NANAIMO & DISTRICT HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

It's in our Nature to Give

Olivia and Liam
Central Island Residents



Dear donors and supporters,

Thousands of Vancouver Island residents suffer from debilitating pain and the anxiety of not knowing what's wrong with them. It's terrifying for them. And devastating to those of us who love them.

My husband Liam was one such person.

He suffered numerous ailments, and doctors weren't sure exactly why. Extreme fatigue. Kidney stones. Calcium build-up on his heart.

It was an incredibly stressful and emotional time, not knowing what was happening to the man I love.

Thankfully, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH) had a piece of equipment that was truly life-altering. It's called a SPECT/CT machine, and it led to a miraculous breakthrough.

That's why I volunteered to write this letter to you.

These SPECT/CT machines are a marvel of modern medicine – but the need for a second one at NRGH is critical. The waitlists are long, and the health of your loved ones and neighbours is at stake. And when I tell you how this machine helped transform Liam's health, I think you'll want to join in and help raise money for a second machine for our community.

You see, a second SPECT/CT machine means we can double the number of people who get this special scan to uncover the true cause behind many health issues including cancer and heart issues.

And I want this important machine to be there for you and any of your loved ones, should they ever need it.

So, I hope today you will consider renewing your support and make a gift to help buy a second SPECT/CT machine. I'll tell you about the exciting possibilities this equipment can offer. But please give me a moment to tell you my story so you'll understand how critical your past gift and future gifts are to people in our community.

IMAGING
SEEING BEYOND TO SAVE LIVES

The Nuclear Imaging Department at NRGH is one of the busiest on the Island, serving patients from Shawnigan Lake to Bowser to Tofino to Gabriola Island and all the communities in-between.

Turn over please

Why Liam needed a SPECT/CT scan

While Liam and I are from the Prairies, we decided to spend our retirement years on Canada's west coast, in Nanaimo. Why Nanaimo? For both of us, the thought of gardening year-round sounded like a dream come true.

And we were right! Nanaimo has been a dream. We moved here in 2016. And from day one, we have loved living here.

But last year, Liam was diagnosed with osteoporosis - a serious condition where your bones become "brittle." A fall that you would simply get up from before can now break a bone. A modest bump can break a bone. Even a big cough can break a bone.

That was the first sign of problems. Then, there was devastating fatigue. Kidney stones that required surgery. And high calcium levels building up on one of his heart valves! As you can imagine, it was a nightmare to see this happen to someone you love.

Last year we performed 5693 nuclear medicine scans. A second SPECT/CT machine would increase the capacity by at least 40% (up to 8000 nuclear medicine scans annually).



Then, a breakthrough happened

Liam had a great team of doctors who worked tirelessly to figure out if there was a common thread connecting his problems. They were working on a critical question: what is causing all of these various symptoms? Could it be a single cause?

One of Liam's doctors suspected a condition called Parathyroid disease.

That affects the parathyroid glands located in the lower neck. These tiny glands, the size of a rice kernel, regulate your body's calcium levels. As you might know, calcium levels are key to the proper functioning of nerves, muscles, certain organs... and bones.

If correct, this would explain everything that was happening with Liam.

And you know, it turned out that they were right! This breakthrough discovery was only uncovered thanks to the SPECT/CT machine and the diligent doctors at NRGH. They did everything they could to solve Liam's problems.



How the SPECT/CT machine will help you if you ever need one

It's actually kind of simple, a combination of two procedures. Two types of "computed tomography" (CT for short) are merged.

Most of us have heard of a CT scan. And I guarantee you know someone who has had one because the CT scan is a common procedure today. However, "single photon computed tomography" (SPECT) is a new kind of imaging—a more powerful tool for doctors. Any problem in your body is easier to find and identify.

Keep reading!

A CT scan shows doctors the structure of the inner body using X-rays in a 3D pattern. And a SPECT scan shows doctors how specific cells in the body are functioning using a radioactive tracer and 3D imaging. When you combine the two, the SPECT functional image is overlayed with the CT structure image. Doctors can then pinpoint the location of problems easier and with much more certainty and precision.

In effect, the two combined is a SPECT/CT scan.

I liked the way the SPECT/CT Scan was first explained to me...

Imagine two pictures, both different. You take one of those pictures, place it on top of the other, and now you can see both of these views as a single image, each highlighting its specialty. Two images become one. The images are merged and the information is combined.

This is an amazing advancement in healthcare technology. And why getting a second machine for our community is so important.

I probably went on too long describing the machine, but I want you to know how amazing it is. And how lucky we are to have one. Now, imagine how many people - our friends, our neighbours - could benefit if we had a second SPECT/CT machine.

Your gift today, by the way, will go towards a new SPECT/CT machine for Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, bringing up the standard of care for patients in our community. This major project will cost $2.9 million, and the benefits for Central Vancouver Island will be worth far more.

So when Liam and I were asked if we'd like to help with a fundraising appeal by sharing our story, our answer was immediate:

"Of course! We'd love to! To help this hospital in any way would be an honour!" Liam's fatigue is gone. He's back gardening and walking with me daily. It's a miracle.

This is where you come in

Will you join other generous donors who care about having one of the best hospitals in the country? Will you join your gift with others in our community to buy this special machine?

You and I both know the problem this will help solve.

Wait times.

All British Columbians (all Canadians) know that hospital wait times are an issue. From ER waiting rooms to highly sophisticated scanning procedures, there are waits. And no one likes waiting, especially patients. The wait can be as long as six months for some types of scans. But having this new machine on site will be an immense help.



This state-of-the art technology decreases uncertainty and leads to early and accurate diagnosis of life-threatening conditions.

75% of the scans done by the SPECT/CT are to identify cancer and cardiac issues.

Over, please...

My letter today is the result of the doctors, nurses, technologists, and administrators of Nanaimo Regional General Hospital all agreeing: they say that buying a second SPECT/CT machine will have a profound impact by reducing patient wait times.

As you know, reducing wait times means a quicker diagnosis and treatment, and ultimately, better patient outcomes.

Having a second SPECT/CT machine is crucial for NRGH to play the supporting role needed by the future Cancer Clinic.

Canada's healthcare system, despite what we may consider "flaws," remains a high-water mark of healthcare globally. But we can do more. That's where the passion and power of community comes in. When we join with our neighbours to buy the latest equipment, our healthcare teams can use those precious resources to help you, your friends and loved ones!



Everyone on Central Vancouver Island benefits.
Please be part of this great group effort. When you renew your support by making a gift today, our hospital can buy another state-of-the-art scanner. You'll make a great difference to healthcare by helping us to reduce wait times significantly.

Please support your hospital with your gift today

When you help us buy this new machine with your gift today, you'll reduce unnecessary suffering. You'll help decrease wait times. You'll help restore many patients back to health so they can return home to their families. Please join me and other donors today. Let's give our doctors, nurses, and technologists at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital the opportunity to help even more patients. And let me close by wishing you a peaceful and healthy holiday season. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Olivia

Olivia
A proud NRGH supporter

P.S. I hope I've succeeded in conveying to you the significance of your act of kindness today and the impact your donation will have. So many people here on Central Vancouver Island have experiences similar to those of Liam. We are eternally grateful for the help we received. And please, keep helping. We're helping alongside you.

*Please note that "Olivia" and "Liam" are their middle names, and their photos are of stand-ins from our community. This is a true story that they volunteered to share, and we are protecting their privacy as they continue on their healthcare journey. Thank you for your understanding and support.

Nanaimo & District Hospital Foundation 1200 Dufferin Crescent, Nanaimo BC V9S 2B7
Phone: 250-755-7690 Email: ndhf@islandhealth.ca
www.nanaimohospitalfoundation.com