

# GIVING LIVES BACK

WINTER 2021



**West Park**  
FOUNDATION

**get  
your  
life  
back**



**Founders  
CIRCLE**

**Be Part of Founding  
the New West Park**

Learn more, page 3



# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



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

This past November, we were delighted to hold our annual donor appreciation event, an occasion all of us in the Foundation look forward to every year. It was the first time we've held the event online and, while we very much missed seeing our friends in person, we were happy that our virtual format allowed many donors from out of town to join us.

To me, it was an especially meaningful event, as the support of our community has been so important this past year – a critical year for West Park in many ways. Our frontline workers showed their bravery, commitment and compassion as they cared for our patients, doing an outstanding job in keeping them safe from the coronavirus. Meanwhile, construction continued apace on our new hospital. It now rises several storeys from the ground, a remarkable sight that greets visitors to the hospital.

Our generous donors supported us in many ways last year. It was a very challenging time, and we are grateful for all the support we've received, including to our capital campaign. The **Get Your Life Back Campaign** will ensure that West Park can continue to provide the very best care for our patients, and I'm proud to announce the creation of the Founders Circle to recognize the donors whose very significant donations are serving as the cornerstone of our new hospital.

On the page opposite is a letter from some of these generous individuals, outlining why they are proud to support the new West Park. It is a compelling case, and we are grateful that they have joined us in making it.

On behalf of the Foundation team, I wish you all the best for a healthy and happy 2021.

## FOUNDERS COME TOGETHER TO HELP BUILD OUR NEW HOSPITAL

West Park Foundation has launched a new giving society to recognize the donors whose significant contributions are helping to "found" the new West Park Healthcare Centre.

Dozens of generous individuals, corporations and other organizations have already joined the Founders Circle with gifts of \$100,000 or more, together recognizing that West Park's new hospital will benefit both the many people who need its services and the healthcare system overall.

"These visionary leaders are providing the very foundation of our new hospital, ensuring that our new facility will be among the world's best in providing rehabilitation and complex continuing care services," says Anne-Marie Malek, President and CEO of West Park Healthcare Centre. "Their generosity is truly inspiring and will have an impact on the lives of our patients for generations."

Scheduled for completion in 2023, the new West Park will have 20 per cent more patient beds and expanded outpatient clinics to meet rising demand, and will include many features to enhance care and improve the patient experience.

"My own family has seen firsthand how the skilled, caring team at West Park can transform a person's life, helping them to recover and get back to their home, their job and their family," says Ian Troop, Founders Circle member and Chair of the Get Your Life Back Campaign, which is helping to fund the capital costs of the new hospital.

"Supporting West Park's bold transformation is an opportunity to invest in excellence, make a real difference in peoples' lives, and leave a lasting legacy."

# JOIN US IN FOUNDING THE NEW WEST PARK.



Founders  
**CIRCLE**

As the present COVID-19 pandemic has shown us, a strong, coordinated healthcare system is vital to the health of our communities, our economy and our families – and to the very well-being of our society.

To meet all our needs, our healthcare system must offer high quality services across the full continuum of care. Rehabilitation hospitals are an important part of this interconnected mix, ensuring that patients are able to receive the type of care they need at an institution that is specialized to provide it. There is none better than West Park Healthcare Centre.

A nationally recognized leader in rehabilitation and complex continuing care, West Park helps people recover from serious injury and illness, and regain their independence so they can lead productive lives in the community. Rehabilitation therapy is often the next step for patients after a stay in an acute care hospital, helping them return home safely and maintain their health so they don't have to return to hospital.

The end result? A more efficient, effective and sustainable healthcare system, and certainly much better for patients. The right care, in the right place at the right time.

West Park is now growing to meet the rising demand for its services as the population ages. It is transforming its 27-acre campus and building a new hospital so that it can continue to provide the very best in rehabilitative care for decades to come. We invite you to learn more about this innovative initiative at [westparkfoundation.ca](http://westparkfoundation.ca).

The \$80 million **Get Your Life Back Campaign** is fuelling West Park's bold transformation, supporting the capital costs of the new hospital to ensure it is a leading-edge facility, able to help more people overcome enormous health challenges and return to their lives.

We have seen for ourselves the difference that West Park can make in a person's life; how its skilled and compassionate care can take a person from despair, to hope, and then back to health. It is a remarkable institution, and we are proud to be Founders of the new West Park Healthcare Centre.

We invite you to join us in the Founders Circle and help ensure that this vital institution remains strong and able to meet the challenges ahead. That it is there when we need it.

*John and Susan Franklin*

*Rick and Janet Lint*

*Peter Fraser and Lorna Blumen*

*Ian and Nicole Troop*

*David and Heather Fuller*

*David and Laurie Weishuhn*

# NEW PATIENT UNITS ARE TAKING SHAPE

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What a difference a year makes! Since we celebrated our “big dig” last February, which marked the beginning of excavation to build our new leading-edge facility, progress has continued.

Patient units are beginning to take shape as concrete pours are now complete for both Long-Term Ventilation units on the fourth floor. Construction workers are starting to form Level 5 of the North Inpatient Unit, which will house the Respiratory Continuing Care unit. When completed in 2023, our six-storey facility will have over 300 patient beds, with 80 per cent in private rooms.

Replicas of patient rooms, team spaces and an elevator cab will be available for viewing either virtually or in-person in early 2021, with proper health and safety protocols.

But until then, keep up with all the action on campus, from now until 2023, by tuning into our live Construction Cam at [wpconstructioncam.org](http://wpconstructioncam.org). And visit [westparkfoundation.ca/why-give/the-get-your-life-back-campaign/](http://westparkfoundation.ca/why-give/the-get-your-life-back-campaign/) to learn how you can support our new hospital.

# SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY JACK ARMSTRONG

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Jack Armstrong, TSN and NBA TV Sportscaster, will give a special virtual presentation to the West Park community on **The Power of Resilience**: In sports, in life, and in the face of adversity. The event is being held via Zoom on Wednesday, February 24 from 1:00 – 2:00 pm.

Armstrong, the popular voice of the Toronto Raptors and Honorary Ambassador for the West Park Tournament of Stars presented by EllisDon, will speak on how resilience can be a powerful force on the playing field, in everyday life and during these challenging times.

To join this exciting presentation, please RSVP to [foundation.rsvp@westpark.org](mailto:foundation.rsvp@westpark.org) or 416-243-3663. Zoom log-in details will be sent to all confirmed attendees.

Unfortunately, with the ongoing restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, West Park Foundation is unable to hold the 2021 Tournament of Stars celebrity basketball event.

“We are grateful to our many generous sponsors, donors and tournament players for their continued support of West Park during this challenging time,” says Joanne Cole, CEO of West Park Foundation. “We look forward to bringing the tournament back in March 2022, when hopefully we can all enjoy an exciting day of basketball with our Raptors and NBA alumni.”

# DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONTLINE: DR. PETER DERKACH

*In his nearly 20 years at West Park, Dr. Peter Derkach, who specializes in family medicine, has worked throughout the diverse patient services in the hospital. Currently he is the attending physician in the Tuberculosis (TB) Service, which is the provincially designated treatment centre for difficult-to-treat cases of TB and other mycobacterial infections. He also serves as the medical director for two long-term care centres: West Park Long-Term Care Centre and Ukrainian Canadian Care Centre.*

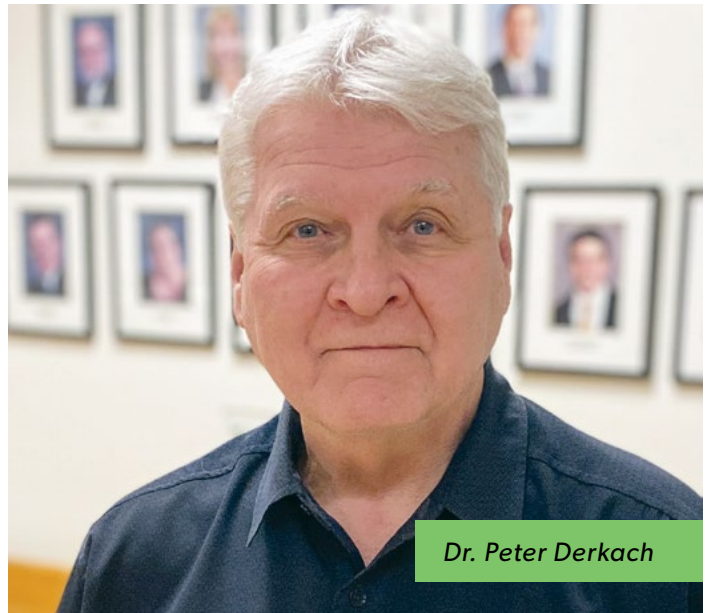
*Dr. Derkach was West Park's Chief of Staff from 2001 to 2008. It was in this role that he led the hospital through the SARS epidemic, when, in 2003, West Park had opened Ontario's first dedicated SARS Unit. Dr. Derkach shares his experience during that challenging time here:*

It all started very abruptly with SARS. I remember there was news coming out of China of cases of pneumonia that were killing people, but the doctors there didn't know what the causative agent was.

On a particular Sunday, I got a call from the president of the hospital's board, asking me to come in for a meeting. I was at a birthday party at the time, but I went straight to West Park.

There was outbreak in Toronto of possibly the same agent that was causing the deadly problem in China, including an outbreak at Scarborough General Hospital, where a number of patients had gotten sick. At this point, we knew to call it SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome).

Within hours of being asked by the province to set up its first dedicated SARS unit, we took over a decommissioned patient unit, and brought in beds and linen. Staff had to volunteer to work in the unit. And all our patients were healthcare workers from Scarborough General, who had fallen ill, including doctors, nurses, and X-ray lab technicians.



Dr. Peter Derkach

I worked in that unit for consecutive days, living in an on-call room. It was a frightening time because we knew so little about SARS. We didn't know whether it was viral or bacterial, and we had to take care of all our patients in isolation. Still, we did it. And all our patients survived.

In the end, 44 people died from SARS in Canada. Sadly, we lost one member of our staff. Tecla Lin was a nurse who worked with us on the unit and she caught SARS. And before she died, she passed the illness to her husband. The hospital still honours her memory each year through the Tecla Lin Education Fund Bursary Awards.

Having the experience of working through SARS solidified my values, because even now with COVID-19, I can't stay away. I'm 71, but I couldn't not go in and not see my patients. I think that having fear is healthy. Fear helps us stay safe, which is why we must continue to emphasize that wearing a mask, keeping physical distancing and washing our hands, will always be the cornerstone of any infection control policy.

# KEEPING PATIENTS CONNECTED DURING THE PANDEMIC



West Park has always taken great care to create a positive environment for patients, one that encourages engagement and fosters a strong sense of community.

“The hospital did not waver on this priority when COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic last March,” says Sarah Benn Orava, West Park’s Patient Experience Coordinator.

In response to physical distancing measures and other public health regulations, West Park revised its Patient Engagement Strategy to maintain patients’ psychosocial well-being during the pandemic.

West Park has a diverse patient population, with many individuals spending weeks, months or even years at the hospital. But as the pandemic stretches into its second year, hospital staff continue to work hard to create a sense of normalcy by finding innovative ways for patients to stay connected as a community.

“Our staff have come up with out-of-the-box approaches to continuously make improvements for all patients and families at West Park,” says Benn Orava, who recently co-authored an article in the *Patient Experience Journal* that

details the measures West Park has introduced to reduce social isolation, ensure patients have consistent access to information, and a continuous connection with families who are no longer able to visit as freely as they could in the past.

Recreation Therapy remains a big part of the patient experience at West Park, but the therapeutic leisure programming looks very different these days with many activities happening virtually, in small groups or by the bed-side. Yet within the challenges there has been a silver lining, says Recreation Therapist, Kandace Assivero.

“The restrictions created an opportunity for us to work closely with service units and connect with patients we hadn’t previously worked with,” she says. “We were able to spend time at their bedside, help lift their spirits and facilitate video calls with family.”

The Recreation Therapy team have come up with creative ways to sustain a sense of community among patients. Virtual programming like Caring Connections has allowed hospital volunteers to have a continued presence in the hospital through recorded videos sharing jokes, games, exercises and music with patients; while virtual pet therapy has brought a lot of joy and ease to patients.

“These programs give our patients an extra outlet to be able to talk about their emotions in a safe way,” says Recreation Therapist, Ksenia Melamed. “And it gave us an opportunity to stay connected with our volunteers, to make sure they are safe and not socially isolated as well.”

West Park has received gifts from donors that have helped enhance the hospital’s virtual programming, including a number of donated tablets that patients can use to stay connected with family, friends and fellow patients.

“Now more than ever, the human experience is an integral foundation to all the work that we do,” says Benn Orava. “We hope that our efforts will continue to make a positive patient experience.”

# WORKING REMOTELY AS A PRINCIPAL DURING AMPUTEE REHAB

When Sarah Calvert first came to West Park in 2017 to recover from a below-the-knee amputation of her left leg, due to complications from diabetes, she didn't know what to expect. She had never even heard of West Park.

"My doctors said West Park was the best place for me get proper amputation rehabilitation, which wasn't available at my local hospital," she says. "I was very impressed: I received the most specialized care from the doctors, nurses and therapists."

Sarah also found a community of other amputees, some of whom were living with diabetes like herself. And when the mother of two returned to West Park in 2020 after having her right leg amputated, she was ready to balance her rehabilitation with her work as an elementary school principal, managing her virtual school from her hospital room.

"Things were very different because of the pandemic. But I was very happy to be back at West Park," she says. "It was very busy, but I've been a principal for nine years, so I knew all the things that needed to get done."

Each morning, when her rehabilitation schedule for the day was posted, Sarah would let her teachers know when she would be unavailable. She worked around her rehab, which included physiotherapy exercises to help her get back up on her feet and walk again, and occupational therapy to regain skills.

"Remote work is a little different, so I was able to do it from the hospital," Sarah says. "I had the tools to support my teachers and help make sure the kids were in class and had the right materials to learn."

As an experienced school board equity officer, Sarah also found herself becoming more involved at West Park. She is currently a Patient Family Advisor and a member of the hospital's new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Even before becoming a double amputee, Sarah was no stranger to the amputee community. Her son, who is now 21, was born with femoral-facial deficiency



Sarah Calvert at West Park during her rehabilitation

syndrome, which meant the bones on his femur and face didn't grow as fast as the rest of his body. When he was five years old, he had his left leg amputated.

"My son now plays sledge hockey, and he's on Team Canada's para-ice hockey development team," Sarah says. "I didn't become an amputee until I was 50, but the years I spent as a mother within the amputee community helped me with my own transition."

Sarah has faced challenges in her "new normal," but tries to lead by example when tackling issues like ableism and accessibility, telling her students not to judge a person by what you think they can do, but to ask them.

"People look at me and automatically assume I can't do something," she says "I may be limited in what I can do now, but I would like the opportunity to be asked.

"I am quite useful, thank you!"

# THIS VALENTINE'S DAY, THE BEST TABLE IS AT YOUR HOUSE

## Wine, Dine, Valentine

On Sunday, February 14, join us for **Wine, Dine, Valentine**, a virtual culinary event hosted by celebrated chef and Food Network Canada personality, Lynn Crawford, who will guide participants through the preparation and plating of a delectable three-course dinner. To learn more, visit: [westparkfoundation.ca/events/wine-dine-valentine](http://westparkfoundation.ca/events/wine-dine-valentine)

## OUR FIRST VIRTUAL UNCORK WAS A GREAT SUCCESS

Thank you to everyone who joined us for UNCORK UNTAP UNWIND Online on October 29. The evening was a great success, raising \$100,000 towards West Park Healthcare Centre's critical mission.

More than 300 participants got to spend the evening with Chef Lynn Crawford, as she hosted our virtual at-home culinary experience, presented by EllisDon.

Thank you to our sponsors, whose generous support helped make the evening possible:



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