

## Patti Dean's Story

In January 2005, my family began a journey that would change us all.

It started in Dr. John Yun's office at Richmond Hospital, the day my mother was diagnosed with an aggressive form of lung cancer. Until that moment, I'd never encountered cancer up close before. I'd never walked through the experience with friends or family. I didn't know anything about it, and I was scared.

When we heard the news, we felt like we were completely in the dark. And yet, despite the negative prognosis, we left Dr. Yun's office feeling hopeful. We knew he couldn't cure Mom, but he could treat her – and he treated her very, very well. From her first round of chemotherapy until she passed away, Mom received unbelievably compassionate care at Richmond Hospital.

The first round of chemotherapy was overwhelming for me on two levels. First, it was painful to see my Mom, knowing she had such a difficult journey ahead of her. Secondly, I realized that many other families there were on the same path. It wasn't easy for any of us, but we knew we weren't alone.

Over the next few years, as Mom's illness progressed, I watched the oncology staff at the Cancer Care Clinic at Richmond Hospital treat patients with dignity and respect each and every time. They explained everything in such a gentle and compassionate way, calming the fears of patients and their families struggling through unfamiliar territory.

**Richmond Hospital is here for our community, wherever we are in life. Whether we're celebrating a new birth, facing a life-threatening emergency, or learning to cope with a chronic or terminal illness, the experienced professionals at Richmond Hospital are here to support us every step of the way.**

It didn't matter what part of the journey my family was on, we always felt cared for. When I took Mom in for blood tests, scheduled appointments, or prepared for her to go into palliative care, the dedicated men and women at Richmond Hospital worked patiently with us, to help us understand what was happening. It was really amazing.

When Dr. Yun discovered that my parents had been figure skaters in Europe after the Second World War, he was keenly interested, and wanted to see pictures of



them skating together. It was obvious that he cared for Mom as a person – not just as a patient, and my mom knew it. She often told me how happy she was with the care she was receiving.

After three and a half years of living through cancer, Mom passed away in the spring of 2008. That year, our entire family decided we weren't going to exchange Christmas gifts anymore. Instead, in honour of Mom, we chose to give the gift of giving. Every Christmas, we each make donations to Richmond Hospital Foundation in lieu of gifts, in gratitude for the role the doctors, nurses and other health care professionals played in our lives.

Over the years, donating to Richmond Hospital has become more than a Christmas tradition for my family. Friends have given me gifts by donating to the hospital, because they know it means so much to me. My family celebrates important birthdays or anniversaries with special donations, because we know what a lasting impact our gifts have on people in our community.

**Remember Richmond Hospital and all they do for our community with a donation this season. Your support is a much more meaningful gift than you can imagine. When my family gives to Richmond Hospital, we do it because we're thankful they took such wonderful care of Mom. We do it because we know they're taking tender care of others right now. We do it because one day, Richmond Hospital will be there to care for us when we need them.**

Looking back on that day in Dr. Yun's office when Mom was diagnosed, I didn't know how we would ever make it through the journey that lay ahead of us. I can't begin to express how compassionate, supportive and understanding everyone was at Richmond Hospital during such a difficult time. I'll always be grateful for what Richmond Hospital did for Mom, for me, and for our family.

I also know that Richmond Hospital continues to provide the same level of outstanding care for all of our families, and they rely on your support to do it. Gifts from our community allow the medical team at Richmond Hospital to continue providing the exemplary care they're known for. They are always here for us, often during the most difficult times in our lives, caring for us when we need them most. Please take a moment today, and show your support for everything they do for us.

**It's never been easier to give. You can send your gift by returning the enclosed form, by phoning 604-244-5252, or through the website [www.richmondhospitalfoundation.com](http://www.richmondhospitalfoundation.com). Give in appreciation for what Richmond Hospital does for our families and our community.**

With warm wishes this holiday season,

**Patti Dean**