

# Giving Lives Back



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## Q&A

SPRING 2016

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**West Park's clinicians and researchers are dedicated to improving patient care through new ideas and knowledge. Your gifts to the Foundation support this important work. In this issue, we meet Dr. Chris Boulias of West Park's Spasticity Management Clinic.**

**Q:** *What is spasticity and why is it an important research topic?*

**A:** Spasticity is tightening of muscles in the limbs caused by neurological conditions that affect the central nervous system. For example, about 80% of people with cerebral palsy and 40 to 60% of stroke survivors have varying degrees of spasticity. We have a very large clinic at West Park, and we often ask ourselves how we can improve the treatments we provide. Research is the way forward.

**Q:** *What new knowledge have you created to date?*

**A:** One of the issues we've looked at is treatment for people on blood thinners. Because spasticity treatment usually involves needles injected into deep muscles, there's a concern that the treatment could cause internal bleeding in people taking anti-coagulants, resulting in serious medical problems.

We've developed an approach to this issue in the clinic that seems to be effective, but we wanted to find out what others were doing. Doctors were surveyed in Canada, South Korea and Turkey, and we found there was no consistency. We plan to bring an international group together to come up with treatment guidelines.

In another study we compared the effectiveness of three options for reducing pain at the injection site – a cream called Emla, a spray-on “vapocoolant,” and ice. We showed that Emla and ice both reduced pain the same amount, and that the vapocoolant actually increased pain. This finding has changed practice, saved patients money, and helped make the health system more efficient.

**Q:** *Why is private support important to researchers at West Park?*

**A:** For years Dr. Farooq Ismail and I worked on research questions in the evening after work, but progress was slow. Now funds held by the Foundation support Dr. Chetan Phadke, a full-time researcher. We need to support that position on an ongoing basis, so that we can continue to create knowledge that improves patient care.

# A positive attitude and West Park's amputee rehabilitation service helped Robb Collis get back to life.



**"I consider West Park a very, very special place... At what was probably the lowest point of my life, there were so many people to support me."**

Three weeks after getting back to work following a leg amputation and six weeks of rehab, Robb Collis fell in the hall at his office. "Everyone else was screaming," he says, "but I just sat on the floor and laughed." He turned down help, gathered himself, and got up using his new prosthetic leg.

That story tells you a lot about Collis. His persistence, positive attitude, and irrepressible sense of humor helped him through a difficult journey. So did the staff and physicians of the West Park amputee rehabilitation service.

Collis has had a remarkable career in marketing and public relations.

Today he works closely with theatre impresario Garth Drabinsky at Tiberius Entertainment Group. Seven years ago he was diagnosed with diabetes. Last spring a cut in his foot became infected, and despite best efforts, the infection spread. On October 10 his leg was amputated below the knee. Four days later he was moved to West Park for rehabilitation.

"I consider West Park a very, very special place," he says. "At what was probably the lowest point of my life, there were so many people to support me." He says staff members were sensitive, understanding, encouraging and

highly skilled. He and his fellow patients also supported one another. "It's like being part of a very exclusive club that you'd rather not belong to," he says with a smile.

Collis is determined that his amputation won't stop him from enjoying life. "The brain is intact, it's just the leg that's missing," he says. "I may be a bit slower but really nothing's changed." He is also determined to spread the word about West Park. "With the onslaught of diabetes, arthritis, and the other challenges of an aging Baby Boom, we need places like West Park more than ever."

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**Joanne Cole**  
Chief Executive Officer  
West Park Foundation

### We Want to Inspire You!

One of the great joys of my job is hearing the stories of West Park patients.

They are often people who have faced desperate circumstances and yet managed to find their way back to a rich and satisfying life. I am always inspired by their courage, perseverance and sheer hard work. I am equally inspired by the physicians and staff of West Park, who are both highly skilled and deeply compassionate.

In this newsletter, we'd like to share some of those stories with you, so that you too can be inspired by the great work that happens here. We'd also like to tell you about the other generous people who support West Park, and the hospital's vision for the future.

The hospital is currently preparing to issue a Request for Proposal for our major redevelopment project. This is an exciting time for West Park, its patients and families, and the people who support them. Stay tuned!



## REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE:

**A conversation with Shelley Ditty, Vice President  
Planning & Development**

*Why is West Park undergoing a transformation?*

SD: The demand for our services is growing as the population ages and more people are living longer with chronic diseases. The current facilities were built for different populations and services, and no longer meet standards.

*So what's happening?*

SD: We are creating an "integrated campus of care," with a new hospital at its heart. The new building will feature 80% single-bed rooms and each patient will have a private three-piece washroom. There will be dining rooms, lounges and visiting spaces on each unit, and terraces and rehab gyms on each floor. The outdoor space will be thoughtfully designed to support rehabilitation.

We've leased some of our land to a private developer who will be creating complementary facilities such as supportive housing. The revenue from this arrangement will help contribute to the cost of the new hospital.

*Where are we in the process?*

SD: We are in the final stages of the planning process for the new hospital. We are now defining the building requirements to support our programming; including room size, to how many electrical outlets there are! This involves months of intensive meetings with patients, family members, physicians and staff.

Once the plans are approved by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, a Request for Proposal will be issued to contractors. As part of the bidding process, the winning firm will be selected to build the new hospital.

## Why I Give: Pat Martin



"My husband Bob [Bob Martin, the former President and CEO of Enbridge/Consumers Gas] was introduced to West Park close to 35 years ago. He served on the Board for several years and then kept in touch with successive CEOs. He was instrumental in a significant donation from Enbridge that resulted in the naming of the auditorium. We have also contributed personally."

"A few months after Bob died I had a hip operation. My surgeon referred me to West Park for rehab. I saw for myself what a caring staff it has, and how determined they are to encourage patients to get well, be independent and get back into society as soon as possible. It was a wonderful experience."

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**t: 416.243.3698 e: [foundation@westpark.org](mailto:foundation@westpark.org)**

## How I'm Making a Difference at West Park

Each issue we'll introduce you to a committed supporter of West Park Hospital. This time it's Peter Fraser, a former patient who is currently a member of the Foundation Board. Fraser is a partner at West Face Capital in Toronto.

*How did you get involved with West Park?*

The first time I showed up at West Park, I was in the back of an ambulance! I'd had a very serious cycling accident on my way to work, and had been patched up at St. Mike's. Because my leg was in a brace, called an external fixator, I spent a month at West Park. Then I continued doing rehab here for six months.

*What makes West Park a special place to you?*

I had a very positive experience at West Park. I was impressed by the personalized level of care. For example, when my physiotherapist learned we had stairs at home, she took me into the stairwell at West Park and trained me how to go up and down using a board and one foot!

*Why is West Park an important part of our health system?*

There is a huge need for rehabilitation and it's getting bigger all the time.

*Beyond work and West Park, what are you passionate about?*

I still enjoy cycling, and I'm a big supporter of the Bruce Trail Conservancy, which protects a ribbon of trail from Niagara to Tobermory.

*What is your "road not taken" – your alternate career path?*

There never was one. When I was 10 I made my first investment and earned enough to buy the bike I wanted from Canadian Tire. I never looked back.

*The words that best describe your character?*

Intense. Quietly determined.

# FUNDRAISING SCENE



West Face Capital gets into the 80s vibe at the Panache Gala.

More than 300 community leaders and corporate philanthropists gathered at The Ritz-Carlton to support Panache, West Park Healthcare Centre's fundraising gala, raising nearly \$300,000 to support patient care at West Park.

Attendees enjoyed dinner, a live auction and danced the night away for a great cause. A moving speech by Suzanne Scinto, a West Park Occupational Therapist and Clinical Coordinator motivated attendees to also fund a state-of-the-art Eyegaze unit. West Park patient, Robert, demonstrated how just by looking at control keys or cells displayed on a screen, he could generate speech either by typing a message or selecting pre-programmed phrases. Having this technology is just one of the ways West Park give patients their lives back.



West Park Healthcare Centre President & CEO Anne-Marie Malek with Panache emcee Steve Anthony.



Enercare's David Weishuhn and Wife Laurie are ready to rock!



Danny and Rita Diamankotos take a selfie with Panache emcee Steve Anthony.

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