



Surrey Memorial Hospital
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Surrey's best-kept secret is gentle tsunami of donor support for hospital fundraisers such as Family Birthing Unit expansion

Surrey, B.C. – An impressive flood of community support for Surrey Memorial Hospital (SMH) -- which has gone unacknowledged in the public eye for years -- is most recently dedicated to helping raise \$1 million for the expansion of the Family Birthing Unit.

“It’s Surrey’s best-kept and perhaps most inspiring secret: the waves of community members who invest in Surrey Memorial Hospital because they passionately believe in and trust the quality of service we offer to a unique and diverse demographic,” said Jane Adams, president and CEO of the Surrey Memorial Hospital Foundation (SMHF).

Expansion of the Family Birthing Unit will help provide patient comfort and privacy and increased capacity so that women in Surrey and the Fraser Valley will be able to deliver their babies close to home. The 33-room Family Birthing Unit (FBU) is the largest single-room maternity care facility in BC, and SMH is the second largest hospital in BC with the second most births of any BC hospital at 4,200 a year.

Given that South Asian newborns represent almost half or 45 per cent of those births, a significant groundswell of donor support is coming from the South Asian community. A South Asian radio station, RedFM 93.1, is pledging to raise \$800,000 through a radiothon on Nov. 28 – one of the largest one-day fundraisers in Canada.

According to Surrey resident and RCMP inspector Amrik Virk, the South Asian community’s spirit of giving for the sake of all who use the hospital has been a tradition for years. He recounts stories of new immigrants donating half of their paycheques to SMHF within a month of arriving in Canada.

“It is a story of open hearts and big hearts and old residents and new residents who help the hospital with everything they can. I recall seeing an older gentleman handing a cheque to a little girl in pigtails, asking her to donate the money to SMHF – a wonderful example of passing the torch on to the next generations,” said Virk.

Virk served on the SMH board of directors for six years and has passed that torch on to his daughter, Anisha, who is the board’s first Youth Ambassador and volunteers at fundraising activities for SMH.

However, donor support is not limited to any demographic and is buoyed by other similarly invested and generous Surrey residents. Kevin Bertoia, whose two children, Braxton and Avery, were both born in SMH's FBU, expresses his thanks for the excellent care they received by making a donation each year during his children's birthdays.

When some issues presented with each child's birth, his concerns were quickly alleviated by the excellent staff who took the time to explain what was happening every step of the way. He believes there is a definite humanity in the way they do their jobs.

"It was because of the donors who came before us that the medical team had the equipment they needed to deal with the emerging medical issues. We benefitted from someone else's generosity so the least we can do is pay it back by paying it forward," said Bertoia.

With many children born every year in Surrey, the demand for services continues to grow. Reconstruction and expansion of the FBU is underway to ensure that new mothers and their babies receive the best possible care, bringing the total number of rooms up to 39. This expansion, valued at \$4.5 million, includes the addition of four new patient rooms, an expanded triage area, and an updated lobby and waiting area.

To find out how you can make a donation toward the expansion of the FBU and other SMH projects, visit www.smhfoundation.com.

Established in 1992, Surrey Memorial Hospital Foundation has raised more than \$60 million to purchase medical equipment, fund innovative programs, and support training and research.

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