

FALL 2021

# vital

**VGH+**  
**UBC** hospital  
foundation

INSPIRING DONORS | TRANSFORMING HEALTH CARE | SAVING LIVES



## Saved from the brink: Rescue in the ICU

Today's actions,  
**tomorrow's care**

**Donor's passion**  
transforming epilepsy care

**Day in the life**  
of a nurse educator

## INTRODUCING

# VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation

Philanthropy allows us to invest in health care innovations that would otherwise be impossible. By empowering a constellation of projects, places and people, we are advancing our understanding of disease and illness, and improving the health of individuals and our health care system, from hospital to home. And it is only made possible because of the vital support of donors like you. Thank you.

**Patients across BC with the most complex health care needs are referred to the Vancouver Coastal Health sites we support:**



**Vancouver General  
Hospital**



**Vancouver Coastal Health  
Research Institute**



**GF Strong  
Rehab Centre**



**UBC Hospital**



**Vancouver Community  
Health Services**

## Recent Initiatives

### A WELCOMING SPACE FOR ALL

Health care is more than a visit to the hospital. It's about taking care of all of us—the diverse and unique communities that Vancouver Coastal Health serves. This is why we are proud of the three traditional Indigenous house posts that stand tall at VGH, reflecting the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

VCH has a deep commitment to improving the care and health experiences of all Indigenous people in the region. We are proud to support them by fundraising to transform the entryways of our hospitals to be more welcoming, starting with these house posts.

[Learn more: vghfoundation.ca/welcoming-space](https://vghfoundation.ca/welcoming-space)

### 3T MRI CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

VGH's new MRI space, which will house the hospital's first 3T MRI, has officially begun construction. Donors contributed a remarkable \$7.8 million in support of this cutting-edge medical device.

This technology will increase patient access and improve imaging capabilities, empowering our world-class medical teams to do what they do best—transform health care and save lives.

Construction is expected to complete April 2022.

[Learn more: vghfoundation.ca/3tmri](https://vghfoundation.ca/3tmri)

**Office:** 190-855 West 12 Avenue Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9  
**604 875 4676 | [vghfoundation.ca](https://vghfoundation.ca) | [info@vghfoundation.ca](mailto:info@vghfoundation.ca)**  
**Board of Directors:** [vghfoundation.ca/board](https://vghfoundation.ca/board)

@vghfdn @vghfdn @vgh and ubc hospital foundation  
 vgh+ubc 医院基金会 @vghubchospitalfoundation

We acknowledge, with gratitude, that our Foundation offices are on the traditional unceded territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-waututh) Nations.

Charitable registration number 13217 3063 RR 0001



PHOTO BY NATHAN DUMLAO

09

## WHAT'S INSIDE

### 04 The next generation of health care

A hospital is only as good as the staff inside it. Investing in these health care superstars will mean the best care for all of us. And donors can play a vital role.

### 05 Research you make possible

Highlights of a few up-and-coming research projects made possible by philanthropy.

### 06 A Day in the Life

Get to know Nurse Educator Jemima Fitz-Gerald as she shares the complex and multi-layered work she does every day.

### 08 Health Check

Do you know the signs of a stroke? VGH neurologist Dr. Thalia Field shares some expert tips on how to identify and respond to this health care crisis.

### 09 Saved from the brink

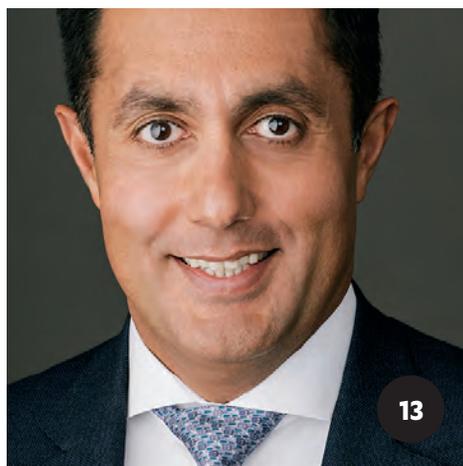
After falling into river rapids in a remote area, Jesse's heart stopped and the race to save his life began. And VGH was the only place that could help.

### 13 Donor's passion transforming epilepsy care in BC

Philanthropist Ali Pejman has led the charge in creating a bright new future for epilepsy care at VGH.



06



13



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

# The next generation of care

**W**orld-leading health care starts with the people. It's within the brilliant minds and caring hearts of our health care superstars at VGH and UBC Hospital that the best patient care is found.

Donor funding through Chairs and Fellowships has played a vital role in attracting and retaining such stars of health care. By funding their research, donors directly impact care at our hospitals.

By investing in people, supporting their research, and offering them an opportunity to explore and share their knowledge, the care offered to patients throughout BC continuously transforms.

### **This is where the next generation of care is born.**

And philanthropy is absolutely vital in order for this to happen.

Decades of philanthropic support for our research centres, such as the Vancouver Prostate Centre, have fueled their development into global leaders in their field. Clinician-scientists have leveraged donor dollars many times over in competitive research grants to have some of the best patient outcomes in the world for men living with prostate cancer.

VGH's Blusson Spinal Cord Injury Centre and the Vancouver Stroke Program—two other leading programs at VGH and UBC Hospital—bring together translational medical research and patient care thanks to generous donations.

This is why I am proud of the role our Foundation plays with donors to transform health care. This includes community leaders, individual donors and philanthropists, such as Foundation Board Member Ali Pejman who raised an incredible \$2.7 million for epilepsy fellowships in BC. And Arran and Ratana Stephens, who donated \$1 million and established the Stephens Family Fellowship in Gastroenterology.

**This is the difference that people make.** Investments from yesterday are felt by patients today, and the same will be true for tomorrow.



IN 2019, A GREEN SPACE ON THE VANCOUVER GENERAL HOSPITAL CAMPUS WAS NAMED PETER BENTLEY AND FAMILY SQUARE TO HONOUR AND RECOGNIZE THE SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY AND LEADERSHIP PETER AND HIS WIFE, SHEILA, HAVE EMBODIED AND ENGENDERED WITH THEIR CHILDREN: BARBIE, SUSIE, JOANIE, MICHAEL AND LISA.

While making final preparations for this issue, I received the sad news that the Foundation's founding Chairman, Peter Bentley passed away. More than forty years ago—at the request of the Premier of the time—Peter established the VGH Foundation. Over four decades, his wisdom and encouragement guided management and the Board to create an engine of health care transformation through philanthropy. **His life and contributions are an extraordinary example of the impact one person can have on our community and for generations to come.**

We stand on the shoulders of giants. And with that I am proud to share with you this issue of Vital as we explore the stories of these incredible minds today, and the impact it will have on care tomorrow..

**Warmest Regards,**



**Angela Chapman**  
**President & CEO, VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation**

# Research you make possible

Your donations support vital research and help jumpstart new initiatives across Vancouver Coastal Health. Below are some highlights of innovative research that have been powered by generous donor support.

 [Learn more: vghfoundation.ca/research](https://vghfoundation.ca/research)



## THE NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTH CARE

A compact, quantitative, and inexpensive opioid detector. The next generational leap for treating erectile dysfunction. And a data-driven approach to understanding obstructive sleep apnea. These three breakthrough projects were front and centre at the 2021 BMO Capital Markets *Innovators' Challenge*, where three promising researchers pitched their groundbreaking ideas to a panel of industry experts. More than 100 individuals, sponsors and health care partners signed up to hear the project pitches online in support of ground-breaking research.



## UNCOVERING NEW TREATMENTS

Biomarkers are telltale signs of disease. However, some are so subtle they go undetected, leaving people vulnerable to developing disease without anyone knowing until it is too late. Thanks to donors, Pancreas Centre BC has been able to discover, study and validate novel biomarkers for pancreatic cancer. Since its launch in 2012, the Gastrointestinal (GI) Biobank has collected more than 230 pancreatic tissue samples from 1,500 patients. This information is directly impacting patient care and treatment plans, and is vital to create a healthier future.



## COVID-19: BENCH-TO-BEDSIDE RESEARCH IN ACTION

The majority of COVID-19 mortality rates are attributable to respiratory failure. Researchers at VGH and UBC Hospital partnered together to better understand the nuance of this failure, and whether it may be caused by a dysregulated immune response. By studying more than 58 patients in the ICU, our researchers have been able to make beneficial changes to treatment plans and improve care for the most critically ill COVID-19 patients. Thanks to exceptional care, public health measures and research, patients admitted to VGH's ICU with COVID-19 had some of the best outcomes of any ICU-admitted patients globally.

## Night of a Thousand Stars

Presented by B2Gold Corp.



Get your tickets:  
[vghfoundation.ca/nots](https://vghfoundation.ca/nots)

Join us for a unique event on Friday, October 22 that blends intimate in-person gatherings with virtual experiences as we come together to celebrate the dedication of our health care stars and raise vital funds to support the future of BC's health care system.



# A Day in the Life: The Nurse Educator



JEMIMA FITZ-GERALD, NURSE EDUCATOR, UBC HOSPITAL

**J**emima Fitz-Gerald is a Nurse Educator. As a registered nurse (RN) with years of experience combined with specialized training, she provides a vital support service to the larger team of nurses at UBC Hospital. Jemima is the first to learn about new techniques, technologies, treatment plans and policies at the hospital, and acts as the critical lynchpin for the nursing staff.

“My role is one of many hats. One moment I could be at my desk, writing a newsletter about the next up-and-coming piece of technology we are going to start using,” says Jemima. “The next, I could be bedside, providing care to a patient and showcasing a technique to a nurse.”

Jemima is both a support to her team and a front

line worker. And to say she took this job at one of the most difficult times in recent history is an understatement.

“I started my role in January 2020,” says Jemima. “Initially, my days were filled with working between the surgical unit and the High Acuity Unit (HAU) at UBC Hospital, where patients who require increased monitoring are cared for.”

In fact, Jemima helped design the new layout of the donor-funded HAU. This work supported the optimization of the HAU so it would offer the best, most effective course of care for patients with complex needs. Jemima also began learning how to operate new pieces of medical equipment in order to train and pass knowledge onto other nursing staff.

## “There’s a science and an art to it, and no day is ever the same.”

Then, in March 2020, the COVID pandemic was declared. Jemima’s world was quickly turned upside-down.

“Due to the emerging nature of the pandemic, we were getting policy changes sometimes multiple times a day that then had to be passed on to staff,” says Jemima. “I was also spending time just being there for my team. It was so tough. But I also felt guilty. Because the nurses that I work with day-to-day were working in Emergency... I knew the kind of things they were experiencing.”

Jemima’s role as a Nurse Educator was a nearly impossible task. She had to battle chaos: new treatment techniques, constant policy changes, staff feelings and stress, all while facing her own personal feelings about the pandemic.

Despite all this hardship, today she is feeling grateful.

“In terms of hospital admissions, things have settled down for now,” says Jemima. “I know everybody talks about the new normal, and that’s reflected in our policies—which have stayed stable for the past many months.”

These days, Jemima finds herself able to relax a little more and return to her more regular remit. She spends her days more akin to how it was in January—learning new pieces of technology, strategizing how to pass on that information and stepping in to help with hands-on skills when needed.

Most recently, Jemima is creating the standard operating procedure for how to manage patient



surges in our Urgent Care Department, by opening an overflow unit in a different part of the hospital. This ensures that patients attending the Urgent Care Department can be cared for in a timely manner. It also enables the team to ensure patients with more serious (or life-threatening) conditions can be cared for in spaces with access to specialized equipment, by diverting patients with minor conditions to an alternate location.

Jemima and other Nurse Educators are having a lasting impact on our health care system by working alongside other front line health care workers. VGH and UBC Hospital have some of the best trained teams in the world, and there are often new advances in technology and techniques to learn and utilize which have been enabled by donor-funded research happening right here in BC.

“I love this role,” says Jemima. “I get to know people from all around the hospital. I get to learn exciting things, and then use my skills to teach others. There’s a science and an art to it, and no day is ever the same.”

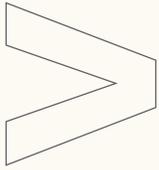


### Nursing Bursary Awards

Every year, our donors support nursing education across Vancouver Coastal Health. This funding offers education, professional development and life-long learning opportunities for these vital care providers, ultimately improving patient care for thousands of British Columbians.

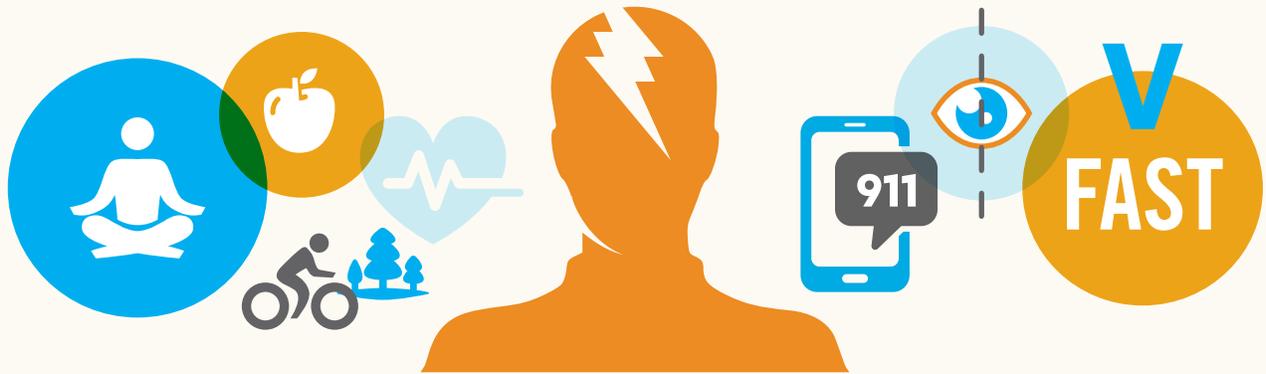


Visit: [vghfoundation.ca/give-vital](https://vghfoundation.ca/give-vital)



## HEALTH CHECK

# Before and After a Stroke Strikes



Every 10 minutes, someone in Canada has a stroke. Even with rapid access to emergency care, strokes are often life-changing events, and can be debilitating for many. Dr. Thalia Field, clinician-scientist and past Director of the Postgraduate Stroke Fellowship Program at VGH, shares some tips for recognizing a stroke, supporting a loved one in recovery and ways you can lower your risk of experiencing one in the first place.

### STROKE PREVENTION

While you aren't able to control your age or family history, you can make two important lifestyle changes to reduce your risk of stroke. Maintain a healthy weight through exercise and eating well, including reducing your intake of salt and saturated fats. Focus on eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains. This will also help maintain lower blood pressure—the biggest contributor of stroke risk in both men and women. Working with your primary care provider to monitor for and to treat high blood pressure is an important part of reducing your stroke risk.

### POST-STROKE RECOVERY

Stroke affects every person differently. Some will recover and remain independent, but many patients will need to re-learn basic skills. Talking, walking, writing, dressing, meal preparation and the million other little things we take for granted every day can become a challenge or impossible to do. Rehabilitation under expert guidance at places like GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre can help patients transition back to their homes and lives.

Emotional support is a critical part of recovery, whether or not someone has overt physical or functional challenges after their stroke. Many friends and loved ones feel awkward and may not know how to connect with or support a post-stroke patient. Feeling unsure is OK. Have open, honest conversations with each other and health care providers, and consider connecting with peer support groups.

**The donor-supported Vancouver Stroke Program at VGH is staffed by expert neurologists who provide real-time stroke care for the entire province, improving outcomes for patients no matter where they are in BC.**

### RECOGNIZE A STROKE

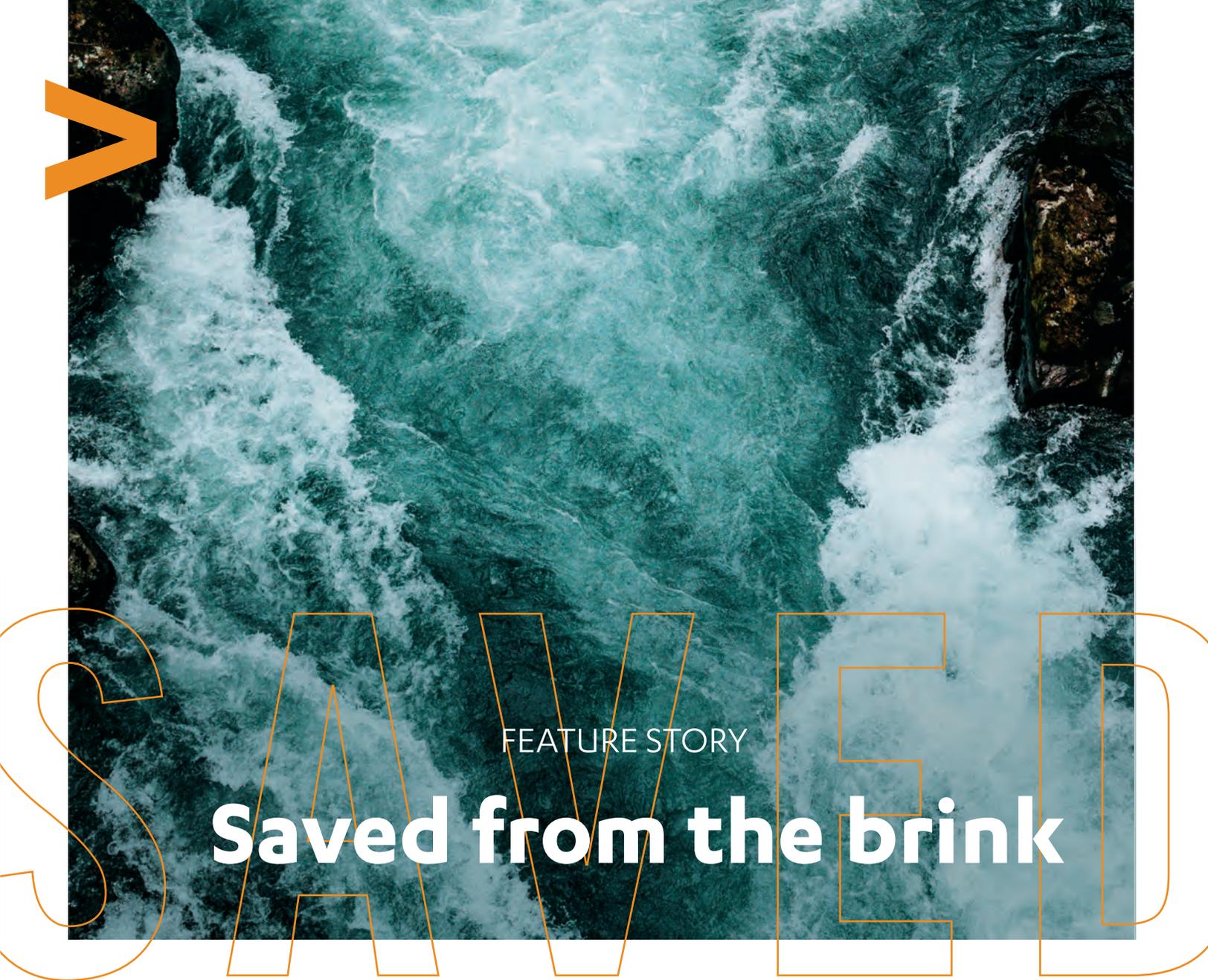
When a stroke strikes, time is brain. Quick assessment and treatment are vital for ensuring the best possible outcome. If you suspect someone near you is having a stroke, think **FAST**.

Is one side of their **F**ace drooping?

Ask them to raise both **A**rms—is one drifting below the other? Is their **S**peech slurred or jumbled? If the answers are yes, it's **T**ime to call 911 immediately.



Learn more at: [vghfoundation.ca/stroke](https://vghfoundation.ca/stroke)



FEATURE STORY

# Saved from the brink

**F**reezing rapids tore at Jesse's hands as he clung with all his strength to a floating log in the river. The December chill whipped through the air, dulling his senses. The roaring rapids crashed into him, again and again. A gift and a curse, as the less he felt, the less pain he was in—but the less grip he could find.

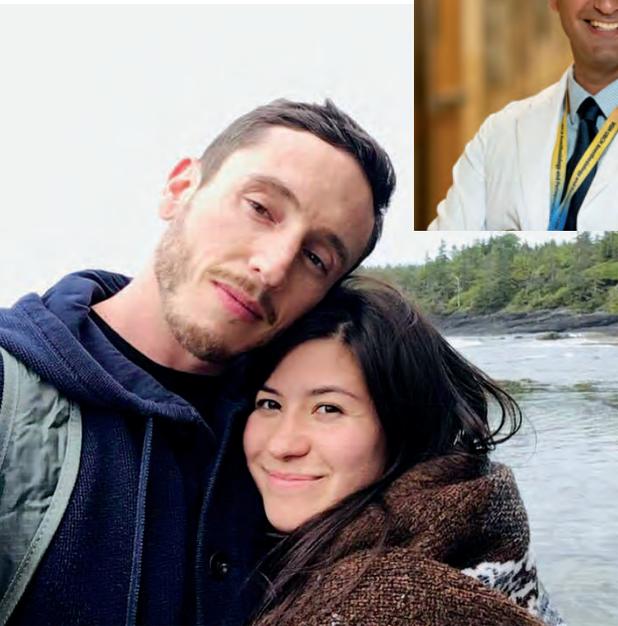
In this moment, Jesse believed he was going to die. He didn't scream. He didn't cry. He tried to make his peace.

**But Jesse's life wouldn't end that day. And what happened next was nothing less than remarkable.**

## **IN A MOMENT, JESSE'S LIFE CHANGED FOREVER**

"I had a drone that fell into the water. It was quite a ways up river, so my friends and I hiked up to get it," says Jesse. "When we got to it, it was pretty close by, so I went out to try and grab it in my socks—which was a mistake. It was only knee-high water, nothing insane. I went out and grabbed it. It was when I turned back, I slipped on a rock."

**In a moment, everything changed.**



ABOVE: DR. GEORGE ISAC, MEDICAL DIRECTOR VGH ICU  
BELOW: JESSE AND JAZMINE, HIS FIANCÉE.

Jesse fell into the freezing rapids. The water was so powerful, he could do nothing as it dragged him down river and over a waterfall. He crashed into the water. Then, somehow, Jesse managed to grab hold of a log and pull himself up.

“At this point, I could communicate with my friends and asked them what was going on,” says Jesse. “They told me not to move. And that’s when they called for help.”

Jesse, an avid outdoorsman, pulled his chest above water to allow his heart to maintain as much warmth as possible. He tried to keep himself calm and motivate himself through it, but he also knew how far out they were from civilization.

“All I could do was mitigate hypothermia,” says Jesse. “But the water was crashing into me burning out my shoulders. I could feel myself slipping away.”

Jesse believed he wasn’t going to survive. He tried to make his peace. Then, out of nowhere, he saw them—Search and Rescue.

The Arrowsmith Search and Rescue (SAR) team had arrived and heroically pulled Jesse from the waters.

He thought he was saved. **And then his world went black.**

## PULLED FROM FREEZING RAPIDS, JESSE’S HEART STOPPED

The minute after Jesse was pulled out of the water, his heart stopped.

The first responders immediately started CPR and got Jesse into a helicopter. En route they switched to an automated CPR device to keep his heart pumping until they could reach the only hospital with the equipment and specialists needed to save his life—VGH.

At VGH, notified ahead of time by SAR and BC Ambulance, the medical teams were prepared to immediately take Jesse into the OR.

“Jesse arrived in full cardiac arrest, and had been for two and a half hours,” says Dr. George Isac, Medical Director of the VGH ICU. “He had profound hypothermia. We have an algorithm to determine these levels, and his was at the worst.”

With his heart stopped, the team placed Jesse on ECMO—a portable heart-lung machine that circulates and oxygenates a patient’s blood and then re-infuses it.

This life-saving, donor-funded device keeps organs functioning while medical teams continue their work.

“It was a race to get him stabilized,” says Dr. Isac. “He was metabolically deranged. He had collapsed lungs. There was swelling in his right arm and abdomen that required multiple operations to address.”

## “To put it simply, Jesse could only come to VGH for this level of care.”

Jesse underwent dialysis, was put on ventilators and ECMO, and finally, after several days, his heart function was restored. At VGH, Jesse received care from ICU, trauma services, cardiac, vascular, orthopedic and plastic surgical teams, the anesthesia team, perfusionists, hematologists, psychiatrists and more.

## **“I’m forever grateful to the people who helped me at VGH, the Search and Rescue team, and all those involved in my care.”**

**“To put it simply, Jesse could only come to VGH for this level of care,” says Dr. Isac.**

Sixteen days after he arrived at VGH, Jesse was able to be transferred out of hospital. He was stable, and set on the path to recovery.

### **LIVING A RENEWED LIFE**

“I’m forever grateful to the Search and Rescue team, the people who helped me at VGH and all those involved in my care and recovery,” says Jesse.



JESSE PROPOSING TO HIS FIANCÉE, SOON AFTER LEAVING THE HOSPITAL.

Jesse is well on his way to recovery. He describes himself sitting around 75 percent of what he used to be like. But perhaps the biggest change since the accident is Jesse’s perspective. He knows firsthand how fleeting life can be, and how it can all change in an instant.

With that in mind, he’s re-prioritized his life.

“I got engaged when I got out of the hospital,” says Jesse. “After all that, it just made sense for me. I could barely walk to the jeweller, but I did it, and I proposed.”

Never one to let his fears keep him down, Jesse has also returned to the waters. In August, he went on his first fishing trip since the accident. And while he recognizes he still has a long way to go, he’s grateful for the opportunity to rebuild his life.

“I survived a nightmare,” says Jesse. “But I’m getting through it. With my family, my friends and my fiancée. Life is good.”

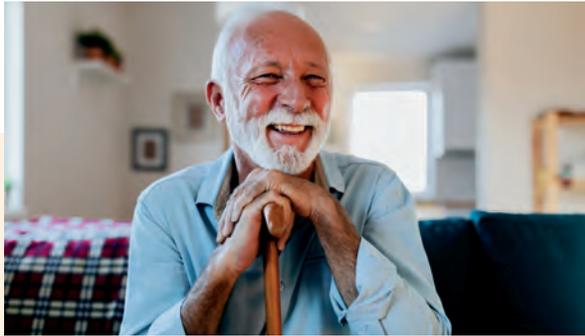
## **Philanthropy powers innovation at VGH**

Saving Jesse’s life required innovative medical techniques, access to specialist equipment and the expertise of highly-skilled medical teams at VGH—one of only two adult trauma centres in BC. ECMO technology was first brought to VGH by donor funding. It is now a standard of care at VGH for life-threatening conditions such as severe lung damage from infection, or shock after a massive heart attack. The generosity of our donors is a driving force that powers innovation in health care that would not otherwise be possible. Thank you.

**Your donations to VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation are saving lives.  
Please visit [vghfoundation.ca/give-vital](https://vghfoundation.ca/give-vital) to give.**



# Today's actions, **tomorrow's care**



**Health care is vital for a healthy community.** When you or your loved ones are sick or injured, you deserve care from the brightest minds in medicine, utilizing state-of-the-art equipment and offering treatment plans based on world-leading research.

This is what VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation helps provide. And none of this would be possible without you, our generous and loyal supporters.

Philanthropy elevates care to new heights. And when gifts are made in sustainable, predictable patterns, our ability to create thoughtful, long-term plans are made possible.

## THE **POWER** OF MONTHLY GIVING

Monthly giving is an increasingly popular way to support our Foundation. It offers an easy and affordable way to give, spreading donations throughout the year. It also provides our Foundation with an opportunity to support our hospitals and health care centres with a steady source of income, empowering them to make bold, long-term plans that truly transform care.

 [Learn more at: vghfoundation.ca/monthly](https://vghfoundation.ca/monthly)

## **PLANNING** FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

By leaving a gift in your will, making a gift of life insurance, or designating VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation as a beneficiary of your TFSA, RRSP or RRIF, your gift can help our health care teams save lives now and well into the future. Through thoughtful planning, you can help support future generations.

 [Learn more at: vghfoundation.ca/legacy](https://vghfoundation.ca/legacy)

## A **LIFETIME** OF SUPPORT

“When my father had a brain tumor, he was admitted to VGH. He was well looked after by all staff. I saw then the need for so many things. After he passed, I decided to start giving monthly. After working at VGH for 40 years, I wanted to repay everything the hospital did for my father, brother and I. This is when I looked into legacy giving.

The hospital has so many well educated, well experienced and very hard working people, but they sometimes work with limited instruments. The hospital is for all of us, and we are the ones who need to help to get the best treatment we deserve.”

CHANDRIKA VADGAMA, FORMER TECH AT VGH, DONOR SINCE 1995.



DONOR-FUNDED ECMO

# Pejman's promise: transforming epilepsy care in BC

"I know first-hand what epilepsy can do to a family... The anxiety, worry and stress. And despite being one of the most common neurological conditions worldwide, there's still not enough known about its root causes, diagnosis and treatments."

A

**Ali Pejman is a man on a mission:** to transform epilepsy care in British Columbia.

Born from fatherhood and watching his own daughter suffer through the condition, Ali knows better than most the impact epilepsy can have not only on patients, but their loved ones, too. The late nights up with worry. The tests that come, but not soon enough. The experimenting with different medications and all the impacts that has on the body.

"Epilepsy is truly pervasive," says Ali. "It changes the trajectory of so many people's lives. It makes them plan out, and often miss out, on things we all take for granted—dinners with friends, sleepovers, road trips. And that's just the start. My daughter appears to have outgrown it. After seeing all this myself, I couldn't stand by and do nothing."

## BUILDING THE BRIDGE TO BETTER CARE

Today, more than 50,000 people in BC are diagnosed with epilepsy. VGH is the provincial centre for neurosciences and home to the Seizure Investigation Unit (SIU), the only service of its kind in BC that assesses and evaluates challenging and complex neurologic disorders, including epilepsy. Currently, between wait times and experimenting with different medications, patients can face multiple hurdles in finding effective treatments. Meanwhile, they suffer from increasingly debilitating symptoms.

"It's not right," says Ali. "So then I asked, what was the problem? And it became clear it was about



resources—funding specialists and the technology they need to build a better future for epilepsy care in BC."

And so Ali got to work.

## THE PEJMAN & FRIENDS EPILEPSY FELLOWSHIPS AND RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Ali, a member of the Foundation's board of directors, set out to raise \$1 million to fund Fellowships in epilepsy at both VGH and BC Children's Hospital.

He connected with more than 40 friends and business associates who contributed towards this fund. **What started as a \$1 million goal ended with an incredible \$2.7 million.**

"To raise that kind of money single-handedly, who does that? With no committee, no gala, just by reaching out to friends," says Kirsten Pejman, Ali's wife.

The initiative will fund Fellowships for specialists from around the world, starting their extra specialization under the tutelage of Dr. Yahya Aghakhani, Head of the Epilepsy Program at VGH, and his counterpart Dr. Mary Connolly from BC Children's.

"This incredible initiative will empower us to transform epilepsy care in BC, and pave the way for the next generation of medical superstars," says Dr. Aghakhani. "We are so grateful to Ali Pejman and his friends for this transformative gift to provide the best care to children and adults living with epilepsy."

# Your Impact



**Chapman Chan**  
Chan Better World Foundation

“Front line health care workers are the backbone of our health care system. We believe it is imperative that this city has the proper infrastructure and equipment to keep them safe in their workplace and ultimately to provide the best possible care for all patients.”



**Dr. Peter Chung**  
Coram Deo Foundation

“My experience with my son made me realize the fragility of life. It has provided me with a greater sense of humility when it comes to life and our connection to our community. We hope our donation will help to develop better treatments so other parents do not have to experience the same helplessness that we did.”



**Shell Busey**  
Prostate cancer patient

“I’m a survivor because my doctors were in behind an area where they keep on top of technology. And that’s why I’m here. It’s very important to keep that technology on the leading-edge.”

**Dr. David Schaeffer**  
Co-Director, Pancreas Centre BC

“We exist because generous donors believe that research is the key that will unlock the mysteries of pancreatic cancer and save more lives.”



**Mary Salas**  
Rare autoimmune disease patient

“I wouldn’t be here without the care I received at VGH. I wouldn’t have been able to return to work and school, be with my friends and family, and have a second chance at life without them. Thank you.”

## VITAL SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY



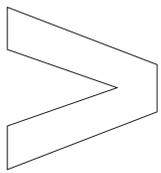
**CANCER SURVIVOR  
RAISES \$400K**

Michael Weiler raised over \$400,000 in support of Uro-oncology Fellows at VGH. As a bladder cancer survivor, he saw first-hand the importance fellowship students have on patient care – their support improves outcomes and enhances patient’s quality of life.



**WE HEART ADDISON,  
10TH HEARTIVERSARY**

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of Addison’s (pictured right) heart transplant, her parents, Elaine and Aaron, along with family friends teamed up to build, paint and auction stepstools, raising \$2,388 for the Addison Fund at the Transplant Research Foundation of BC.



# The transformative power of donors

Philanthropy is vital throughout all stages of health care. From the equipment used today to research grants and awards that empower clinician-scientists to transform the care of tomorrow.

Join us as we map the ways your donations can impact the development of a health care professional's career and the care they provide to BC patients.



## DONOR-FUNDED FELLOWSHIP BRINGS RESEARCHER TO VGH

An opportunity arises—a Fellowship opportunity opens at VGH, Western Canada's largest teaching hospital. Thanks to donor funding, the hospital is able to hire a Fellow, a medical doctor who undergoes additional specialty training. Their critical support enhances the knowledge of the hospital staff and elevates care to new heights.

***"Having a Fellow join our program has been critical in advancing care. We would be several steps behind without them."***

DR. MYP SEKHON, INTENSIVIST AT VGH



## PHYSICIAN RECEIVES EARLY-CAREER VCHRI AWARD

That same bright young star who was funded with the Fellowship emerges with innovative and exciting research and ideas. Thankfully, funding for up-and-coming researchers through awards from the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute (VCHRI) is available, allowing them to pursue their dream even further at VGH and UBC Hospital.

***"Donors have allowed me to pursue my work as a scientist. I truly believe this work will transform care for the better."***

DR. RYAN HOILAND, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW



## CLINICIAN-SCIENTIST RECEIVES KEY RESEARCH GRANT

Years later, the once-funded Fellow now calls VGH their home. After receiving critical support in the early development of their career, they are now a clinician-scientist at our hospital, bolstering care and helping those suffering from the most complex and rare conditions. Able to focus on their work without worry of funding, this individual just received a donor-funded grant to pursue new bench-to-bedside research.

***"The future of a COVID-19 patient's quality of life is able to be addressed because of the support philanthropists have made."***

DR. CHRIS CARLSTEN, RECIPIENT OF THE VCHRI COVID-19 RESEARCH FUND



## A DEPARTMENT HEAD RECRUITS THE NEXT GENERATION

The next generation of care is on its way. The former Fellow and award-winning clinician-scientist is now a department head for a key area of care at VGH. The support received throughout their career has allowed them to reach this point and they are now in a position to hire the next future superstar.

***"Fellowships have played a critical role in my life, and being able to hire the next generation of Fellows was a dream come true."***

DR. THALIA FIELD, PAST DIRECTOR OF THE POSTGRADUATE STROKE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AT VGH

# Thank you!

**To the nurses, doctors, researchers and their assistants. Housekeeping, administrators, volunteers and more, thank you.**

You are the reason our hospitals and health care centres are able to provide world-class care to those in need, no matter how complex or rare their condition. You have been there for us and our loved ones.

**To our passionate philanthropic community.**

Despite a global pandemic that kept us apart, you came together to support these health care superstars. **Thank you** for transforming health care and saving lives.

**And to all of you** who have done your part during this pandemic. From following public health policies, to getting your vaccinations.

We said it from the start—we are all in this together.

**Thank you.**



**VGH+**  
**UBC** hospital  
foundation