

**Craig Mearns makes major gift to *Building Care Together* campaign**

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For Immediate Release

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**Victoria** - The Victoria Hospitals Foundation today announced a major gift from local donor Mr. Craig Mearns. The announcement was made at a news conference this morning where Mearns generously contributed \$265,000, pushing the campaign to its finish line. Mr. Mearns' donation will be matched by BC business leader Jim Pattison as part of the *Community Matching Gift Challenge*.

Craig Mearns is a retired businessman who serves as a councillor in North Saanich. He has served as a member of the Eldercare board of directors and on the cabinet of the Victoria Hospital Foundation's last capital campaign. Including today's gift he has donated \$330,000 to the *Building Care Together* campaign. Active in giving back to his community for many years he focuses his donations locally to help grow community services that will benefit residents for years to come. Organizations such as the University of Victoria, Saanich Peninsula Hospital, the Victoria SPCA and local arts and cultural groups have all benefited from Mr. Mearns' generosity. Since 1989 Mr. Mearns has generously donated \$480,000 to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation in support of quality healthcare.

"The Patient Care Centre at Royal Jubilee offers diagnoses, treatment and life-saving care to the people of Vancouver Island," said Mearns. "This campaign is about making an investment in people's lives and in the strength of our community and I cannot think of anything more important to support. We are very fortunate to have this hospital on Vancouver Island and I felt it was critical to make a gift that recognizes this."

In 2012/13, 17% of Emergency Room visits to Royal Jubilee and Victoria General hospitals were from Saanich Peninsula residents with 7% alone to Royal Jubilee. In that same year, 61% of hospital admissions to Royal Jubilee and Victoria General were from Saanich Peninsula residents with 32% alone to Royal Jubilee.

Campaign chair, Ms. Leslee Farrell expressed sincere gratitude to Mearns for stepping forward to make the gift.

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“We are so very thankful for the incredible generosity of all the donors who have given to the Patient Care Centre since our campaign began in January of 2011, and we are deeply grateful to Craig Mearns for stepping forward to take us to our goal,” said Farrell. “This community has been outstanding and backed us up every step of the way. Craig’s gift today is a clear expression of that support and testament that when a community stands together amazing achievements can be realized.”

Victoria Hospitals Foundation Board Chair Alan Lowe said, “We are deeply grateful for Craig’s incredible gift, and also want to thank the 3,228 donors who saw the importance of helping fund the best tools possible for our medical teams. This community has told us through their philanthropy how deeply they value healthcare, and we are truly grateful. Today we can say we are at \$25 million and counting!”

Leslee Farrell highlighted that gifts will continue to be accepted to the campaign.

“We have been speaking to many people about the importance of this campaign and I know that several are still very interested in giving. I want to make sure they know that every gift given is still so important and helps to provide for the tools and technology that help caregivers deliver excellent health care.”

Campaign wrap up celebrations will take place at the end of March, when a final campaign total will be announced. Details regarding the event will be announced in the coming weeks.

Launched in January of 2011 the *Building Care Together* campaign has raised funds for the purchase of leading-edge equipment for the Royal Jubilee Hospital Patient Care Centre. Donors to the campaign have assisted in the purchase of a long list of equipment including Smart Beds, vital signs monitors, telemetry systems and medication safety cabinets, to name a few.

There are many ways to donate to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation including by mail, telephone or online. You can reach the Victoria Hospitals Foundation at 250-519-1750 or online at [www.victoriahf.ca](http://www.victoriahf.ca).

**About the Victoria Hospitals Foundation and the *Building Care Together* Campaign:**

Victoria Hospitals Foundation works in partnership with the Vancouver Island Health Authority to enable donations to Vancouver Island's two largest and most comprehensive hospitals: the Royal Jubilee and the Victoria General. Since 1989, the Victoria Hospitals Foundation has raised nearly \$97 million to benefit our hospitals. *Building Care Together* is the third and most ambitious campaign in the Foundation's history. The campaign has raised funds to support the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment for the new Patient Care Centre at Royal Jubilee Hospital. For more information, please call the Foundation at 250-519-1750 or visit [www.buildingcare.ca](http://www.buildingcare.ca).

**About the Community Matching Gift Challenge**

The *Community Matching Gift Challenge* launched in July when business leader Jim Pattison announced that he would match all gifts, dollar for dollar, up to \$5 million. Mr. Pattison matched \$2.5 million in gifts at the July news conference, and in December matched \$1.68 million in further donations to the campaign. Since that time a number of community donations have brought the campaign to its goal, completing the matching gift challenge.

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