



Photo: Cindy Goodman

Despite a severe brain injury in his youth, intensive rehab ensured that Blair Mitten has enjoyed a lifetime of outdoor pursuits.

After a summer of intensive rehabilitation, Blair returned to Lighthouse Park (see black and white photo above) where he had originally learned to climb, and set himself the personal challenge to complete a guiding course in Banff. Over the next ten years, he re-discovered his climbing, skiing, and life skills.

"I then chose to make use of the lessons learned from my nurses and occupational and physiotherapists to pursue a practice of rehabilitative massage therapy," explains Blair who went on to train in Toronto before returning to West Vancouver.

Forty years later, he continues to operate Ambleside Massage Therapy in Dundarave, working with soft tissue to improve movement and well-being for his clients.

Thanks to the rehabilitation he received all those years ago, Blair has enjoyed a full and active lifestyle, continuing with his work and outdoor pursuits such as ski touring, hiking, biking, backpacking and kayaking. The care, training, and encouragement that he received has stayed with him long after he left LGH.

When he learned about the Foundation's Re-Imagine Rehab campaign he knew that he had the opportunity and the project for "pay back". Through his estate he has chosen to support rehabilitation care for future patients, ensuring others have the same opportunity to rebuild, and return to the lives they love.

## A Mountain to Climb

### Life Comes Full Circle for Blair Mitten

The mountains and forests of West Vancouver shaped Blair Mitten from an early age. He spent his youth in the local woods, first with the local Scouts troop, then at West Van High, and later with UBC's Varsity Outdoor Club and Outward Bound. The outdoors were not just a pastime, they were part of who he was.

In 1973, he moved to Banff to teach mountaineering to Cadets and while upgrading his skills the following year he fell and suffered a serious brain injury that led to stroke-like symptoms. After emergency treatment in Calgary, Blair was transferred by air to BC and on to Lions Gate Hospital where he spent two weeks in critical care.

Once stabilized, Blair began the demanding work of intensive rehabilitation. While he could still move, he had lost his sense of balance and his ability to walk, write, or fully organize his speech or social cues and needed support with basic bodily functions. Daily physiotherapy and occupational therapy focused not only on restoring physical function, but on helping him reconnect to his everyday life.

He recalls lighter moments during rehabilitation including hopscotch on the grounds to test his balance and coordination, learning safe cooking practices, and tactile craft work that helped him refine his fine motor skills.

**Your estate gift can reflect the causes that matter most to you, creating a lasting impact in an area of care close to your heart. Please see page 2 for more details about our Re-Imagine Rehab Campaign.**

**When a person suffers a major medical trauma such as a stroke, neurological injury, debilitating illness, critical surgery or accidental injuries, every second counts and immediate life-saving care is critical to survival.**

But survival is only the beginning. Once patients are stabilized the journey to recovery begins. This starts with intensive or high-intensity rehab care to restore independence and improve their quality of life. It's a strenuous long-term process that can take several months.

"The goal in rehab is to make the most of the special window where maximum recovery is possible," explains Dr. Nicola Hahn, a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Physician at LGH. "There is a critical time where the potential for nerve healing can be influenced by the right sorts of stimulation. The key goal is to take the patients from being medically stable to living their life in this key timeframe."

There are currently 15 dedicated intensive rehab beds at Lions Gate Hospital split over two locations. Limited capacity means some North Shore patients are sent to GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre in Vancouver to receive the essential treatment they need. This creates an extra burden for families and loved ones who have to spend more time travelling to be with the patient.

## Re-building Rehab

The Re-Imagine Rehab Campaign will create a new, centralized rehabilitation centre built specifically for high-intensity recovery. It will have more beds to accommodate between 25-30 patients; a new therapy gym equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, dedicated spaces for psycho-social support, communal living areas and a transition room that imitates the home environment to assess if they are ready to go home.

With one central location, our multidisciplinary rehab team will be able to work more closely together to deliver truly integrated care.

The new unit will be the first purpose-built rehab facility developed in the province for many years and the funds we raise from the campaign will ensure that more local patients

- recovering from a major medical
- trauma will be able to start their
- recovery closer to home.

RE-IMAGINE  
REHAB



Dr. Nicola Hahn,  
Physical Medicine  
& Rehabilitation  
Physician.

To learn more about Re-Imagine Rehab, go to: [www.lghfoundation.com/re-imagine-rehab](http://www.lghfoundation.com/re-imagine-rehab)

## Caring for our Community

Funding from LGH Foundation for the new West Vancouver Adult Day Centre will provide expanded services for residents living with dementia and cognitive decline and provide much-needed support for their caregivers.

The Centre, on 22nd Street, is located in the new affordable housing facility Kiwanis Village West. It will offer programming that provides local residents with a safe space to enjoy activities, socializing and supportive services. The Adult Day Program will also provide respite for the caregivers who provide 24/7 care.

The Centre, opening in April, was made possible by a \$3.65 million donation from the Foundation, supported by the Paul Myers Family Foundation, George and Annabelle Gaffney, and other donors.



Kiwanis West is home to  
the new West Vancouver  
Adult Day Centre funded  
by LGH Foundation.

# Family Values

For one local family, giving back to Lions Gate Hospital is a tradition passed down through generations.



Elsa Wah, Sarah Tam, David Tam and his parents Frances and Roger Tam.

**For David Tam and his late wife, Elsa Wah, giving back was part of the life they built together, guided by a shared spirit of generosity.**

David grew up in a home where charitable giving was an integral part of family life. His parents began supporting Lions Gate Hospital more than 30 years ago,

Elsa's life was defined by remarkable strength. She faced six bouts of cancer, supported by care teams at Lions Gate Hospital, BC Cancer, and, in her final months, North Shore Hospice. Across those many years of treatment and care, David and Elsa experienced both the challenges and the comforts that come with a life-threatening health care journey. Through it all, their belief in the importance of giving never wavered.

**"It is a reminder that giving, when rooted in love and family, can become a meaningful part of family heritage..."**

helping to develop his understanding of how essential a strong community hospital is, not only in moments of crisis, but across a lifetime. When David and Elsa built their life together, that belief naturally became something they shared.

They began supporting the Foundation after returning to Canada with their young daughter Sarah, following a period living overseas. As monthly and annual donors, their generosity had an impact on many different areas of care. Their giving reflects the quiet, thoughtful family values that help ensure that compassionate, high-quality care is there for others, just as it was for their own family.

When Elsa passed away in September 2025, the response from the community was deeply moving. Many chose to honour her life through donations in her memory. These gifts are now supporting oncology care and hospice services.

To mark Elsa's life in a lasting way, David also dedicated a room at North Shore Hospice in her honour, a space of comfort and care for families who will follow in the future.

This family tradition of philanthropy continues through their daughter, Sarah, now 22, who has chosen to support the hospital as a monthly donor herself. It is a reminder that giving, when rooted in love and family, can become a meaningful part of family heritage that connects generations.

## Donor Support in Action

*In the last year, with the support of donors, LGH Foundation invested more than \$4 million in equipment and medical technology for Lions Gate Hospital. Whether contributing to a specific area of care, making a donation to purchase a piece of equipment, or buying tickets for the LGH 50/50 Draw, your support is vital.*

**Removing a cast can be a stressful experience for children.** Thanks to the generous support of donor John Morrow (pictured below with Adam Poznanski), the Cast Clinic now has a new pediatric cast saw which is smaller, quieter and produces less vibration during cast removal, making the procedure more comfortable for our younger patients.



**Elsewhere in the hospital, the Ultrasound Department has a new ultrasound system** thanks to the generosity of Guy and Kathryn Campbell (pictured above). This upgraded scanning technology delivers faster, clearer images helping our medical teams diagnose patients more efficiently and accurately during routine exams as well as complex emergency assessments.

# A Legacy of Care

## Honouring Our Legacy Donors

It is our privilege to recognize the generosity of the following individuals who left a lasting legacy in 2025 through their thoughtful bequests:

- Judith Alarie
- Kenneth & Joyce Clark
- Spencer Cowan
- Christina (Tina) Evinger
- Patricia Jessop
- John & Marilyn Macfarlane
- Dalton McArthur
- Jennifer Ann McDowell
- Kenji & Susan Okuda
- Richard Paterson
- William (Bill) Pratt
- Olga Ryan
- Reza Sebic
- Norma Smith
- Billie & Arne Sorensen
- William (Bill) Stewart
- James (Jim) & Maureen Tarkanen
- Beverley Walker
- Kenneth Warner
- Joseph Whiteside
- Bryan Williams
- David Philip Wright

The legacy of these thoughtful individuals lives on in every patient cared for, every family supported, and every life improved at Lions Gate Hospital. We are deeply grateful.

## Continuing the Legacy

The care we receive today is made possible by the generosity of those who came before us.

By including a gift in your Will, you can help ensure that care continues for future patients and families.

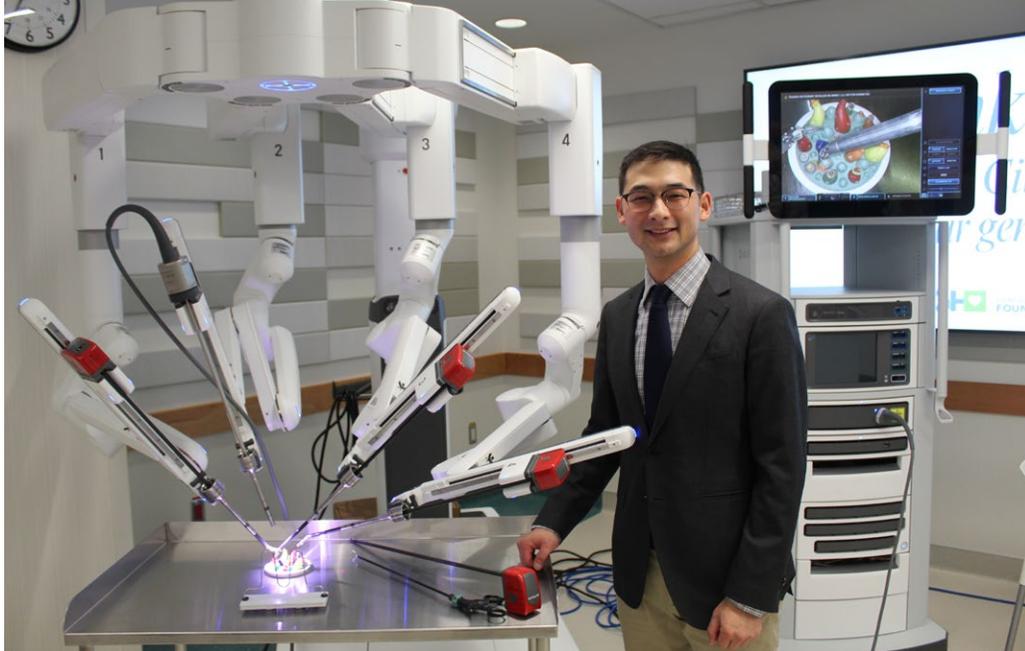
Please let us know about your plans. This gives us the opportunity to thank and recognize your generosity and to discuss your wishes, so your gift supports the causes and programs that matter most to you.

### Questions or to connect:

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Urologist Dr. Justin Lee with the Da Vinci Xi Robotic Surgical System.

## State of the Art

Robotics are transforming the future of surgery and with the opening of the Paul Myers Tower, Lions Gate Hospital now has the advanced infrastructure needed to support the next generation of medical technology.

The Da Vinci Xi Robotic Surgical System was delivered to Lions Gate Hospital in the fall of 2025 and after several months of intensive staff training, the state-of-the-art surgical robot is now in use.

The new system, which is operated by surgeons, is more precise, less invasive, leads to faster healing and reduces patient recovery times.

Robotic assisted surgery will support procedures across general surgery, urology and gynecology, including prostate removal, hysterectomy, complex hernias and bowel, rectal, bladder and kidney cancers. Hundreds of patients will benefit from the new technology.

Dr. Justin Lee, Attending Physician in the Division of Urology at LGH, who championed the purchase of the technology, emphasizes

the importance of the new system: "We care about our patients and when we can reduce recovery times, pain and discomfort, infections and complications that lead to re-admission, we improve their quality of life and increase their chances of recovery."

LGH Foundation is a champion of progress and innovation and we extend our gratitude to all of the donors who generously covered the \$5.5 million cost of Da Vinci Xi. The investment includes the purchase of the system, additional instruments, simulator and software.

The arrival of the Da Vinci Xi keeps LGH at the forefront of surgical innovation in the province. In 2025, the Mazor Robotic Guidance System, funded by West Vancouver residents Ian and Rosemary Mottershead was in use within weeks of the Paul Myers Tower opening.

**By investing in innovative technology, Lions Gate Hospital Foundation helps ensure patients receive the best clinical care, enjoy faster recoveries, and access to better care close to home.**



Visit us at [lghfoundation.com](http://lghfoundation.com)

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