

## **Warm Fall Greetings from the Women's Giving Circle**

### **Message from the Chair**

On October 19, I had the privilege of kicking off the program of the annual WGC Fall luncheon, featuring the recipients of this year's WGC research grant – Dr. Christopher Doiron and Dr. Amber Simpson. Because October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, and I am a member of a dragon boat team of breast cancer survivors – called “Chestmates”, sponsored by Breast Cancer Action Kingston -- I took the liberty of drawing a comparison between the teamwork that we do on the dragon boat to that performed every day by teams of researchers and their allies. It takes a team, comprised of frontline workers, health care professionals, researchers, fundraisers and a myriad of others -- all working together, paddling together, heading to the same place, to develop treatments and cures in today's complex health care world.

Since allocating our first grants in 2013, the Women's Giving Circle has raised over \$415,000 for research projects, with 100 percent of the funds staying in Kingston. To date, we have funded 25 researchers in our three hospitals in 11 different areas, such as chronic pain management, neurological diseases, palliative care, mental health, and more.

*Lucille Davies, Chair*



*Jean Wilson, member of the WGC executive committee (left), and Lucille Davies, Chair (right), present a cheque representing this year's WGC research grant to Dr. Christopher Doiron, Dr. Tiziana Cotechini, and Dr. Amber Simpson, collaborators in the study of the immunologic and inflammatory causes of interstitial cystitis/bladder pain syndrome – also known as IC/BPS.*

### **Fall Luncheon Recap**

Members and prospective members of the Women's Giving Circle enjoyed the opportunity to connect and reconnect at the group's annual Fall luncheon, hosted at the Cataraqui Golf and Country Club. Guest speakers at the event were Dr. J. Curtis Nickel, Professor Emeritus, and Dr. Christopher Doiron, both of the Department of Urology at Queen's.

Dr. Doiron's presentation, entitled: “Characterizing the B cell repertoire of Hunner lesions in Interstitial Cystitis/Bladder Pain Syndrome (IC/BPS) through B cell receptor

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*A meet-up of members of the “Chestmates” dragon boat team, with guest speaker Dr. Curtis Nickel, at the WGC Fall luncheon on Oct. 19. From left: coach Sarah Emery, Jane Kitchen, Audrey Harvey, Karen Nickel, Dr. Curtis Nickel, Lucille Davies*

sequencing”, provided an overview of his work, with collaborators Dr. Tiziana Cotechini, Dr. Amber Simpson, and Dr. Nickel, among others.

In a very succinct slide presentation, he outlined what the group has accomplished in their research so far -- the “What” of Hunner lesions. This was followed by a synopsis of what the WGC funding will help the researchers accomplish -- the “Why” of Hunner lesions.

Dr. Nickel’s introduction of Dr. Doiron provided the background to IC/BPS, a painful urinary tract infection that primarily affects women, is traditionally poorly funded, and has few treatments, and no cure.

Due to the generosity of luncheon sponsor Krina Vaghela, pharmacist and owner of several Shoppers Drug Marts in Kingston and region, the WGC is able to donate every dollar of membership dues to our annual research grants.



### **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

I am sure that each and every one reading this knows someone who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. In Canada, one in eight women will be diagnosed each year.

October has been designated Breast Cancer Awareness month. The objectives of the designation are to support patients diagnosed with breast cancer; to raise awareness to the signs and symptoms, treatment options, and educate people about breast cancer risks.

A large part of the activities of the month are fundraisers for research and support.

The theme for 2023 was “no one should face breast cancer alone”.

Living in Kingston we are fortunate to have the Breast Imaging Centre, a stand alone facility that is part of the KHSC where screening mammograms, biopsies, ultrasound and follow up care can happen in one place.

We have a cancer centre for treatment and a breast reconstruction surgeon, so patients no longer have to travel out of town for care.

BRA days give information on reconstruction. Usually there is a session in Kingston each year.

Breast Cancer Action Kingston offers support to those facing breast cancer treatment and recovery.

We also have a Dragonboat paddling group where breast cancer survivors come together to train and paddle dragon boats as a benefit to their physical health and social wellbeing.

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*Dr. Curtis Nickel (top) and Dr. Christopher Doiron, both of Queen’s Department of Urology, address the Fall luncheon gathering of the Women’s Giving Circle*

(Please see the “Message from the Chair” and “Fall Luncheon Recap” for more information.)

Remember -- if you detect something unusual, see someone about it. There are no silly questions.

*Submitted by:*

*Jean Wilson, Executive Committee*

***Update from Membership Co-Leads,  
Barbara Hammond and Jan Linscott***

The WGC’s primary mission is to raise funds to support research projects at Kingston hospitals. All of us are benefactors of this highly important work, for better health care tomorrow. As was the case throughout many organizations during the pandemic, our membership declined somewhat -- to 81. We currently have 89 members, and it is our fervent hope that membership numbers will grow to 100, thereby allowing more research projects to be brought to fruition. The WGC would like to

onboard some younger members as well. Aligning with this thought, one might consider the idea of sponsoring one’s daughter, daughter-in-law, or perhaps one’s granddaughter. The multigenerational dynamic would help us as we step, increasingly, into the future.

We are navigating other avenues of outreach as well. We are hoping to connect with a few women’s groups, to bring our message to their attention. We are proud to be able to spread the word that 100 percent of all donations, in collaboration with UHKF, goes directly to supporting medical research. If you have any suggestions/ideas/thoughts which would assist us in our attempt to grow membership of this very fine organization, we would love to hear from you.

*Submitted by:*

*Barbara Hammond, and Jan Linscott, Executive Committee*

## ***Join us at the Women's Giving Circle!***

Membership in the WGC currently stands at 89. We welcome new members to join us in our efforts to support state-of-the-art medical research taking place right here in our local hospitals. Every dollar of our membership dues goes directly to research through our annual research grants. Please check out our webpage for more information and click 'Join'!

We are also inviting current members to join our Executive Committee. We meet once a month to plan upcoming events – with tremendous support from the team from University Hospitals Kingston Foundation. We would very much appreciate input from our members. Please email us if you are interested.

Our webpage:

<https://www.uhkf.ca/Ways-To-Give/Women-s-Giving-Circle>

Annual dues: \$500 or \$250 for age 40 and under

Link to sign up or renew:

<https://uhkf.akaraisin.com/ui/womensgivingcircle/donations/start>

Our email: [events@uhkf.ca](mailto:events@uhkf.ca)

*Newsletter editor:*

*Barbara Yates, Executive Committee*

Research  
today for  
better  
health care  
tomorrow



Women's Giving Circle  
In support of research at Kingston's hospitals

