

# Inspirations

Gratitude Report | 2016



## Celebrating 50 years of health care at Richmond Hospital

### A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

Grateful bariatric patient's journey

### RICHMOND'S GROWTH OF DIABETES

How donors help Richmond's most seriously ill

### BEST & BRIGHTEST

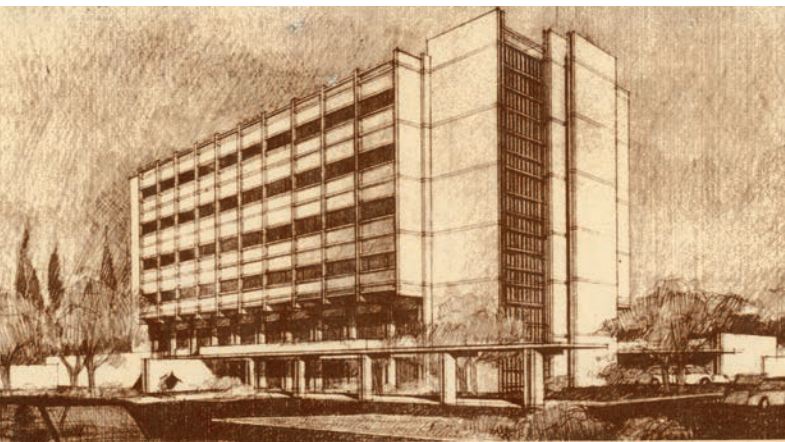
New doctor joins team to provide expert care



RICHMOND HOSPITAL  
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# A Major Milestone: Richmond Hospital turns 50!



Artists Conception of proposed **RICHMOND GENERAL HOSPITAL**



**D**r. Tony Yurkovich, who began practicing in Richmond in the 1950s, remembers driving to Vancouver General Hospital twice a day to see patients. One late night, after delivering a baby, he fell asleep driving home and was fortunately wakened by honking horns. "I used to drive 25,000 miles a year just making house calls," he said.

Community leaders took notice and the push for a hospital began in 1953 when the Richmond Hospital Society was formed and supporters took a grassroots community effort to keep pushing for a hospital. In 1962 there was a referendum in Richmond on whether a new hospital should be built. Voters said "yes" to Richmond Hospital and with 90.5 per cent approval Richmond taxpayers were expected to pay 35% of the roughly \$3.2 million cost of the hospital with the provincial and federal governments paying 50% and 15% respectively, according to the Vancouver Sun. Construction began the following year.

On Feb. 27, 1966 at 2:30 p.m., Richmond General Hospital opened its doors to the public. Some 5,000 people visited that day, entertained by the sounds of the Richmond Senior Secondary School Band.

"The opening of Richmond Hospital was a great day for everybody in Richmond," recalled Nancy Yurkovich, who was there with her husband Tony. "We were standing there filled with joy much like everybody else was in our community."

"It had a dramatic impact on my life," Tony said. "I didn't have to make as many house calls because when patients were sick they could come to the Richmond Hospital (emergency department)."



Dr. Tony & Mrs. Nancy Yurkovich, longtime Richmond residents and passionate supporters of local health care in Richmond.

The six-storey hospital dominated the Richmond skyline and was the tallest building of its time. Nowadays, Richmond Hospital isn't quite so dominant in Richmond's skyline, but remains a vital part of the community. Office buildings now stand where cows once grazed. Towering condos dominate Richmond. Richmond Hospital staff members are proud of their dedication to patient care. The hospital attracts top-notch staff.

That said, with our rapidly growing city, aging population of many residents, along with the thousands of employees who work in Richmond and the 20 million passengers who travel to, from and through our province through YVR, we need a new acute care tower to replace the 50-year-old structure that is the original hospital. A new acute care tower would address the serious seismic issues of our 50-year-old hospital, improve infection control, and bring new technology to the forefront in the way we delivery care for the next 50 years.

## "It had a dramatic impact on my life"

## Treating a silent epidemic: Expert care for Richmond's growing diabetes



It's a shocking statistic that runs counter to what we've heard: Richmond residents currently have the longest lifespan in the country. But there's a growing epidemic in Richmond and it's life-threatening. "Diabetes is a silent killer," says Dr. David E. Harris, Richmond Hospital's endocrinology and metabolism specialist with a primary focus on diabetes and obesity. "While Richmond's prevalence of diabetes is the lowest in Canada, increasing incidence rates of diabetes is among the highest in Canada, surpassed only by First Nations communities and Northern Territories. At this rate, our overall prevalence will catch up with Alberta and Ontario in the next five to 10 years."

"Richmond is still noted as the healthiest city in Canada for its diabetes rate, which is interesting because a lot of people have suggested that that's because of the immigrant population in our city, who tend to have healthy habits when they arrive. Even though our track record is good, things are progressing in the wrong direction."

"Here's the problem. It's not always an acute disease. It has largely livable symptoms for a long period of time, until a major complication happens that requires medical intervention, whether that's dialysis, going blind, losing your foot, experiencing a major heart attack, stroke or dying."

Dr. Harris says, "It's important people visit their family physician and manage diabetes or you will have major life-changing illnesses. We have a lot of work to do here going forward and we look forward to evolving with better services for the community."

# A New Lease on Life



Ian Milford standing at 6'2" weighed 280 lbs before his bariatric surgery.

Standing at 6'2", Ian Milford, 52, says he had always been a big guy and like many people midlife, he was slowly gaining weight. A husband and father of two, tragedy struck the family one day. "In 2011 my wife passed away, and I turned to food for comfort," he says. "My weight really started to get out of hand." In July last year, Ian weighed 280 lbs. "I went from being simply overweight to obese."

As his weight increased, obesity was taking a heavy toll on his body and his health. "My blood pressure and blood sugar were bad. I had type 2 diabetes. My medication had doubled in 18 months. It was frightening."

A turning point came in May last year. Ian was playing indoor soccer and injured his foot. It became infected and wouldn't heal for months. Alarmed he visited his family physician and sought medical advice. "It was the poor circulation caused by the diabetes," he says. "I was really concerned about where my health was going. I didn't want to be the guy who was dead after having a heart attack in his 50s."

Ian discussed the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Program at Richmond Hospital with his GP and sought bariatric surgery. He applied in August, followed the program requirements to prepare for surgery and when the opportunity came up to seek surgical treatment in September, he jumped at it.

Dr. Sharadh Sampath is the Director of the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Program at Richmond Hospital and was also the surgeon who performed the procedure. "He explained everything really well. I felt I had a personal connection with someone who truly wanted to provide a surgical solution. He really had a genuine concern to help with my longevity."



Dr. Sharadh Sampath, Director of the Metabolic and Bariatric Program and general surgeon at Richmond Hospital.

The surgery went extremely well, Ian says, and recovery time was minimal. Following the surgery and working with the team at the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Program, Ian was able to lose nearly 70 lbs and keep it off. "I went down from 44" inch waist to a 32" waist."

Today, Ian lives free of all medication for his obesity and now goes to soccer regularly and even hikes in Lynn Canyon. "I've got more energy now. I have the ability to enjoy my children again. I can keep up with them. I don't have to rest and take breaks."

"If I had not been able to get this surgery, I would now be significantly sicker than I was. Every time I see Dr. Sampath, I thank him. I feel like I've been given a new lease on life."

"It's truly life-changing. It's fundamentally changed where my life was going and where I am now. I'm active again. I feel better. I'm happy to go out and see people. I don't hide in the house any more. Most importantly, I no longer feel like I'm held captive by eating. I have good will power. This is not a will power issue. I didn't have any control over this."



After the surgery, Ian Milford lost nearly 70 lbs and went from a 44" waist to a 32" waist. He now lives free of all medication and enjoys spending active time with his children.

## "You've helped improve patient safety"

Dr. Sharadh Sampath is a general surgeon at Richmond Hospital who splits his time between general surgery and bariatric surgery. "When I started seven years ago, we had none of this access to technology in the operating room. We weren't able to do investigations while we were operating."

"For emergency surgeries such as a colon cancer surgery in the middle of the night where the colon is twisted or for a stomach cancer, there was no chance of getting a scope at Richmond Hospital. Now it's never an issue to get a scope at that hour."

"It's a huge bonus for us to have this equipment right there in the operating room without having to keep a patient under anesthetic waiting for equipment to become available," he says. "Immediate access to these tools provides much better patient safety. There are fewer complications, patients are doing better and they're going home quicker."

"Today, we have some of the best laproscopic and endoscopic equipment in our ORs. Donors have helped us achieve major transformational improvements with access to this surgical technology in our ORs and they continue to donate to make it even better."

# You made this happen!



## HEAD OF CLASS

Kronier Education Fund (\$50,000)

Health care innovations and research are developing rapidly and with donor funding, the Foundation has helped create educational opportunities since 2014 by providing funding for health care professionals to take courses to learn the latest in their field and share that knowledge with colleagues.

*In November 2015, fifteen members of the interprofessional team at Richmond Hospital received the Acute Care of the At-Risk Newborn, training for best practices to stabilize newborn babies at risk. Kara Thompson, Interim Clinical Resource Nurse at Birth Centre said, "This is probably one of the best classes I ever attended! It incorporated our own hands-on scenarios where we are able to run through during the workshop."*

## KID-SIZED EQUIPMENT & CARE

Pediatric Short Stay Unit (\$200,000)

Injured or sick children need specialized kid-sized medical equipment as well as care by pediatricians and pediatric nurses in a child-friendly environment.

Last year in June, a new Pediatric Short Stay Unit was officially opened with five single rooms. Each room has a cardiac monitor specially calibrated for the normal range of a child's heart rate, temperature and oxygen level. The unit also has a dedicated automated pharmacy system that safely dispenses medication dosages for kids.

*"Thank you for your generosity. Your donations are truly making a difference to the improvement of care for families we serve at Richmond Hospital."*  
- Dr. Erik Swartz, Pediatrician, Richmond Hospital

## WATERWORKS

Urology  
Six Cystoscopes (\$120,000)

New cystoscope purchased by donors equip Richmond Hospital's world-class team of urologists to examine a patient's urinary tract, in a non-surgical manner, helping to diagnose and treat a wide range of urinary problems.

*"Last year the urologists at Richmond Hospital were able to evaluate over 4,000 patients with the diagnostic cystoscopy equipment. This represents a 15% increase in the number of patients we were able to assess for urinary dysfunction and cancers of the bladder. It helps bring greater efficiency to the team and our staff is now able to assess patients more quickly than ever,"* says Dr. Ken Poon, Head of Surgery and urologist at Richmond Hospital.



## HEAR! HEAR!

Operating Room  
Trans-Canal Endoscopic Ear Instruments (\$60,000)

New trans-canal endoscopic ear instruments allow Dr. Lillian Wong to provide minimally invasive care for patients requiring even the most delicate and complex type of ear procedures to help improve or restore hearing. With the new equipment patients can now avoid having an incision behind the ear, unnecessary discomfort and delayed recovery. "Donor support has greatly contributed to higher quality medical outcomes and improved patient experiences," says Dr. Lillian Wong, Ear Nose Throat surgeon at Richmond Hospital.



## TUMMY TOOLS

Gastroenterology  
Three Gastrosopes (\$95,000);  
Two Colonoscopes (\$100,000)

Thanks to donors new gastrosopes help physicians view the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract in a non-surgical manner. Instead of hard, rigid instruments, now our gastroenterologists have more sophisticated, flexible tools to provide treatment for patients that feel better!

In August 2015, the colon cancer screening program was expanded at Richmond Hospital. New colonoscopes help doctors view the colon and remove smaller pre-cancerous polyps, if present, on the spot, sparing the patient from painful, more invasive surgery, and resulting in faster recovery times. Last year, Richmond Hospital saw 6,458 colonoscopy and upper gastrointestinal visits, an increase of 11% over the previous year.



# Best and Brightest

## More people can be treated now

This year in January, Richmond Hospital added a new member to its expert gastroenterology team to help tackle digestive tract diseases and conditions. Dr. Nancy Fu is one of only six sub-specialists in the entire province with an area of interest in Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).

From colon cancer screening, which was expanded last year at Richmond Hospital, to providing care for the increasing incidences of stomach and gastrointestinal illnesses and chronic inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's and ulcerative colitis, Richmond Hospital's specialists see more than 6,000 patients each year, half of whom require very specialized procedures for the digestive tract.

Dr. Fu says she's optimistic about the future. "I'm excited about the changes underway and the new ways we can help patients," says Dr. Nancy Fu. "Gastroenterology is a fast changing field right now, and there's a lot of research under way. In the past 30 years, we didn't have much to offer patients. We could provide surgery, and that was drastic. Now we can offer very effective medical treatments."



Born in Taiwan and fluent in Mandarin, Dr. Nancy Fu studied medicine at UBC and completed an Advanced Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) fellowship at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California in 2014.

### MESSAGE FROM CHAIR & PRESIDENT



You know the importance of good health, and knowing that quality health care is available whenever you need is certainly comforting. Thanks to generous donors like you, Richmond Hospital is able to purchase new medical equipment, improve patient care programs and upgrade facilities. We hope you take pride knowing that your gift allows grateful patients and

families to receive compassionate and life saving care at Richmond Hospital.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of Richmond Hospital. It opened in 1966 and was only made possible after a groundswell of community support rallied together to say

"Yes!" to a referendum in 1962. Today, we all still feel fortunate to have great medical and health care teams to look after us, right here close to home.

Thank you for your loyal support. We look forward to keeping you up to date on plans for our future, and in the meantime, your continued help to make sure that we have the best care possible for you, your family and friends is truly appreciated.

Natalie D. Meixner  
President & CEO  
Richmond Hospital Foundation

Kyle Shury  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Richmond Hospital Foundation

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