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# Thank you

On behalf of Alberta cancer patients, thank you for making their lives easier. Your gift of \$250,000 in memory of Gary Gault continues to enhance the care provided at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre, giving patients more moments with their loved ones.

With your support, the Alberta Cancer Foundation works directly with the Tom Baker Cancer Centre to invest in enhanced care. Together we identify the greatest needs and the biggest opportunity to improve patient experience.

Your investment helps ensure that patients at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre receive access to groundbreaking research, enhanced care and improved quality of life. Thanks to you, the investment made in Gary's name supports more than 175,000 patient visits to the Tom Baker Cancer Centre each year.

As a testament to the change you're helping make possible, we've included two stories from Doug & Darlene below to demonstrate how patients' lives are changed.

## Impacting lives like Doreen's

Doreen Thompson became the first patient in Alberta to undergo the breast brachytherapy – the implantation of tiny, radioactive seeds into the tumour as an alternative to a traditional regimen of radiation.

The 58-year-old financial services manager opted for the one-day procedure, instead of enduring daily radiation treatment- something that could have impacted her daily routines. In traditional radiation therapy, Thomson would have had anywhere from 16 to 25 hospital visits over the course of up to five weeks. Instead, she was under general anesthetic for about two hours as the seeds were implanted.



"I had it done on Tuesday the 19th and I was back to work the following Monday," she says "I was a little bit sore at first, but every week it gets better and better."

This type of treatment can save most of the normal breast tissue, preserve the cosmetic appearance of the breast and avoid the physical and emotional trauma of extensive breast removal surgery.

"By not using external radiation beams, skin reaction may be reduced, as will the impact of radiation on other organs, including the lungs and the heart," says Dr. Husain.

The ability to access cutting-edge treatment right here in Calgary now means less invasive surgeries, fewer harsh side effects, improved patient care and ultimately more time with our loved ones. Breast brachytherapy is not in the roster of standard of care in Alberta and it is only through the funding made possible by donations such as yours, that Doreen and other patients could access this alternative treatment.



## Doug Hassell

While on vacation with his wife, Martha, at a remote cabin in BC, Calgaryian Doug Hassell suffered a seizure. Frightened, Martha had Doug airlifted to the Foothills hospital. After many tests and days, Doug was diagnosed with epilepsy. Under the care of his neurologist, Doug was sent home with a treatment plan to ease his new condition. But when he wasn't getting better, Doug's neurologist recommended further tests.

A scan showed a mass in his brain, which triggered an invasive biopsy to remove a sample of the mass from his brain. With his two daughters and wife by his side, Doug's surgeon gave him the news that he had an aggressive form of brain cancer called glioblastoma. "Among other questions that I had, I said 'How long will it take to get better', and he said 'well, you won't get better'." says Doug. He was told he had 14 months to live.



"Glioblastoma is arguably one of the most aggressive cancers a person can get," says Dr. Jay Easaw, clinical oncologist at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre. "The median survival with no treatment is 10 weeks. There are very few cancers that kill that quickly."

"Words can't express how grateful I am given the time that we have," – Jenny Hassell. "I would say 'thank you' but that seems not enough."

When Doug first received his diagnosis, the Hassell family did some research about where to receive the best treatment. Their search across the world indicated that the Tom Baker Cancer Centre is one of the leading centres for brain cancer. "As a result of the funding we've received from Alberta Cancer Foundation donors, the patients in Calgary live longer than the quoted average that we see in literature," says Dr. Easaw. He attributes

increased survival to the excellent team in Calgary that works really well together and because of the new research that they've been able to bring forward.

More than two-years after diagnosis, Doug is happily spending time with his family. "Words can't express how grateful I am given the time that we have," says Doug's daughter Jenny Hassell, "I would say 'thank you' but that seems not enough."

## Your return on investment

Thanks to you, we are developing innovative solutions that are vital to translating research into life-saving therapies. Together we continue to enhance patient care and improve lives. Below are just a few more examples of how you've helped elevate the care provided at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre.

- **Patient Financial Assistance** - Sometimes patients opt out of therapy if they can't afford to take time off work to attend their prescribed treatments. The Alberta Cancer Foundation's Patient Financial Assistance Program allows cancer patients to focus on healing rather than making ends meet when faced with a cancer diagnosis. Last year hundreds of patients receiving care at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre received financial support for emergency expenses like medication, food, rent, and accommodation during their cancer journey.

For patients, clinical trials offer another treatment option, when all others have run out. Simply put, it saves lives.

- **Screening for Distress** – Navigating through a cancer diagnosis can be a difficult and often stressful time for patients and their families. The Screening for Distress program assists patients as they navigate through psychosocial, practical and physical concerns faced during their cancer journey. Because of donor support, patients at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre have access to individualized resources that will help them heal and increase their quality of life.

- **Clinical Trials** – Clinical trials are the engine that drives life-saving treatment. By investing in leading-edge clinical trials research, we are improving outcomes for Tom Baker cancer patients. In fact,

Alberta leads the national average in recruiting patients to these trials, giving Albertans access to groundbreaking therapies years before they are made available to the general public.

## Thank you

Thank you for making a difference for patients and their families facing cancer at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre.

Together, we are making an impact.





## Thank you for changing Albertans' lives.

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### **Associate Cancer Centres**

Central Alberta (Red Deer), Grande Prairie,  
Jack Ady Cancer Centre (Lethbridge),  
Margery E. Yuill Cancer Centre, (Medicine  
Hat)

### **Community Cancer Centres**

Barrhead, Bonnyville, Bow Valley,  
Camrose, Drayton Valley, Drumheller,  
High River, Hinton, Lloydminster,  
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