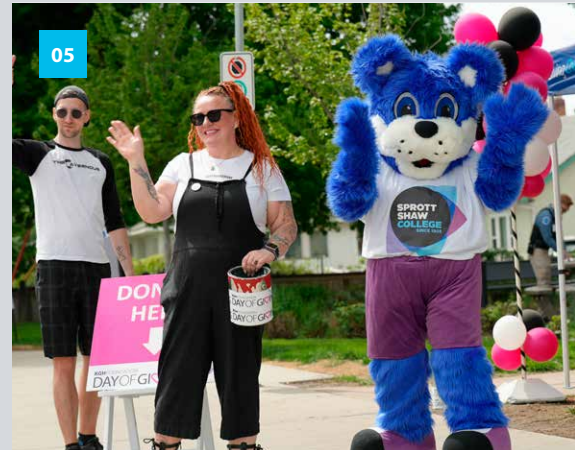
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We humbly recognize and acknowledge that Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) and the KGH Foundation operate on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the syilx people.

Cover Image: Dr. Doug Cochrane, former Chair of the Board of Directors for Interior Health. See story on page 6.



**Allison (Allie) Young**  
Chief Executive Officer  
KGH Foundation



The lives and hearts  
touched, choices  
made, actions taken...  
all are contributions  
to our life's legacy."

— Allison (Allie) Young

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

# LEGACIES

What is a legacy?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines legacy as the "long-lasting impact of particular events and actions that took place in the past, or of a person's life." The great Andy Warhol said that "the idea is not to live forever; but to create something that will."

Legacy isn't only to be considered in the twilight years of our lives. You and I are living our legacies right now. The lives and hearts touched, choices made, actions taken... all are contributions to our life's legacy.

When I read through this edition of Foundations, I am inspired by the powerful legacies built by people in our community. People like Dr. Doug Cochrane, Chair of the Board of Directors for Interior Health, whose passing earlier this year was met both with profound grief and deep reverence. Over his decades long career, Dr. Cochrane had an unforgettable impact on health care. His gentle and compassionate leadership was a true inspiration to so many, including me.

Legacies are so often kept alive by a family's commitment to building upon the work of their predecessors. There is the beautiful story of the Gorman family, and a daughter's wish to continue her father's legacy with a very special contribution to the endowment he established many years ago. Consider also the legacy that began with Joe and Anna Huber, and their children's, deep-rooted commitment to hospitality, which continues to extend to hundreds of families every year at JoeAnna's House.

You will read about a young man whose life was saved by the legacy built by you and many others through the investment in the cardiac program at KGH. The Varette's lost their beloved son to a heart attack in 2017. SAVE BC is part of their living legacy to help prevent cardiovascular events in men and women under the age of 55. Similarly, we share the ongoing impact of the Eger-Blenk family's commitment to changing the experience for young people at risk of mental health challenges.

Lastly, there is the impact of a person's choice to bravely share their story in order to influence the legacies we are building together within our communities. Legacies like better health care. Time and again we see that when one shares their story, it has a powerful ripple effect, connecting us to one another and inspiring action towards a better future for all.

Legacies. What will yours be?

In gratitude,

**Allie Young**  
CEO, KGH Foundation





One of the local transit shelter ads featuring real local people who have been touched by cancer.

## CANCER CARE

# PEOPLE LIKE ME

By Shauna Nyrose, VP Brand & Communications

"It's not every day that you see your face cruise by you on the side of a bus," laughs Rutland resident Whit Penner, a father of two in his mid-thirties. "But I get it. I'm the last person anyone would have ever expected to get cancer. I think that's the point."

This spring, Whit's face wasn't the only one that appeared on buses, transit shelters and in newspaper ads. His was not the only voice heard on the local radio stations as kids were dropped at school or trips were made to the grocery store. Because Whit is not alone. Last year, over 7,500 people like Whit from the Central Okanagan and surrounding communities underwent surgery or were admitted for cancer-related care at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH).

People like Whit, and people like me. It's probably no surprise that the inspiration for our Cancer Care campaign was drawn from my own

experience as a cancer patient and survivor. In 2019, at age 44, I heard the dreaded words, "it's cancer." Like Whit, I was not someone anyone would have bet would get cancer. And the more our team spoke to cancer survivors and their families, the clearer it became: Cancer touches all of us.

I'd like to share a little bit about our 'faces' of Cancer Care, because it takes courage to put yourself out there so publicly. Despite it feeling like a big city sometimes, our community is still... well, a community. There's not much more than a degree of separation between any of us.

We are your neighbours, friends, colleagues. We are that friendly face at the bank, that guy you play squash with on Friday mornings. We are real people. Maybe you are one of us.

When you give to support the KGH Foundation's Cancer Care priority, you're giving to support us, and all those who, sadly, will follow. One thing we all learned for sure along the journey is that taking on cancer is not something that is ever accomplished alone.





Father, partner, dog dad,  
hockey enthusiast  
**Penile Cancer**

*"My whole world collapsed the day I received the call. I was 36 years old and an otherwise healthy person who had never—outside of an appendectomy—had any health issues. The news hit me like a freight train, shattering the illusion of invincibility I had carried as a healthy adult. The road to recovery is long and has its challenges, but I face it with unwavering determination and a newfound appreciation for life's fragility."*



Mother, grandmother,  
philanthropist, volunteer  
**In loving memory of her husband, Leo Robert**

*"Every day of health is a blessing and every experience with illness makes those days even more of a blessing. Leo fought his battle with cancer with an optimistic outlook and infectious positivity. We miss him dearly. I know he would want me to continue to advocate for world-class health care right here in this beautiful place we call home. When we need health care, we need it here in Kelowna."*



Mom, wife, registered nurse & youth mental  
health care specialist, Corgi mom  
**Breast Cancer**

*"I was a 38 year old breastfeeding mother at the time I found a lump in my right breast. It was a fast process after that for me as the type of cancer I was diagnosed with was so aggressive. The staff at KGH were wonderful to me. I'm happy to be able to share my story in support of initiatives to advance cancer diagnostics and treatment at KGH, and also to inspire others who are going through their own journey."*



Mom of footballers, NICU nurse, wife, friend  
**Thyroid Cancer**

*"In all honesty, it was a pretty difficult time so I tried my best to remain optimistic – for myself and my boys, who were quite young at the time. Thankfully, I was surrounded by love and support – I had lots of cheerleaders! Being a NICU nurse and formerly an ICU nurse, I knew I was in good hands at KGH. I never take life for granted, I embrace adventure and will be cheering on my boys for decades to come."*



World traveller, wife, philanthropist, friend  
**Living with Lung Cancer**

*"I have realized that life is a gift with no guarantees so make the most of the time you have. I have non-small-cell lung cancer. It was hard to believe as I am very health conscious, a non-smoker, and there is no history of cancer in my family. My cancer diagnosis has made me realize how important people and support is. It has definitely made me a better person with more love, care and compassion for others."*



Husband, father, grandfather, volunteer  
**In loving memory of her husband, Donald Lee**

*"Our family was shocked when Donald was diagnosed with mesothelioma (cancer in the lining of the lungs). Up until this point in his life, he was the picture of health, walking five kilometres a day, lifting weights regularly and eating a well-balanced diet. In the hospital, the doctors were stunned that the only medications that Donald took on a regular basis were vitamin D and C. He has left a tremendous hole in our lives and hearts but we are grateful for the compassionate care he received at KGH."*

# EIGHT DAYS TO \$5 MILLION

What began as a humble, one-day fundraiser has blossomed into an extraordinary grassroots movement, driven by the incredible generosity of our community.

The very first **KGH Day of Giving** took place in 2017 to fund the opening of Foundry Kelowna, now a vital, integrated youth mental health care centre in our community. That inaugural year, just over \$42,000 was raised during the one day effort.

But then, over the next seven years, something truly unimaginable happened. Soon, hundreds of thousands were being raised as the community came together, increasing in numbers and enthusiasm.

The mission for this year's **KGH Day of Giving** was Cancer Care. The response was undeniable: \$927,707 raised to advance medical imaging, pathology, surgical oncology and innovation right here in our home community at KGH.

Following this year's success, an astounding \$5.5 million has been raised over the past eight years. You could say we did it, together, in just eight days!

The remarkable success of the **KGH Day of Giving** is due to it being about much more than just the funds raised. It is an example of the incredible achievements made possible when clinicians, physicians, volunteers, businesses, partners, and donors unite for a common cause. It is an expression of community in action —

individuals working together to build world-class health care for everyone in the Southern Interior.

Every single donation makes a difference. Because they add up. The charm of the **KGH Day of Giving** is that despite its exponential growth, it is still a grassroots community fundraiser.

When the **Sprott-Shaw Change Bandits** took to the streets in front of the hospital, they raised a record-breaking \$7,454 from the vehicles and pedestrians passing by. When the owners of the five Kelowna **Pita Pit** locations set out to raise \$2,500—they quadrupled their goal and raised \$10,000. When local realtor, **Darcy Nyrose**, offered to match gifts that came in from his colleagues and clients with \$5,000, over \$11,000 was raised. When our Kelowna **Save-On-Foods** and **Urban Fare** hosted a BBQ lunch for KGH staff, over \$2,000 was raised for the cause. Another \$11,606 was contributed through their till campaigns.

A huge thank you to our entire community for showing up in support of our hospital and health care in our community. **KGH Day of Giving** would not be possible without you and reminds us of what it means to be a part of a community that is not afraid to work together to accomplish big things.



Pita Pit raises \$10K for Day of Giving.



Thank you to the Rotary Club of Kelowna Okanagan Mission and our outstanding partners at Bell Media.



All smiles for Day of Giving.

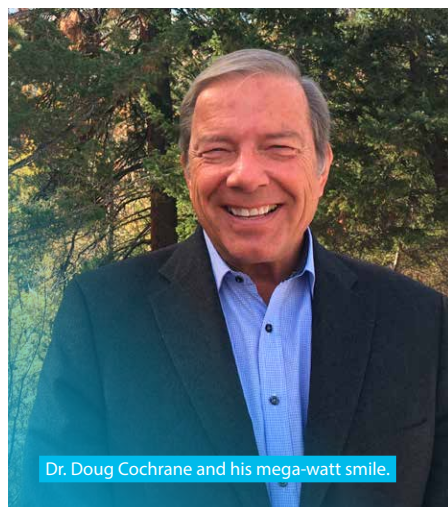


The Sprott Shaw Change Bandits.



# RED CHUCK TAYLORS AND A MEGA-WATT SMILE

Remembering Dr. Doug Cochrane



Dr. Doug Cochrane and his mega-watt smile.

“

The monument of a great man is not of granite or marble or bronze. It consists of his goodness, his deeds, his love and his compassion.

– Alfred Armand Montapert

In spite of all the achievements, impact and greatness that people can achieve in their lifetimes, there are a very special few who can accomplish all of these in the generosity of their smile. This was Dr. Doug Cochrane. As a symbol of challenging the status quo, Dr. Cochrane was also known to wear red Converse Chuck Taylor All Stars with his suits. He encouraged others to do so as well, as a reminder to all of us to challenge existing norms.

Earlier this year, in February, we learned of Dr. Cochrane's passing. There are no words to articulate the depth of the loss to our health care community. Dr. Cochrane was an extraordinary clinician and, more importantly, human being. By all accounts, he was the best combination of brave, brilliant and kind. This disposition made him an inspirational leader and administrator.

“Beyond being a gifted clinician and facilitator for important change in our health system, Dr. Cochrane was a phenomenal leader and human,” says Allison Young, CEO, KGH Foundation.

Dr. Cochrane had stepped down as Interior Health's Chair of the Board of Directors just two weeks prior to his passing.

“He had this big job, important initiatives to drive, and a full schedule,” continues Allison. “Yet when he spoke with you, you felt seen and heard. And later, he would give you that great, big smile and remember you, and what you had talked about.”

Perhaps no one benefited more from Dr. Cochrane's expertise and generous human spirit, than our province's littlest patients. Kids were his jam. He was an exceptional pediatric neurosurgeon with incredible clinical skills. Originally from Ontario, Dr. Cochrane pursued his medical studies at the University of Toronto, the University of Calgary, and completed his

fellowship in pediatric neurosurgery at the Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto. He spent the majority of his clinical career with the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery at BC Children's Hospital and the University of British Columbia. He had an extraordinary gift for making his patients, and their families, feel welcome, safe and cared for.

After over thirty years of clinical practice, Dr. Cochrane retired and focused his efforts on the quality of the health system and its impact on outcomes for people in the Interior Health region. He was a pioneer in patient safety and quality. Early on, he asked the question, “How do we put people at the centre of care?” He made it his mission.

Dr. Cochrane chaired the BC Patient Safety Task Force from its inception in 2003, he helped establish the BC Patient Safety & Quality Council (now known as Health Quality BC), and was a humble ally to Indigenous health.

“Doug was an extremely kind and thoughtful friend and mentor,” shares Dr. Devin Harris, Chair, Health Quality BC and Cabinet Co-Chair of the KGH Foundation's *Closer to home than you think* campaign. “Professionally, he had a lasting impact on health care in BC and Canada – in patient safety, medical quality, physician leadership, and health equity. As a clinician, he has changed the lives of so many children and families.”

Dr. Cochrane recognized that technical skills were not enough and that the climate, culture and the way people talk to each other mattered. He leaves an unparalleled legacy in clinical care, health care leadership, and patient quality and safety.

Dr. Harris sums it up perfectly. “His are big (red) shoes to fill.”



Carol Gorman (centre), with her siblings (L to R) Mary Tracey, Ron Gorman, and Louise Arkle in front of the photo of their father, Ross Gorman, on the endowment wall at KGH.

## FAMILY ENDOWMENT

# GENERATIONAL GIVING: A GORMAN FAMILY CONNECTION

An enduring vision for Cancer Care at KGH

A sparkle appears in Carol Gorman's eyes when she talks about her father, Ross Gorman. And she radiates warmth and affection for him when she shares memories of post-dinner family hikes in the woods near her childhood home in Westbank.

"I'd often get tired on these hikes and my dad would scoop me up, pop me on his shoulders and carry me the rest of the way," reflects Carol. "He always made me feel secure and loved."

Carol and her father Ross were very close and shared a special bond until his passing in 2014. After discovering that her father had established an endowment with the KGH Foundation in support of cancer care at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH), Carol pursued the possibility of adding to his endowment fund.

"I became interested in what my father had

established through this endowment. Since I am also navigating my own cancer journey and have received exceptional care at KGH, I felt this would be a good way to give back to the hospital," explains Carol.

And that she did. In late 2023, Carol and several members of her family gathered at the KGH Foundation to celebrate Carol's significant contribution to enhance the **Ross Gorman Endowment Fund** and advance priorities in cancer care at KGH. It was a tremendously moving morning as Carol's family beamed with joy, love and pride for a beloved sister, aunt and great-aunt.

Dr. Brenda Farnquist, a KGH radiologist, was on hand to thank Carol personally for her generous gift. "These gifts to our hospital—the future of care—truly touch my heart," Dr. Farnquist says. "They mean so much to all of

us, including the radiologists and teams who work in the hospital. We are all working hard to do more, often with less, and this gift is extremely heartfelt and appreciated."

Radiology and medical imaging play instrumental roles in cancer diagnosis and follow-up treatments at KGH, including biopsy and surgery.

"Gifts like this mean so much because they make us—and the hospital—better," Dr. Farnquist continues. "They lead to new discoveries for faster and more accurate diagnoses, better patient care and ultimately, a healthier community."

Allison (Allie) Young, CEO of the KGH Foundation, echoes Dr. Farnquist's sentiments. "The faith of Ross Gorman and the continuation of his legacy are very special. Carol's gift will support Dr. Farnquist and all the doctors who



diagnose and treat patients with cancer in our hospital," she says.

"Physicians and clinicians are the backbone of diagnostic and surgical cancer care delivery at Kelowna General Hospital. It is essential to support their dedication to providing the best possible care for us," continues Allie. "With this gift to the existing endowment, both Carol and her father Ross will always be alongside patients—and their health care workers—on their journeys."

Carol is all too familiar with the journey that many cancer patients are on. "I spent fourteen days at KGH as part of a surgery to remove the cancer from my pancreas," shares Carol. "The care I received from the doctors and nurses was outstanding—they truly saw me and I felt supported. It was similar to the feeling I would get when my dad carried me on his shoulders during those family hikes—I felt secure."

Even though the cancer was removed from Carol's pancreas, it has spread and she continues to be monitored. The Gorman family is resolute, "Auntie Carol has defied the odds," says her niece, Nicole. "And we get to witness

her generous heart and desire to help others through this gift."

Growing up, Carol was keenly aware of her father's community-oriented nature. Ross Gorman started Gorman Brothers Lumber with his brother John in 1953. As the organization expanded to become the Gorman Group of Companies, Carol observed her father's commitment to giving back in order to promote a healthier community—whether through community partnerships or the Gorman employee giving program.

"It is a privilege and an honour to be able to make a gift like this," says Carol.

We are grateful to Carol Gorman for following in the footsteps of her father and for their investment in a transformative future for cancer care at Kelowna General Hospital and for our whole community.

*This article was written in February 2024. Carol Gorman passed away in April. She will be fondly remembered for optimistic outlook, warm smile and generous heart.*



Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) is one of two tertiary hospitals in the Interior Health region. Patients in the Central Okanagan and surrounding area who experience symptoms of cancer are most often referred to KGH for diagnosis and surgical interventions.

Last spring, the KGH Foundation launched its \$40 million *Closer to home than you think* campaign to help fund the immediate needs and long-term system changes in local health care, both at KGH, and in the community. This year, the focus is on advancing Cancer Care at KGH, ensuring that when this life-altering disease affects you or someone you love, world-class care is available, close to home.

To learn more about the Cancer Care campaign, see story on page 3.

## ENDOWMENTS WITH THE KGH FOUNDATION

If you would like to learn more about creating an endowment with the KGH Foundation, contact Colleen Cowman, Director of Philanthropy, Planned Giving at [colleen.cowman@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:colleen.cowman@interiorhealth.ca) or 250.862.4300x 27011.



L to R: Dr. Brenda Farnquist, KGH radiologist, Carol Gorman, and Allison Young, CEO, KGH Foundation.

# MATTERS OF THE HEART

It was a gorgeous spring afternoon in Penticton, BC. Dan Colbeck, aged 40, had just finished a mountain bike ride with a friend and was sitting in his car. Something didn't feel right. And his chest hurt.

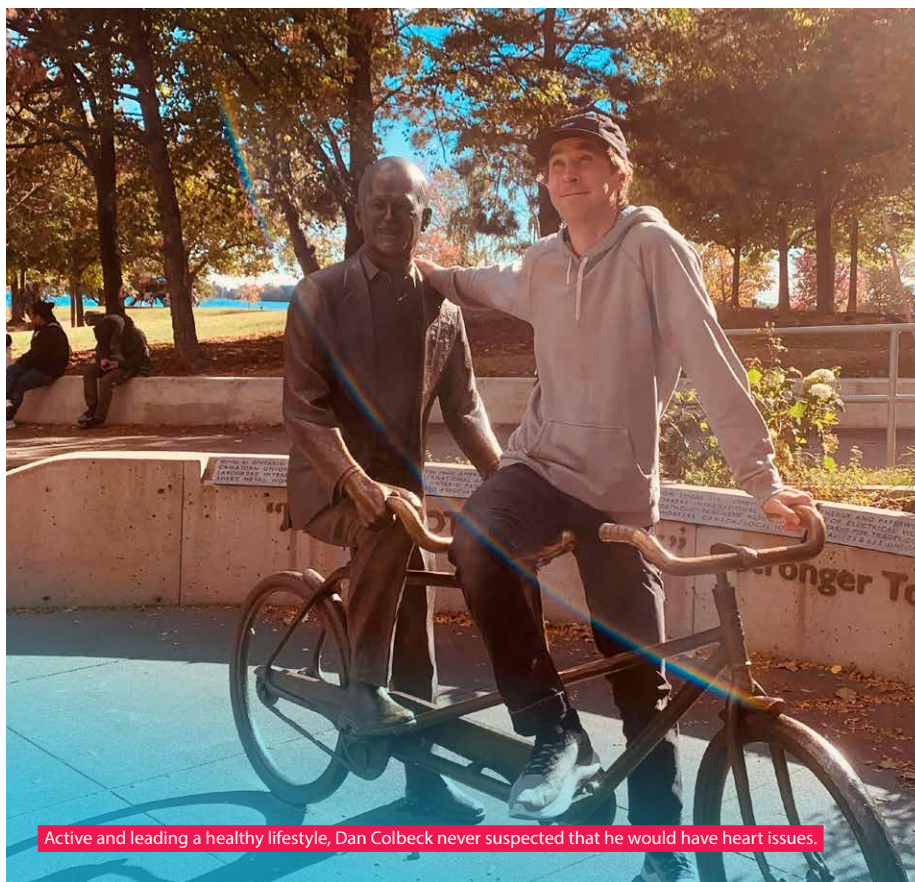
Dan was sweating from more than just the ride, he looked so unwell that his friend called 9-1-1. Paramedics arrived and quickly determined that Dan was experiencing a serious cardiac crisis.

The ambulance was equipped with an ECG (electrocardiogram) machine which meant paramedics were able to perform this critical diagnostic test and send it to the Penticton Regional Hospital Emergency Department while en route. They were able to confirm that Dan was experiencing a full blockage in one of his major coronary arteries. The paramedics were instructed to take Dan directly to Kelowna General Hospital (KGH), the Interior Health region's cardiac referral hospital, home to the specialized Cardiac Catheterization Lab (Cath Lab).

Upon arrival, Dan was rushed to the KGH Cath Lab, considered one of the most advanced interventional cardiovascular operating environments available today. Dan would later learn that he had suffered three cardiac arrests that day. The specialized care he received at KGH may well have saved his life. He has since made a full recovery.

Young, healthy, active men like Dan shouldn't be having heart attacks. However his case, though puzzling to Dan, wasn't altogether unusual. It was discovered that he has a hereditary risk factor for cardiovascular disease. It was then that Dan was enrolled in a cardiac health program and learned about **SAVE BC**.

**SAVE BC**, the Study to Avoid Cardiovascular Events in British Columbia, aims to identify and support people like Dan who are at risk of premature cardiovascular disease through early detection, intervention, and education. It began at Vancouver General Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital in the Lower Mainland, and was trialled at KGH in



Active and leading a healthy lifestyle, Dan Colbeck never suspected that he would have heart issues.

2019 through the support of Sharon Varette and her family. The Varettes lost their son to a cardiac event in 2017. Their resolve to help ensure that no family has to suffer the tragic loss of a loved one has fuelled their mission to bring **SAVE BC** to KGH.

Sharon explains, "Our hope is that the applied knowledge from the research being done with patients and their first degree relatives will help to improve current practices for family physicians, patients and members of the public, advocating for the **SAVE BC** protocol to become the standard of care in British Columbia."

Today, **SAVE BC** has a permanent team at KGH including Dr. Frank Halperin, KGH's Medical Director of Cardiology.

Dr. Halperin shares a compelling perspective on Dan's story.

"Without question, donors saved Dan's life, and may even save his children's lives. When Dan experienced his first cardiac event that day in Penticton, the paramedics were able to administer an ECG in the ambulance and as a result, he was immediately rerouted to Kelowna, saving



precious time when every moment matters,” shares Dr. Halperin.

“The ECGs in ambulances and the training required for paramedics are part of the PCP-CHAMP (Primary Care Paramedics Collaborative Heart Attack Management Program)—a regional initiative funded through donors to the KGH Foundation, Vernon Jubilee Hospital Foundation, and the South Okanagan Similkameen Medical Foundation, in partnership with the Provincial Health Services Authority and BC Emergency Health Services.”

“KGH is also home to the Interior Heart & Surgical Centre (IHSC) which, thanks to donors

to the KGH Foundation’s \$12 million *Be a Lifesaver* campaign (2015), contains some of the most advanced cardiovascular interventional equipment and operating environments in the country,” adds Dr. Halperin.

“And finally, donors are actually contributing to the prevention of future cardiac events — for people like Dan, and his children, who also qualify for **SAVE BC** screening. The bottom line is, donors save lives and we are immeasurably grateful for their support.”

Allison Young, CEO of the KGH Foundation, stresses the importance of **SAVE BC**’s mission. “Sharon’s family loss and Dan’s journey from

near tragedy to recovery are powerful calls-to-action for all of us,” she says. “These stories highlight the dangers of undiagnosed cardiovascular disease and the lifesaving potential of this type of early detection and intervention. Thanks to the incredible generosity of donors like the Varette family, the Foundation is able to support **SAVE BC**’s mission to protect our community’s cardiac health.”

“

Dan’s ECG indicated that he needed to bypass Penticton and get to KGH for treatment in our Cath Lab.”

— Dr. Frank Halperin,  
Medical Director of Cardiology at KGH  
and SAVE BC Principal Investigator





Members of the Mental Health Cafe Group including Maven Gray Maraj (centre), Regional Okanagan Youth Ambassador, Joshua Raphael (third from left), ROYC Program Coordinator, and Logan Burd, (second from left) MPH, CLARITY Project Coordinator.

## MENTAL HEALTH CARE UPDATE

# FROM CRISIS TO CONNECTION

Young people are leading the way

“I know what it’s like to not have support,” shares Maven Gray Maraj, a student at UBC Okanagan. “I want to make sure that if there is just a little bit that I can do, that I do that much. And this is something where I can make a difference—a community-based difference.”

Maven’s desire for youth-led impact when it comes to their peers’ challenges with mental health are echoed across the Okanagan. Thanks to a novel initiative funded through the KGH Foundation’s *Closer to home than you think* campaign’s commitment to mental health, young people in the Okanagan like Maven are doing just that.

According to the BC Coroners Service, suicide is a leading cause of death in children age 10-18,

second only to fatal overdose from illicit drugs. In the Okanagan, over 2,400 young people received support from Child and Youth Mental Health Services in the 2022/23 fiscal year. On average, they waited 73 days to access services. With demand for support continuing to increase, Okanagan young people can find themselves feeling like they have no one to talk to.

Advancing mental health care is a critical component of the *Closer to home than you think* campaign. Funding is committed to support the immediate needs of acute and community health care providers to help people, including our community’s youth, who need help now, and facilitate collaboration to support the innovative approach needed to build a sustainable, inclusive and accessible system of care in the Okanagan.





Dr. Sana Shahram



Dr. Katrina Plamondon



Joshua Raphael, ROYC Program Coordinator

## A FRESH APPROACH: THE PATH TO CLARITY

“Personally, I’m very passionate about the idea that the people experiencing the problems are also the ones who will have the solutions,” explains Dr. Sana Shahram PhD, MPH. Dr. Shahram and Dr. Katrina Plamondon PhD, RN, both Assistant Professors in the School of Nursing at UBC Okanagan are co-leads of the **CLARITY** (Community-Led Action for Resiliency Important Throughout Youth) **Project**, a unique partnership between the KGH Foundation, the Blenk Family Fund and Interior Health.

Founded in 2018, the **CLARITY Project** aims to address the root cause of youth’s mental wellness challenges through resilience-building intervention.

“When it comes to the areas of youth suicide, substance use, and general wellness, we need to look to young people themselves for solutions,” says Dr. Shahram.



I’m very passionate about the idea that the people experiencing the problems are also the ones who will have the solutions.

— Dr. Sana Shahram

## CREATING A YOUTH-LED SUPPORT NETWORK

Under the umbrella of the **CLARITY Project**, the **Regional Okanagan Youth Council (ROYC)** has been established with support from RBC Foundation. The program invites youth from diverse backgrounds to attend discussions where they are able to communicate directly with community mental health partners. The **ROYC** acts as a collective voice for youth across the Okanagan, working with mental health and wellness organizations, such as This Space Belongs to You, Third Space Charity, and Foundry Kelowna.

Maven Gray Maraj and Mia Ngo were se-lected to serve as Regional Okanagan Youth Ambassadors in September 2023 to help facilitate the **ROYC** discussion sessions held every three months where participants share their opinions and ideas about the issues surrounding youth mental health.

“This job gives us direction and opportunity to work,” says Mia. “Engaging and connecting with youth gives me a feeling of making a meaningful contribution and being productive within the community.”

## THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The **ROYC** is having a very real impact on our health care in the community. **ROYC** works by being proactive, giving youth a place to voice their concerns and make meaningful connections, to help prevent mental health crises before they happen. The hope is that a preventative care approach will help reduce the need for downstream mental health services.

“The project takes an upstream approach to youth suicide prevention by seeking to implement services and programs in the community that act as a resilience-building intervention,” says Dr. Shahram. “This helps identify the root causes of issues before they occur, helping solve issues on a broad level.”

“The **CLARITY Project** and **ROYC** not only foster youth mental health and wellness, but also much-needed connection between youth with practical experience and their peers,” explains KGH Foundation CEO, Allie Young. “In doing so, young people are, appropriately, helping drive the future of mental health care in our community through authentic engagement and deliberate actions.”

# CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF OUR HOSPITAL AUXILIARIES



In 1963, the Kelowna Junior Ladies Auxiliary members presented hospital equipment purchased through fundraising efforts.

Kelowna Public Archives: KPA#2691

For over 100 years, the volunteer members of the Okanagan Hospital Auxiliaries (Kelowna, Cottonwoods, Peachland, Rutland and Winfield) demonstrated their commitment, creativity and progressive thinking in their support for Kelowna General Hospital (KGH). Their founding mission was to raise funds to ensure that the hospitals were supplied with linens. Over time though, as the hospital began to grow with the needs of the communities it served, their initiative and 'can-do' mentality became instrumental in helping advance care at KGH.

After decades of tireless commitment to the hospital, in 1996, the hospital Auxiliaries joined forces with the KGH Foundation. The decision was made that the Auxiliaries fundraising efforts would specifically support the acquisition of state-of-the-art medical equipment. Since then, they have raised and contributed over \$13 million.

In 2000, the Auxiliaries established the **KGH Auxiliary Endowment Fund**, investing their

capital reserves to ensure that the group could support the hospital in perpetuity.

Over the next two decades, membership slowly declined and in 2020, the decision was made to dissolve. A few remaining members continue to volunteer for the KGH Foundation through its social enterprises including the KGH Gift Shop, Perking Lot, Royal Bistro and Rutland Thrift Store. What will also remain is the incredible legacy of generosity and volunteerism that will continue through the establishment of the KGH Foundation Educational Awards, made possible by the **KGH Auxiliary Endowment Fund**.

Facilitated through COBSS (Central Okanagan Bursary and Scholarship Society) and funded through the proceeds of the Endowment's annual allocations, each year the Awards support upwards of seven students pursuing a career in a human health care field with a bursary of \$2,500. Preference is given to students who volunteer in the community, including those who volunteer at the KGH Foundation

social enterprises. Two awards with Okanagan College (OC) were also established, named the Kelowna Hospital Auxiliary Health Care Awards. Each year, \$2,500 is awarded to two returning OC Practical Nursing diploma students who have completed the second semester in the program at the Kelowna campus.

"Thank you... this award will be of great help to continue my studies at OC," writes one grateful student. "After completing the Practical Nursing Program, I will be working as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) in the acute or long term care setting. I am excited to have a positive impact on my community and all of my future patients."

Over the years, well over 150 awards have been given to deserving students, many of whom have completed their studies and chosen to work in health care at Kelowna General Hospital or in the community.

Through volunteerism, philanthropy and foresight, the Auxiliaries of the KGH Foundation and others prove yet again the timeless impact of giving.

The KGH Foundation also offers the KGH Foundation Scholarship, set up in 2007 in recognition of Terry Flanagan's participation with the Heart of Gold event through the creation of an Endowment held by UBC. The award is offered to students who have completed one year or more of undergraduate study at UBC Okanagan and are beginning or continuing studies in the Faculty of Medicine at UBC.



# COMFORT THROUGH CHAOS

*Everything is happening so fast*, thought Jesse Batke as he threw some personal belongings into a bag, trying to ignore the growing anxiety in the pit of his stomach. Jesse and his wife, Erica Stavinga, would normally be planning a hike or a fishing trip with their two kids for the weekend in their hometown of Creston, BC. Instead, Erica was on an emergency flight to Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) and Jesse was frantically making arrangements so that he could follow.

In the days prior, Erica had been suffering from uncharacteristically severe migraines, culminating in the alarming loss of her vision. An MRI performed at Creston Community Hospital was sent to Dr. Michael Tso, a neurosurgeon at KGH, the region's advanced neurology referral hospital. Dr. Tso's response was swift. Erica was experiencing a serious brain bleed inside her optic nerve and needed to be flown to KGH for an emergency craniotomy.

As Jesse made the five hour drive to Kelowna to join his wife, the last thing on his mind was where he was going to stay. His sister-in-law suggested he reach out to JoeAnna's House. All he could think about though was whether his wife would be OK.

Jesse arrived late in the evening and spent the night at KGH with Erica, who had been admitted and scheduled for surgery the following day.

"Being away from home and in such a precarious situation was incredibly difficult and unnerving," explains Jesse. "After that first night, I didn't know where I was going to sleep, where I would get food, and how I was going to afford a hotel room for a week or more."

Jesse called JoeAnna's House. As is increasingly the case, the home-away-from-home just steps

from KGH built to accommodate the families of patients who've had to travel for advanced care, was full.

And then, miraculously, a room opened up.

"Walking into JoeAnna's House was like walking into one of the most inviting homes I'd ever been in," says Jesse. "The staff made me feel like I belonged. It was like nothing I've ever experienced."

JoeAnna's House, and the people who work and volunteer there, have that effect on guests.

"I get emotional talking about it," shares Jesse. "It was such a departure from the traumatic feelings I was going through at the time—I had an overwhelming desire to just hug everybody"

Thankfully, Erica's surgery was a success. Dr. Tso and his team were able to remove the bleed from Erica's optic nerve and are hopeful that her vision will improve with time.

"Erica received the finest care from Dr. Mike Tso, Dr. Daniel Yavin, their team, and all of the nurses and staff at KGH," says Jesse gratefully.

And for Jesse, he says the care that he received at JoeAnna's House was second to none. "We are so grateful for every person—whether they donate, volunteer, or work at JoeAnna's House," he says. "The love and support we received during such a scary and uncertain time gave me the strength to cope and better support Erica."

"From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you."



Jesse Batke (top right) with his wife Erika Stavinga and two children, Abigail and Jamie.



## VOLUNTEERS

# GREEN THUMB GIVING

The modern farmhouse décor inside JoeAnna's House is warm and inviting, and staff and volunteers work hard to keep it pristine for their guests.

But there are also the busy bees hard at work to beautify the outside as well. "Having been here since the beginning, our beloved volunteers, Clare Mallow and Maureen Anderson, are the original Green Thumb Givers," explains Darlene Haslock, Director of JoeAnna's House. "And now there's a whole crew of nurturing hands that help keep our gardens flourishing!"

The Green Thumb Givers meet weekly, organize spring and fall clean-ups and help keep the landscaping at JoeAnna's House healthy and looking its best.

"The work that these enthusiastic volunteer garden gnomes provide saves us literally thousands of dollars in landscaping costs each year," says Darlene. "They are so appreciated and it means so much that our gardens are being tended to by people who truly love JoeAnna's House and all it stands for."



Top (L-R): Andrea Heinseleit, Clare (The Legend) Mallow, Kerry-Ann Weaver

Bottom (L-R): Hennie Combet, Reesa Groenewegen, Nancy (DeGardenNomme) Denomme, Maureen (Loves to Volunteer and Work Here) Anderson

## BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Join a team of people just as committed as you to giving back and advancing health care, right here at home. From a regular shift at a hospital venue, JoeAnna's House or the Rutland Thift Store to assisting at an upcoming fundraising event, your gift of time will make a difference.

Learn more at [kghfoundation.com/volunteer](https://kghfoundation.com/volunteer)



Giving Changes Everything.

**KGH**FOUNDATION

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