WE FULLY SUPPORT THE RADIOTHON AND WANT LISTENERS TO KNOW HOW VERY LUCKY WE ARE TO HAVE SUCH A WORLD-CLASS FACILITY RIGHT IN OUR BACKYARD

– Steven Thomas

TALK RADIO

Mom Brandie Thomas holds her two-year-old daughter Kailyn, while husband Steven holds their son Mason, four. A patient at the Stollery Children’s Hospital since birth, Mason is on the waiting list for a heart transplant. The family came out to support the 2016 Corus Radiothon, which raised $1.3 million for the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation.

Sharman Hnatiuk photo

KINDNESS ON A ROLL

Time can move slowly in a hospital waiting room, adding to its occupants’ stress. That’s where the Creativity and Kindness Cart is making a difference. Spearheaded by a pair of staffers at the Cross Cancer Institute, the cart offers crafts, puzzles and art supplies to patients and families in the facility’s sitting areas.

HITTING BACK LIFE’S CURVE BALLS

At some point, life tosses everyone a curve ball. How you overcome adversity takes resilience, which can be honed and strengthened so that when a curve ball comes your way, you can knock it out of the park.

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**WELCOME REFUGEES**

Canada has had a long history of being a welcoming nation. In Alberta, communities have opened their doors to newcomers from other parts of Canada and around the world. In the past, we have seen refugees from eastern Europe, Central America, southeast Asia, and east Africa. By January, almost 1,400 refugees have settled in Alberta. Late in 2015, the federal government made a commitment to bring to Canada a significant number of refugees from war-torn Syria. Since 2011, more than four million Syrians have fled their country in search of safety, seeking asylum in western nations in order to build a new life.

It's anticipated 2,500 to 3,000 children, women and men will resettle in Alberta. By January, almost 450 Syrian families began calling Edmonton home. They are dealing with health challenges that come from having lived through war in their own country and difficult living conditions in the refugee camps.

Edmonton Zone staff have partnered with Catholic Social Services and physicians from Edmonton Zone’s Primary Care Networks to work directly with refugees providing assessments, immunizations, medication, health information and hands-on teaching.

Alberta Health Services is working with local municipal governments, schools, post-secondary institutions, immigrant settlement organizations, and primary care physicians to ensure refugees are supported with the health care they need.

All refugees, regardless of their country of origin, need the support of all Canadians. The delivery of quality health care is particularly important.

AHS’ website addresses the needs of Arabic-reading refugees at www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/refugee.aspx. One section provides links to the numerous aid organizations so Albertans can provide a helping hand.

We encourage you to support these newest residents of Canada and wish to thank our staff, physicians, volunteers and partners for their work and support in welcoming newcomers to the Edmonton Zone.

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**YOUNG DOC LEADS FROM THE TOP**

Tony Plain patients are being cared for by some of the best, the brightest, and the most youthful leaders.

Dr. Ryan Oland became Edmonton Zone’s youngest chief of medical staff when he took on the position at WestView Health Centre in 2012 at age 36. Since then, he’s been working to improve the system and increase patient access.

Having worked as an emergency physician for more than 11 years, Oland knows first-hand the difficulties that non-acute care cases place on the emergency department’s (ED) staff and resources.

To help relieve the pressure on Edmonton Zone’s hospital system, Oland has introduced initiatives like the Emergency Room Clinical Associates program at WestView where registered nurses work in collaboration with the ED to help patients navigate the health system and to avoid repeat and unnecessary emergency room visits.

His dedication to helping save patients’ lives in the ED, as well as finding ways to attract doctors to rural areas that badly need them, are why Edmonton’s Avenue Magazine named him to its annual Top 40 under 40 list.

When the magazine unveiled its latest list last November, Oland was among the crop of educators, innovators, and entrepreneurs recognized for making a significant positive impact in the community.

“In addition to my role as chief medical staff, I also sit on the board of governors of the WestView Primary Care Network (PCN),” Oland says. “One of the primary goals of the PCN is to increase access to medical care 24/7 and reduce patients’ reliance on visiting our emergency room in non-urgent situations.”

Oland supervises approximately 70 physicians in WestView’s ED, operating room, and acute and long-term care programs, as well as the day-to-day training of medical students and residents on shift in the emergency department.

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TUNING IN TO HELP SICK KIDS

Children like Mason Thomas are the reason the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation partners with local radio stations in the Corus Radiothon. This year, more than $1.3 million was raised.

Story by Kerri Robins | Photos courtesy Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation and Sharman Hnatiuk

 BRANDIE THOMAS

STEVEN THOMAS

$20 or more to the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation.

The two-day event also featured a power hour that raised funds for the Allen Little Pal Stirrup, a specialized piece of equipment that helps pediatric surgeons hold little legs in place, using stirrups, to perform operations. Designed for ages three to six, they can support up to 73 kg.

Dr. James Shapiro, a liver transplant surgeon (children and adults) with Alberta Health Services, says he’s thankful for the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation.

“They help us enormously through research dollars that drive our progress and our ability to stay on the cutting edge in surgery and outcomes in care,” says Shapiro.

And Mike House, President and CEO of the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation, agrees.

“Delivering specialized, acute health care to kids who need it most is what our foundation is all about,” House says.

“Our vision is to advance and transform children’s health, and the Corus Radiothon is a perfect example of what we are able to do collectively when we combine our donors and media partners with stories of excellence heard through the eyes of a child, a mom, a dad, and the caregivers at the Stollery.

“This collective energy translates into new monthly donors and increased investments in the best people, programs, research and equipment that matter most to the outcomes of kids and their families.”

As Mason awaits a new heart, he’s doing well. And dad Steven says he’s grateful for the foundation and hospital.

“We fully support the radiothon and want listeners to know how very lucky we are to have such a world-class facility right in our backyard,” Steven says.

“The hospital philosophy of a family-centred approach has allowed us to be together during those times when we need each other close by and around Mason.”

For more information, please visit www.stollerykids.com.

A career in health care can be extremely rewarding. Visit the AHS website for career details.

www.ahs.ca

“DELIVERING SPECIALIZED, ACUTE HEALTH CARE TO KIDS WHO NEED IT MOST IS WHAT OUR FOUNDATION IS ALL ABOUT.”

– Mike House, President and CEO of the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation
SIM PROGRAM GETS GROWING

Story and photo by Shelly Willsey | Sim Program

To provide the best patient care, today’s surgical nurses need to be prepared for anything—and thanks to an expanded training program based out of the Royal Alexandra Hospital, they are.

The Centre for the Advancement of Minimally Invasive Surgery (CAMIS) ensures that novice and intermediate surgical nurses can receive 84 hours of hands-on simulation training labs to better prepare them for their career in the operating room (OR).

Training in a CAMIS lab allows a multi-disciplinary team to hone their skills as they operate and troubleshoot in a simulated setting with a special high-tech mannequin. The advantage of a lab is that it allows learners to practise in an environment that has no impact on patient safety.

“Operating rooms are complex, high-stakes work environments; they aren’t the best classrooms for developing new surgical skills,” says Dr. Daniel Birch, CAMIS Medical Director.

“The simulations are environments where learners can make a mistake, and then debrief and learn how to respond in a more appropriate way.”

“Our surgical nurses have always been well trained to do what they need to do to optimize patient safety and patient outcomes, but AHS is an organization that strives for continuous improvement. If we can improve the training we provide, we’re compelled to do that.”

Beyond OR technical components, troubleshooting, crisis management, and communication, the trainees also experience situations that don’t typically occur a clinical setting, such as a fire in the OR or unexpected bleeding in a patient.

More than 50 nurses have completed the training in the past year alone. After participating in a simulation that saw a patient’s laparoscopic surgery expand into an open surgery, registered nurse Kathleen Kanto said, “It’s a nerve-wracking experience, but it’s better to see these situations for the first time when it’s not a real person in an operating room. We can work out the kinks before there is an actual problem.”

Surgical nurses perform a variety of roles, including laying out and preparing instruments, as well as monitoring patients and alerting the OR team to any changes in vital signs.

“It’s a benefit to our patients to have well-rehearsed surgical teams performing their operations,” says Kenny Davidson, Patient Care Manager of Operative Services at the University of Alberta Hospital.

“They are familiar with simple and complicated procedures, they communicate as a team, and this reduces the OR time needed for training. The simulation labs are a big win; rehearsal is one of the best methods of learning.”

CAMIS Manager Keith Andony agrees.

“Much as a pilot would do aviation simulation training, we want our learners to have rehearsed a variety of possibilities prior to assuming full responsibilities in the operating room,” Andony says.

“Surgical teams are telling us that when these trainees go into the OR, they’re more skilled, confident, are able to anticipate what the team needs, and can effectively troubleshoot.”

Through the Centre for the Advancement of Minimally Invasive Surgery’s expanded simulation program, novice and intermediate surgical nurses like Kathleen Kanto, right, are receiving training from experienced nurses like Kate Bouska to better prepare them for work in the operating room.

Surgical nurses receive hands-on experience through expanded training with medical mannequins

When you’re ready to start trying for a baby—or not—it’s good to have a plan. Visit www.readyonot.alberta.ca for help making that plan.

Screen Test provides mammography screening to women ages 50 to 74—the age group most at risk of developing breast cancer—in rural communities where the service isn’t regularly available. The program is coming to the following Edmonton Zone community:

• Leduc: March 1-2.

Appointments fill up quickly. To book your appointment, confirm dates and locations, and to inquire about upcoming stops, call toll-free 1.800.667.0604 or visit www.screeningforlife.ca/screentest.
Carting Around Kindness

Craft cart a plus for patients and families at the Cross Cancer Institute

Waiting for an appointment for cancer treatment can now be a lot less boring thanks to an inventive pair of staffers at the Cross Cancer Institute (CCI).

The Creativity and Kindness cart – created by volunteer resources co-ordinator Heather Dunn-Kinsman and art therapist Marie Butler – first rolled out at the CCI in early 2015 and continues to bring smiles, crafts and activities to patients and families as it eases their anxiety.

“The idea behind the Creativity and Kindness cart is to enhance patient care by providing an opportunity to occupy the wait time and reduce stress,” says Dunn-Kinsman.

“The arts serve as therapeutic and healing tools and can have a positive impact on health outcomes.”

Loaded with craft supplies and reading materials, the cart is wheeled about by a small group of trained volunteers as they walk around waiting rooms to engage patients in a variety of free activities, which helps reduces anxiety as they await appointments.

“The arts contribute to what it means to be human, especially in times of illness,” says Dunn-Kinsman. “A continually growing body of research shows the qualitative and quantitative benefits of the arts within the health care setting.”

Activities offered are based on their cost, sustainability, infection control and ease of activity. The CCI Volunteer Association solely funds the cost of the cart.

Art projects on the cart include creating greeting cards, felting, colouring, knitting and creating fabric bracelets. Activities include puzzles, word search, crossword, brain teasers, as well as playing cards and a cribbage board. Hannah Mast, a volunteer at the CCI for over a year, has witnessed the impact of the cart first-hand.

“I was walking with the creativity cart and initially engaged in conversation with a middle-aged gentleman in the outpatient department,” she says. “He expressed interest in learning how to weave, so I showed him how.”

As Mast sat in a chair beside the man, he shared why he was at the CCI.

“He expressed his fears – now that his mother is combating cancer – that he’s the only one left to carry the emotional burden and concerns.”

As he weaved, he began to weep.

“As he cried, he continued to show off what he was accomplishing,” adds Mast. “Amidst his tears he would turn to me, smile, and say, ‘Look how much I’ve done!’”

“His mother was receiving treatment and he was the only family member available to accompany her; her husband – his father – had passed away due to cancer years earlier,” says Dunn-Kinsman.

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“This gentleman expressed his fears – now that his mother is combating cancer – that he’s the only one left to carry the emotional burden and concerns.”

Across the entire sitting area, interest soon piqued about how weaving works – and the one-on-one session quickly evolved into a group activity.

Mast says her experience is common. Many patients and staff express their gratitude for the cart and the items they’re able to make and bring home to loved ones.

Photo by Kristin Bernhard

Story by Kristin Bernhard | Photo by Gregory Kennedy

H E A L T H  C A R E  H E R O E S

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Are You Young At Heart?

If you’re 30 or older, AHS’ new Heart Disease Risk Calculator can tell you your heart age and chances of having a heart attack or stroke in the next 10 years. Try out this new tool today by visiting http://bit.ly/1Vs29zp.

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• If you don’t teach your kid, who will? For advice on parent-child communication about sexuality, visit www.teachingsexualhealth.ca.
• Our latest blog on #mentalhealth – Ending Stigma: it’s ok not to be ok. Visit http://bit.ly/1nKcXhp #abhealth.
• Check out www.weareahs.ca, showcasing some of the 123,000 staff, patients and families who make the health care system what it is. We post a new AHS face and story every day this year.

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LIFE PITCHES
EVERYONE CURVE BALLS

Resilience helps hit them over the wall

Story by Greg Harris  Illustration by Michael Byers  Visit applemag.ca

Sooner or later, life pitches everyone an unexpected curve ball that tests their mettle.

It might not be a headline-grabbing event such as a natural disaster or wartime displacement, but layoffs, illnesses and family breakups can all turn the world upside down.

It takes resilience to knock life’s curve balls out of the park.

“Resilience is like a muscle,” says Patricia Morgan, a counsellor in Calgary who speaks and writes about overcoming adversity.

“Some people do seem to be born with stronger muscles, but everyone can develop and strengthen their own resilience.”

How people bounce back in the face of adversity depends, in part, on their personalities and how they were raised.

A child’s positive, nurturing relationships with early caregivers lead to healthy social, emotional and cognitive development. That development is the foundation for resilience and lifelong well-being.

Children also take their cues from parents when it comes to resilience and are likely to repeat the behaviours they see modelled.

But even in adulthood, resilience can be honed by paying attention to the following areas:

1. Managing your thoughts and learning how to cope with your emotions.
   “How you feel triggers behaviour,” Morgan says.
   “Making a mental space between thoughts and feelings can help you choose how to respond, instead of just reacting.
   “We can’t always control what happens, but we can control how we react to what happens – even when it’s other people’s poor behaviour.”

2. Take care of your body. Mental stress takes a physical toll. Make sure you’re active, eat healthy foods and get enough rest. A good night’s sleep puts problems in better perspective. Exercise can help reduce stress levels.

3. Rely on your support networks. When friends or family offer a helping hand, take it.

4. Morgan says she recently heard about an Edmonton oilpatch worker who became suicidal after being laid off, but now, thanks to the support of friends and family, is back working.

5. Be prepared. Adversity doesn’t always arrive out of the blue.

   “If you work in a sector being affected by the economic downturn, it’s a good idea to put away three months of living expenses, dust off your resume and get your professional contacts up to date,” she adds.

6. Morgan says when dealing with adversity it’s helpful to keep in mind the Serenity Prayer, versions of which can be found in different cultures around the world: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”
Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation campaign sets its sights on improvements at the Eye Institute of Alberta

Story by Kerri Robins

Photos courtesy Darren Jacknisky and the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation

When his vision worsened in 2007, Cal Nichols thought it was simply because he was getting older.

But when he got checked at what is now the Eye Institute of Alberta, a tertiary centre at the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH), Nichols discovered his condition was far more serious.

“What I thought was just part of the aging process turned out to be a detached retina,” says the 72-year-old Edmonton businessman.

“I was subsequently diagnosed with Fuchs Corneal Dystrophy (a condition where the innermost layer of cells in the cornea start to degenerate) and am so fortunate for the quick efforts at the institute to save my vision. My followup care has been outstanding.”

Patient care is the No. 1 priority of the eye institute, which is the focus of a $4-million campaign launched by the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation late last year.

“Strengthening patient care is at the core of what we do,” says Dr. Karim Damji, Clinical Section Head of Ophthalmology at the Royal Alexandra Hospital.

“We are looking to the future and positioning ourselves to offer the services that patients with more complex problems require – for example, high-risk patients, those with cancers, challenging retinal detachments and cataracts, as well as seniors requiring specialized care who have complex general health conditions.”

The Eye Institute of Alberta, formerly known as the Regional Eye Centre, opened in 1995 at the Royal Alex. Funds raised from the campaign – which Nichols co-chairs – will support three priority areas:

- $2.3-million renovation to existing space.
- $1 million to support the Ophthalmic Surgical Skills Centre.
- $700,000 to support innovation, education and research funding.

“We’ve been continually investing in our patient care, our student and staff education, and in research to improve vision-related quality of life,” says Damji, also a professor and chair of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the University of Alberta. “This campaign will help further these goals.”

The institute serves area residents, northern Albertans and western Canadians.

Haily Nguyen, Patient Care Manager of Ophthalmology at the hospital, is pleased with the proposed renovations, which are expected to begin late this year or early next year.

“Along with improved esthetics, layout and flow, our waiting rooms will see more chairs added for the comfort of patients and attending family members,” Nguyen says. “The renovations will also help improve access for patients with mobility issues, and a play area for children is being created.”

The skills centre will be equipped for students to learn and practise more precise surgical skills using 3D virtual reality, something Dr. Carlos Eduardo Solarte, Director of the Residency Program of Ophthalmology, is excited about.

“We want to facilitate on-site e-learning with state-of-the-art technology and equipment; for example, student stations will include cameras to capture what students are doing and display the activity on a smart board,” says Solarte.

He adds that students will also do their practicums in smaller communities.

“Because many of our patients come from rural areas, it’s important for students to study in these areas to gain a better understanding of their patients,” Solarte says. “It may also encourage some students to practice in these small communities after their training.”

The institute sees about 45,000 patient appointments a year and treats approximately 3,500 patients per month.

Andrew Otway, President and CEO of the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation, lauds the work done at the institute.

“For many years, the foundation has been proud to support the excellent work being done at the Eye Institute of Alberta,” Otway says. “We value our partnership with the University of Alberta’s Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, a relationship that has led to many benefits and improved outcomes for patients seeking eye care at the Royal Alexandra Hospital.”

For information, visit www.royalalex.org.

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Mark your calendar

**Mar 10** CARE FROM THE HEART RADIOTHON

The Fort Saskatchewan Community Hospital Foundation and MX107.9 are hosting a radiothon in the main entrance of the Fort Saskatchewan Community Hospital from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Proceeds go to fund a simulation medical training centre. To make a donation, visit the hospital, call 780.342.3115. or go online at www.fschf.ca.

**Mar 10-11** WALK WITH ME CONFERENCE

The CapitalCare Foundation and the Research Institute for Aging are hosting Walk With Me, a conference on changing the culture of aging in Canada. It takes place at the Fantasyland Hotel in Edmonton. For more information, visit www.theria.ca/walkwithme.

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In total, $7,000 was raised to support the school's Winter Wishes, as well as $500 for the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton and $1,100 worth of toys for Santa's Anonymous. “The idea grew from a story about how a company had sponsored a classroom at an elementary school at Christmas,” explains Kim Reich, a social worker at NECHC. “We didn’t think we could afford a classroom, but we thought every child should receive a gift during the holiday season."

The team started raising money through on-site silent auctions, bake and craft sales, raffles and cash donations. The team approached Famous Toys, which offered a substantial discount on toys and created a catalogue for the school, allowing each student to hand-select their Winter Wish toy.

“We surpassed our goal of $5,000 and were able to not only support this school, but also two other great charities in Edmonton,” says Reich.

In December, staff and physicians at NECHC raised enough money to purchase a toy for each child at a nearby elementary school, as well as to contribute $1,200 for a hot turkey lunch.

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