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ROYAL COLUMBIAN HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

Spring 2010



under pressure

CBC's Claire Martin and Burnaby Fire Fighters join forces for RCH



moment to shine

RCH Foundation's gala fundraiser spotlights care and donor support



a day in the life

What an 'easy office day' looks like for Neurosurgeon Dr. Mark Matishak



I will survive

How courage, strength and team work saved a woman battling a deadly infection caused by the H1N1 virus.

On the day Canada officially entered the second wave of the H1N1 flu pandemic, Alexandra Kroetsch could barely breathe.

Initially diagnosed with pneumonia, the 27-year-old nanny and musical performer was admitted to RCH on October 23rd, 2009, suffering from severe symptoms of the H1N1 virus.

Her lungs were so badly infected that she had to be placed in an induced coma and put on a life support system called ECMO to oxygenate her blood outside of her body, as her damaged lungs were unable to do the work themselves.

For the next 147 days, Alexandra's life would rely on a hoard of advanced technology; the profound expertise and care of a veritable army of doctors, nurses, surgeons, respiratory therapists, and physiotherapists; and the unwavering support of her family and friends to combat a deadly infection caused by the H1N1 virus.

"She had been very, very sick and thought

not to survive," says Lia Carter, Health Services Manager for RCH's ICU and CCU. "This is truly an amazing story of courage and strength and team work."

A few weeks into her stay in RCH's Intensive Care Unit (ICU), tests showed that despite being put on a strong course of antibiotics and therapists' efforts to remove excess fluid from her lungs, Alexandra's left lung and other vital organs were showing signs of potential failure. Big, aggressive decisions had to be made or she would not survive.

"Alex was very unstable and had a blood clot around her lung...she was going downhill quickly, so we had to move quickly, as well," says Dr. Derek Gunning, an Intensivist and a Cardiac Surgeon at RCH.

Given Alexandra's condition, Dr. Gunning and Dr. James Bond made the radical decision to remove the infected tissue from behind her left lung while Alexandra remained in the ICU. Alexandra's family was warned that the in-situ ICU surgery would be fraught with serious and

potentially deadly risk, but without surgery, the infection would continue to spread throughout her body.

Dr. Bond performed the operation in approximately two hours. During the procedure, the surgeons discovered that the left lung itself was so severely infected that it needed to be removed, but the risk of removing it there and then was too high, and so it was later removed in the OR on November 27th. "Her left lung was necrotic and had virtually disintegrated from the infection," says Dr. Sheila Webster, RCH Respiriologist.

But the loss of her left lung was no setback for the determined medical team and a feisty Alexandra. Each day, her respiratory therapists conducted breathing trials with her to rebuild the chest muscles needed for breathing. By Boxing Day, she was using an alphabet board to spell out questions for her therapy team like, "Are you challenging my breathing enough?"

With the support of her respiratory and
continued on page 7

H1N1 survivor Alexandra Kroetsch with physicians Dr. Sheila Webster and Dr. Derek Gunning, in the Serenity Garden at RCH.

For more information or to make a donation to the Intensive Care Unit, call 604.520.4438 or go online to rchfoundation.com

To read more of Alexandra's story, visit rchfoundation.com

Shining support

Last year some people thought we might be a bit too ambitious to hold our SHINE Gala so close to the Olympics and Paralympics, especially in light of continuing economic challenges.

Well, thanks to you -- the many individual, corporate, media and community supporters of Royal Columbian Hospital -- the RCH Foundation SHINE Gala was sold out nearly a month in advance of the event.

Your impressive support helps to ensure that patients have access to the best in health care from the moment they arrive at RCH. It helps ensure that the most advanced life-saving equipment and facilities are

available to care for patients in the Intensive Care Unit, as in the case of H1N1 patient, Alexandra Kroetsch (cover story); that wait times for diagnostic breast exams can be significantly reduced, enabling more patients to get the critical treatment they need sooner (page 3); that infants and children with health challenges are given the best start in life (page 6).

In the end, your support helps us realize that people prioritize health care above all else.

Just like Royal Columbian Hospital does, every single day.



RCH Foundation President and CEO, Adrienne Bakker.

did you know?

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- Home to the busiest cardiac intervention unit in BC, providing 24/7 minimally invasive heart diagnosis and treatment
- The site that receives more trauma patients by Air Ambulance than any other hospital in BC
- Fraser Health Authority's only hospital for neurosurgery
- A UBC teaching hospital with medical school onsite

A home away from home

Support from Variety and RCH Foundation helps provide care and comfort for a new baby and her family.

On the evening of January 8th, 2010, Kelley Bennett was in the grocery store picking out the last few items on her list when she received an urgent call from her doctor. She was told to report to her local hospital immediately. Test results from blood taken the previous day returned abnormal, and Kelley needed to be closely monitored. She was 32 weeks pregnant.

By 7 a.m. the next morning, both mom and baby's heart rate were plummeting, and doctors moved quickly to conduct an emergency caesarean section. Baby Mikaila was born weighing only 3 lbs. 3 oz., and was having difficulty breathing on her own. She was transferred by air ambulance to RCH's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) from Chilliwack General Hospital (CGH), and placed on a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine to help her breathe. Her mom, Kelley, was discharged from CGH a few days later.

"At the time, I couldn't think about

driving back and forth every day from Chilliwack...but I didn't want to be away from my baby," recalls Bennett. "Unfortunately, we didn't have anyone we could stay with near RCH."

Through Variety -- The Children's Charity, Bennett and her husband, Brendan, were able to stay in a local accommodation for the four weeks that Mikaila was cared for at RCH.

"We hadn't expected our baby to arrive so soon...to be able to stay near the hospital was a real relief for us," says Bennett.

Variety, in consultation with RCH's Social Work Department and RCH Foundation, funds the Pediatric Patient Family Support Fund, enabling Social Workers to assist families in need of financial support, directly and onsite. Since 1988, Variety has donated more than \$1.3 million to RCH's NICU to fund specialized equipment to help ensure RCH's tiniest patients and their families receive the best care possible.



Queenie Lai, NICU Patient Care Coordinator, with Brendan and Kelley Bennett and baby Mikaila, who was born premature and had to be transported by air ambulance from Chilliwack.



To make a donation to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, call 604.520.4438 or go online to rchfoundation.com

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Additional key tenants expected to join The Brewery District include a national pharmacy, major bank and several other well-known retailers. Strata space for healthcare practitioners is also selling well, with some attractive opportunities remaining.

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A day in the life: **Dr. Mark Matishak**

The alarm rings at 0530. It's 40 km from West Vancouver into New Westminster, so I have to leave early to make it for an 0700 meeting. It's cold and I'm late, as usual.

I get to the hospital, shower and am prepared for an 'easy office day'. After checking on some patients admitted two nights before, I head to Surgical Booking to completely change my slate for tomorrow. I have hundreds of patients on the waiting list, but several people have come in who need urgent surgery: one man who is becoming quadriplegic due to a spinal cord tumour and another has a brain hemorrhage.

The first few patients I see at my office are easy; follow-up brain surgery and everybody is doing well. I'm continually interrupted by the phone or pages but things keep flowing. The next few are more difficult: one woman with two brain tumors, both potentially life-threatening. We talk, and I reassure her about monitoring her versus surgical intervention. No one volunteers for brain surgery.

Since my office is just across the street from RCH, I'm continually running across to check on patients or results. I go to Medical Imaging to beg for a variety of scans. They are always accommodating.

I run back to the office, trying to eat something between patients.

My secretary calls me a Neurosurgical counsellor, since I do so much talking with each patient. I actually find that the most enjoyable part of my career now. The second last patient has an inoperable brain blood vessel malformation deep in her brain. We always chat, but there's little I can do for her surgically.

Now, to check on everybody in the hospital. Usually I have between 15 and 25 patients on the ward, but I've been away, so it's a short list today. I discharge a young man with a head injury and discuss surgery with the patients and families for tomorrow. I go over the list of duties with our Patient Care Coordinator, Wendy Grozier; it's a joy to work with her.



Dr. Mark Matishak, Neurosurgeon, on his daily commute to Royal Columbian Hospital.

I also touch base with two of my colleagues, Dr. Navraj Heran, who's burnt out from four days on call, and our senior colleague, Dr. Winston Gittens. Dr. Gittens and I have no sympathy for Dr. Heran – we used to work 120 hours a week in the old days!

Then I head downstairs to the medical school to discuss several resident evaluations with staff and to arrange the AV equipment for Surgical Grand Rounds tomorrow at 0730. I check my hospital mail, dictate some discharge summaries, and am back on my bike by 1900 to get back home before 2030. I love easy days like today. Nobody died, and most problems were solved.

Under pressure

Normally when she speaks to an audience, CBC News Meteorologist Claire Martin is standing in front of a weather map of Canada talking about high pressure ridges and low pressure centres. Recently; however, she spoke out about a completely different kind of pressure.

The kind that you face when you are told you have breast cancer.

"I went through this pressure in November," says Martin. "But I found out, there is hope."

cancer she was diagnosed with in November 2009, and she credits her survival to an early diagnosis and her colleagues' support.

One in nine women develops breast cancer. It is the second highest cancer causing death in women.

By diagnosing the cancer early, women have a much greater chance of surviving the disease.

That's why Martin and the CBC News Vancouver team are partnering with the Burnaby Fire Fighters Charitable Society to

Martin has triumphed over the breast

continued on page 7



The Burnaby Fire Fighters have teamed up with CBC News Meteorologist and breast cancer survivor, Claire Martin, to help raise funds for a digital breast imaging machine at RCH.



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KELLY & GLEN

RCH Foundation hosted its third annual fundraising gala on Thursday, March 4th, 2010 at the new Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel, Vancouver. In just one evening, 450 guests helped raise more than \$200,000 for patient care at Royal Columbian Hospital.

The money raised will be used to purchase advanced technology that will help reduce wait-list times for diagnostic mammograms in RCH's Breast Health Centre, and provide equipment for a higher level of care to patients in other areas throughout the hospital.

Recognizing the need to support RCH, CBC News Vancouver host and SHINE Gala emcee, Ian Hanomansing commented on RCH's formidable mandate: "Besides the excellence of care this hospital provides, it is responsible for an area that makes up one-third of the population of BC," said Hanomansing. "What an extraordinary job RCH has... a duty and a privilege to serve that large an area, and that many people from our province."

Burnaby Fire Fighters Charitable Society President, Rob Lamoureux, announced a \$15,000 donation to help purchase a digital breast imaging machine, while campaign partner, CBC News Meteorologist Claire Martin delivered a poignant, personal account of why the diagnostic imaging technology is vital to patients.

Gloria Macarenko, CBC News Vancouver host and SHINE Gala Master of Ceremony, applauded Martin for speaking about her personal experience as a breast cancer survivor. "The more people who talk about their experience, the more we will all realize how important it is to have the right diagnostic equipment and the right facilities in place when people are in that very crucial waiting time for information."



(Right) Dr. Rardi van Heest, Chief of Trauma Services; Jocelyn Reimer-Kent, Cardiac Clinical Nurse Specialist; Kelly Moore and husband, Dr. David Konklin, Surgeon.
Photo: Tyler McGowan

(At Left) RCH Foundation Board Chair Belle Puri (centre), shares a laugh with Gateway Casinos Executive Vice-Chairman David Gadhia and his wife, Charu.
Photo: Tyler McGowan



(Left) RCH Surgeon Dr. Robert Granger and his wife, Diana.
Photo: Tyler McGowan

(Right) CBC News Vancouver's Gloria Macarenko and Ian Hanomansing emceed the SHINE event.
Photo: Teresa Corsie



(Above) Destino's Joey Niceforo, Hans Munoz and Paul Ouellette.
Photo: Tyler McGowan



(Above) Dr. Baldev Sanghera and his wife, Nav.
Photo: Jerald Walliser



SHINE Gala co-chairs Wade Winkler and Sharon Domaas.
Photo: Teresa Corsie



(Above) Good neighbours: RCH Foundation President and CEO Adrienne Bakker with co-presenting sponsors Mainland Sand & Gravel Ltd. President Ted Carlson (left) and Winvan Paving Ltd. President Stan Weismiller. Photo: Tyler McGowan



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Resident Julia, and Jennifer enjoying tea.

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Thanks to community donors

Thank you to all of our community group donors for their generous donations, received in 2009-2010, helping us to raise \$2.3 million to support exceptional care at RCH. For more information about their gifts, visit rchfoundation.com.



Loyal Protestant Association has donated \$20,000 to Royal Columbian Hospital Foundation to help purchase a neonatal ventilator for RCH's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). This ventilator helps ill and premature babies breathe until they are mature or well enough to breathe on

their own. As these babies' immature lungs are very fragile, their every breath must be monitored for the slightest change. (From left) George Ferguson, RN Margaret Riches, NICU Patient Care Coordinator Diane Wood, and Fred Campbell.



New Westminster Shrine Club No. 8 has donated \$12,387 to Royal Columbian Hospital Foundation to fund state-of-the-art phototherapy lights used to treat jaundice in babies in the Paediatrics Unit at Royal Columbian Hospital. (From left) Ron Anderson, RCH Liaison; Richard Gauer, Assistant Rabban, Gizeh Divan; Paul Johansen, President; Donovan

Tyres, Secretary; Marvin Knott, Treasurer; Adrienne Bakker, RCH Foundation President and CEO; Ed Scott, President-Elect; Jan Huggan, RCH Paediatrics Manager; Anita Wempe, RCH Paediatrics Patient Care Coordinator; Desmond Shairp, Vice-President-Elect.



Patti Armstrong of the Elks Club of New Westminster presents Adrienne Bakker, RCH Foundation President and CEO, with a cheque for \$5,000 for a specialized co-bedding crib in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Royal Columbian Hospital. The crib

enables twins and triplets to be cared for together in one crib, which is essential for their development. Studies have shown that keeping multiple-birth siblings together in the same crib can help each sibling gain strength after a premature birth.

For more information about our Foundations and Community Organizations program, call Gordon Stewart, Director, Leadership Giving, at 604.520.4288

Your Health Matters is published twice annually by RCH Foundation. If you have any questions or story ideas you would like to share with us, please contact our office at 604.520.4438 or email info@rchfoundation.com.

Photography by Jerald Walliser unless otherwise noted.

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Our sincerest apologies for any errors or omissions.

Survive from page 1

physiotherapy teams, Alexandra had celebrated an impressive number of "firsts" by the time February 2010 rolled around: standing, going for a walk, drinking a glass of water, breathing without a respirator. Activities that most people take for granted.

"Alex got up to walk today and just kept going," wrote her mom in a February 17th journal entry on caringbridge.org, a website Alexandra's family used to document her health crises and victories.

Although Alexandra had to have additional surgery at Surrey Memorial Hospital, she finally arrived home in April. Alexandra's doctors believe that there is every chance she will be able to live a normal life. "My ICU nurses, physicians and therapists were incredible, and would even call in to check on me on their days off," says Alexandra. Her mother, Anna-Marie Lyons, agrees: "I really don't think any hospital can compare to RCH...we feel so incredibly fortunate that Alex found her way there."

Pressure from page 3

help RCH Foundation fundraise for a \$600,000 digital breast imaging machine for RCH. This technology will help enable the RCH team to reduce wait list times to receive a diagnostic mammogram from eight weeks to within five days following an abnormal mammogram result.

Rob Lamoureux, president of the Burnaby Fire Fighters Charitable Society, also knows from working with his team that "breast cancer leaves very few people's lives untouched."

As a tribute to those members who have been affected, the Burnaby Fire Fighters Charitable Society has pledged \$15,000 towards the funding of the digital breast imaging machine.

For more information or to donate to the digital breast imaging machine call 604.520.4438 or go online to rchfoundation.com

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