

GIVING LIVES BACK

Fall 2024

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West Park
FOUNDATION

Get your life back.

Rally for Rehab

The West Park Warriors were out "in force" on Sunday, September 8 at the UHN Rally for Rehab. More than 40 staff, family and community members (and pets!) signed up to Walk for West Park on either a 2 or 3.5 km route, raising more than \$2,000 for patient care and research at West Park. The walk began at UHN's Rumsey Centre and went through the Leaside neighbourhood.



West Park Physiatrist at the Paralympics

Dr. Steven Dilkas was at the Paralympics in Paris this summer as the doctor for Canada's men's and women's wheelchair basketball teams, helping keep the athletes healthy and enabling them to perform at their best.

As a physiatrist, Dr. Dilkas' goal is to enhance the physical function and quality of life in patients who have significant medical conditions. Whether it's injuries of the brain, spinal cord or musculoskeletal system, he's helped countless patients achieve what some would have considered impossible.

For those patients, it's not about gold medals and world records, but rehabilitation to regain and sometimes surpass the function they had before they arrived at West Park.

"I have patients who are going from a wheelchair to learning how to walk again," says Dr. Dilkas, who specializes in amputee rehabilitation, prosthetics and orthotics. "And that's just the beginning."

He says the most rewarding part of his job is not only helping patients be physically active but seeing them become amazing at what they do. He sees parasports as an extension of that rehabilitation process — the highest level of pushing limits and challenging what is functionally possible.



Dr. Steven Dilkas (L) and Danielle de Laat, a physiotherapist at Niagara Health & Rehab Centre, in Paris at the 2024 Summer Paralympics. (Photo: Courtesy Steven Dilkas)

Keep out, patient!

West Park's expanded Outpatient Services are helping more people recover at home.

By Doug Earle,
CEO, West Park Foundation

The desire to get out of hospital and return home is a powerful and universal sentiment, fueled by a yearning for the comfort, familiarity, and independence that home represents.

In the often sterile, clinical environment of a hospital, patients find themselves longing for the warmth of their own bed, the sounds of their loved ones, and the routine of their daily lives.

Anyone who has been in hospital knows exactly the feeling.

And UHN-West Park certainly knows that feeling. We understand that most people want to recover in their own home. If they are hospitalized, we get them back home as quickly as possible and, if required, continuing their recovery on an outpatient basis.

By investing in doubling the outpatient care capacity in our new hospital building, West Park has strengthened not only our role as a 'bridge' in the health system – helping people return home safely following a stay in acute care – but also our 'buffer' role, helping people maintain their health and avoid a hospital stay.

Driven by research, and inspired by the latest in technological advances, West Park has built a holistic range of restorative outpatient services that include:

Respiratory: Covering the gamut of respiratory conditions including tuberculosis, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), pulmonary fibrosis, and patients requiring long-term ventilation.

Geriatrics: Our Geriatric Interprofessional Assessment Clinic offers comprehensive assessment of the domains associated with ageing to identify factors that can improve health, maximize independence and safety. Our new Geriatric Day Hospital will provide the education and therapy of the inpatient program but the patient gets to go home at night.



Helping to train the next generation of healthcare professionals: On July 31, West Park's outpatient facilities were the site of a lab for more than 100 U of T physiotherapy students.

Amputee: West Park's Prosthetics and Orthotics department houses a full-service manufacturing facility, one that can build state-of-the-art prostheses and orthoses that will improve the quality of life and independence of amputee rehabilitation patients. Over 2,500 people visit our P&O Centre annually to maintain their prostheses.

Spasticity: More than 350,000 Canadians have spasticity, and for many it makes daily activities painful or impossible, reducing quality of life. West Park's spasticity management program is tackling one of the most untreated challenges facing Canadians impacted by stroke, MS and other neurological conditions affecting the central nervous system.

Our expanded outpatient rehabilitation gym and water therapy pool means results-oriented rehabilitation through appropriate, timely and personalized treatments specific to patients' individual rehabilitation needs. With our new space, we can offer wellness services providing integrated, multi-disciplinary and collaborative treatment within one facility.

By helping keep patients out of acute care; by helping them get back home as quickly as possible; by designing treatment plans that ensure their recovery goals are clear; the end result is nothing short of transformative. For the patient, for their family, and for the health system overall. West Park Foundation donors should be proud of our new hospital building and how it is changing health care.



Geriatrician Dr. Jamal Depradine with patient.

New Hospital Enabling Transformational Care

GERIATRIC DAY HOSPITAL ONE OF MANY INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS OPENING AT UHN-WEST PARK

Canada is in the midst of a massive demographic shift.

The post-WWII, baby-boom generation is aging, and each year the 65 years and older age group is becoming a greater share of the population.

This is causing a strain on our health system. As seniors age, and their healthcare needs become more complex, they become greater consumers of health care. Right now, people over 65 years of age represent 17% of our population but 58% of all hospital stays. Over the next 20 years, the 65+ age group is expected to grow by 68%.

It was this coming demographic surge that was the driving force to build West Park's new hospital building, more than 15 years ago when planning first began.

Now that our new facility is open, with 316 beds and double the outpatient capacity, we are better able to meet the increased need for rehabilitation and complex continuing care services and open new programs to meet the needs of our aging population.

"We need to do more than increase capacity in the system. We need to transform how we deliver care to help keep our seniors healthy, active and independent as they age," says Dr. Jamal Depradine, Physician Lead for the Geriatric Medicine Program.

UHN-West Park's newest addition to specialized outpatient geriatric care is a Geriatric Day Hospital, which opened in August. This 10-week program is for older individuals living in the community who have experienced a loss of function and have identifiable rehabilitation goals. Services include a cognitive, physical or psychosocial assessment, health education, connections to community services and programs, and hands-on exercise.

It is the only geriatric day hospital in the western GTA, and part of a suite of seniors programs at West Park that include the inpatient Geriatric Rehabilitation Services (high and low intensity), an outpatient Geriatric Interprofessional Assessment Clinic, and a Seniors Mental Health Outreach Service.

West Park is also home to a new, ground-breaking Rapid Rehab initiative that helps older adults transition from the emergency department directly to inpatient rehabilitation, and avoid an acute hospital stay.

"It is vital we transition seniors out of acute care and back home, and provide them with the health services they need to remain active in their communities and living with

the highest quality of life for as long as possible," says Dr. Depradine. "It relieves pressure in crowded acute care hospitals, and, even more importantly, genuinely improves the lives of our patients."

More information about geriatric services on the West Park campus can be found at westpark.org.



Entrance to the ABI Rehabilitation Unit.

EXPANDED ABI REHAB UNIT OPENS ITS DOORS

In July, West Park's expanded Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Rehabilitation Unit opened its doors. This 12-bed unit – an increase from seven beds in our legacy building – is designed to help patients recovering from an acquired brain injury to reach a level of independence and return to living in the community independently or with support.

This self-contained unit that includes a specialized rehabilitation gym, access to a practice kitchen, lounge, dining room and quiet room specifically for the ABI unit will provide an ideal rehabilitation environment for patients.

"With new programs continuing to come online, we are beginning to see the full impact of our new hospital building," says Doug Earle, CEO of West Park Foundation. "Our patients are benefiting from innovative, specialized programs designed to meet their needs closer to home, and our increased capacity is helping to reduce the strain on our healthcare system."

"West Park's generous donors are helping us bring our new facility to life, and with their continued support we will complete our bold transformation."

Our Transformation Continues!

The redevelopment of the West Park campus has continued since the new hospital building opened in April. The Ruddy Building (pictured) is being demolished this Fall so the back service road can be connected to West Park Drive and facilitate entry to the campus from Emmett Avenue. Once this work is complete, West Park's Central Plaza will be created outside of both the new hospital and the Long-Term Care Centre. This plaza will serve as a welcoming meeting place for West Park staff, patients and visitors, and will be the site of community events.

West Park's redevelopment will continue over the next several years with the creation of outdoor therapeutic environments that will better support patients as they recover. In addition, planning is underway for a second long-term care centre on the site.



Kress Family Gift Celebrates "A Perfect Match"

Ed Kress grew up in the west end of Toronto, and attended Islington Public School, Etobicoke Collegiate, and the University of Toronto. Yet when he joined the board of the West Park Foundation in 2002, he had barely heard of the hospital.

"That was the big problem West Park had," he says. "Nobody knew what it was or where it was! For me, it was quite an education."

Much has changed in the intervening two decades. Now a beautiful new hospital building is attracting kudos, and West Park is celebrating the recent voluntary integration with University Health Network (UHN). Kress has made a \$1 million donation to West Park Foundation, part of a joint gift solicited with UHN Foundation, that will be recognized by naming West Park's diagnostics and imaging laboratory, The Kress Family Diagnostic Centre.

Kress studied commerce at U of T and then, influenced by two family members, became an accountant. His practice came to focus primarily on one large client, Brascan (later Brookfield Corporation), and in 1974 Kress joined the company.

"It was a great company, and a great place to work," he says. He rose to the top, eventually serving as Group Chairman at Brookfield Asset Management.

As his career peaked, Kress was encouraged to get involved in the community. A UofT classmate approached him about a gift to West Park. When he replied that Brookfield preferred to support organizations where their employees were involved, he was invited to join the West Park Foundation Board of Directors. He served on the board from 2002 to 2011, including one year as Vice Chair, two years as Chair, and also spent two years on the Centre Board.

Even in the early 2000s, there was growing recognition that West Park needed a new building. To raise awareness of the hospital and support the future fundraising effort, the board inaugurated a gala, the Scarlett Ball. Kress's wife Paddy, an experienced event planner, led the first event, which was a huge success. She also served as the inaugural Chair of the Foundation's Donor Recognition Committee.



Paddy and Edward Kress

"West Park's new building and its location are spectacular, and now it's connected to Canada's leading hospital network. It's a perfect match."

When Paddy became ill, Kress stepped back from his work at West Park. He remembers a time when Paddy was diagnosed with Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome and treated in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Toronto Western Hospital. Worried, Kress called Dr. Roger Goldstein at West Park. Goldstein told him that the head of the unit was an exceptional clinician who had transformed the way ICUs operate. Says Kress, "That gave me some comfort at a difficult time, and we got through it." Paddy passed away in 2019.

In 2023, West Park CEO Anne-Marie Malek called Kress at the cottage to let him know that West Park was in the process of merging with UHN.

"I was absolutely overjoyed," he says. "West Park's new building and its location are spectacular, and now it's connected to Canada's leading hospital network. It's a perfect match."

Patient Takes First Steps at West Park

Just 27 days after arriving at UHN-West Park, Yevhen Shlemkyvych, 21, a below-knee double amputee patient who had never walked, took his first steps.

And, for the rehabilitation care team – including a physiatrist, physiotherapists, rehabilitation assistants and prosthetists – it marked the first time they treated a patient who had never experienced walking and had to be taught the mechanics such as using his knees and exploring a new range of motion.

"It's really remarkable to see his progress," says Dr. Steven Dilkas, physiatrist for Amputee & Musculoskeletal Services at West Park. "This is all new to him – being upright, putting on shoes for the first time and learning to tie his shoelaces."

Growing up in Western Ukraine, Yevhen was born with a condition that rendered his legs unusable. At home and when he was out in public but thought no one was looking, he moved on his knees with pads for protection, dragging his feet behind.

With limited infrastructure in his village to accommodate wheelchairs, he was largely housebound.

Yevhen was advised to wait until he turned 18 to undergo a double amputation and be fitted with prostheses. But by the time that day came, the Russo-Ukrainian War prevented him from having the procedure.



Yevhen with members of his rehabilitation care team.



Yevhen Shlemkyvych with West Park physiatrist Dr. Steven Dilkas and Dr. Joon Mun, UHN resident.

After immigrating to Canada a year ago, Yevhen was referred to a surgeon, underwent bilateral amputations and arrived at West Park in May. Over the course of his stay, he worked with West Park's Amputee Rehabilitation and Prosthetics & Orthotics Services.

As Yevhen had never walked before, the rehabilitation care team had to explain the mechanics. They guided him through strengthening muscles he had never fully used, taught him how to utilize his knees and their range of motion, and helped him find his new centre of gravity after his prostheses – which were fitted at West Park – significantly increased his height.

"It was hard. The prostheses were very heavy at first, but they seem lighter now," says Yevhen, describing his first steps through a Ukrainian translator, Stefania Lehkyj, who was also one of his physiotherapists. "I knew over time, I would be able to walk."

Wearing blue Saucony runners, his first pair of shoes, Yevhen is now able to walk and go up and down the stairs with two canes. With continued training, he looks forward to the day he can walk without aides.

Since his first step, Yevhen's perspective on life has changed literally and figuratively. With his new legs, he is taller, which he says offers a much better view. Life opportunities are also beginning to open.

"With my legs, I feel normal," Yevhen says. "I can be amongst people now. I can find a job."

The West Park team has been in awe of his progress over the weeks and is optimistic for his future.

"It's an inspiring story," says Dr. Dilkas. "I'm thankful for what we do here, the team and all of their efforts."



Chefs Alvin Leung (top) and Claudio Aprile racing the clock with their teams of Fundraising Foodies at the 2023 Culinary Showdown.

Calling all Foodies! The Culinary Showdown Returns November 2

After a phenomenal success in 2023, the West Park Foundation Culinary Showdown is back! This exciting event brings together five Celebrity Chefs and our top 50 Fundraising Foodies for a MasterChef-style competition on Saturday, November 2 at Beanfield Centre (Exhibition Place).

The all-star Celebrity Chefs competing are: Mark McEwan, Antonio Park, Nicole Gomes, Claudio Aprile and Alvin Leung.

Sign up to be a Fundraising Foodie and get your chance to cook on-stage alongside this epic lineup, or purchase a ticket or table and cheer on the competitors while enjoying a Chef-inspired gourmet meal, all in support of West Park! For more information, visit theculinaryshowdown.com.

Golf Classic was a sold-out success!

On Monday, August 12, 128 golfers gathered for the 2024 West Park Foundation Golf Classic at Lambton Golf & Country Club.

Players enjoyed a beautiful day on the renowned Lambton fairways and had the opportunity to interact with Golf Town professionals who were on-course for a "Beat the Pro" contest and a chance to "Buy a Drive" from a pro.

The day was capped off by a post-game cocktail reception where the winners were announced. Congratulations to the King International Advisory Group Inc. foursome who won with a score of 56!!

A huge thank you to the 45 generous sponsors who supported the event and helped us to raise \$250,000 in support of West Park Healthcare Centre.

See you next year!

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The winning foursome from King International Advisory Group Inc (L-R): David Edwards, Jeremy King, Tyler King and Matthew Wegg.



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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement: At West Park Healthcare Centre Foundation, we are committed to fostering an inclusive, diverse and accessible environment, an important part of living our brand. We are dedicated to building a staff and board that reflects the diversity of our community.