



Volunteering for the greater good

Board members are making a world of difference in patients' lives

By Shelley White

Serving on the board of the Toronto General & Western Hospital Foundation (TGWHF) is a combined effort for long-time friends Loretta Rogers and Dr. Bernard Gosevitz.

"We work as a really close team," says Dr. Gosevitz, sitting with Ms. Rogers in the sun-filled atrium of her home in Old Forest Hill, Toronto. "Loretta's been involved in philanthropy for a long time, particularly with schools, so she puts a different spin on it, and I've got the spin of a primary physician, as well. So we come up with ideas that are maybe a little to the right or to the left, but maybe that's good."

Dr. Gosevitz, Vice-President and Chief Medical Officer at Rogers Communications, recruited Ms. Rogers 10 years ago to join him on the TGWHF board, knowing she shared his interest in cardiac care and research. Dr. Gosevitz had been the Rogers family's physician since 1974 and treated Ms. Rogers's husband – the late communications magnate Ted Rogers – for an ongoing heart condition that plagued him for years.

Ms. Rogers says she felt compelled to join the board because she had always been impressed with the care her husband had received as a patient at the University Health Network (UHN).

"Ted had quite a few rounds of surgeries, so you start to get to know people and see that it's a really good place to go," says Ms. Rogers. "It's a very nice, caring atmosphere. The doctors, surgeons and nurses – you are looked after very well, with a smile."

Because of their shared interest in cardiac health, Dr. Gosevitz and Ms. Rogers have focused

much of their efforts for the TGWHF board on supporting the innovative work of the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre (PMCC) and the recently launched Ted Rogers Centre for Heart Research. This cutting-edge initiative, which will combine the forces of the UHN, the Hospital for Sick Children and the University of Toronto, was established in 2014, thanks to a landmark donation by the Rogers family of \$130-million – the largest ever single donation to a health-care institution in Canada.

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Linda Goldsack,
Chair, Peter Munk Cardiac Centre
Campaign

"The thing I really like about the PMCC and the Ted Rogers initiative is that it's patient-focused, and, to me, that's the whole reason we're here," says Dr. Gosevitz, who is the only community-based physician on the TGWHF board.

"For me, it's been very rewarding as a physician, and I've seen the benefit to my patients. It's catapulting Toronto as a world-leader in heart and vascular disease, and it's saving lives every day."

When asked what initiatives she is proud of, Ms. Rogers points to the Ted Rogers and Family Centre of Excellence in Heart Function, a program that specializes in improving clinical outcomes for patients who have experienced heart failure. "It's doing a great deal of good," she notes.

Ms. Rogers and Dr. Gosevitz are two of 36 members on the TGWHF board, which is comprised of leaders in medicine, business, media and philanthropy. Linda Goldsack, chair of the PMCC Campaign, says that volunteers are instrumental in providing guidance and direction in fundraising efforts.

"Volunteer board members serve a major role in the success of fundraising," says Ms. Goldsack. "They source potential new donors, make direct asks to potential supporters and also open doors to provide opportunities for donations."

A lot of the donations that have come through his practice are grateful patients coming to him and asking, "What can I do?," says Dr. Gosevitz.

"We've got a superb foundation – the people who work there," he says. "We can open the doors, but they know how to finish,

and, at that point, once you've done your contacts and created an ambiance that may work, it's, 'Over to you, guys.'"

Beyond their interest in health-care philanthropy, Dr. Gosevitz and Ms. Rogers also share a passion for protecting the environment. Dr. Gosevitz is the Chair of the Canadian Wildlife Foundation, and, over the years, he and Ms. Rogers have teamed up to produce a series of children's books through Ms. Rogers's organization, Children's Books for Charity.

Their latest book is called *Under Your Nose: A Book About Nature's Gifts*, featuring artists like renowned naturalist painter Robert Bateman, D.A. Dunford and Ms. Rogers herself. ("It's a story about kids who are forced to go without technology for a while," says Dr. Gosevitz.) Proceeds from the book will be split between the Bateman Foundation and the Canadian Wildlife Foundation.

But while the two friends have accomplished a great deal through their philanthropic endeavours, Ms. Rogers says that there is still much work to be done. What's ahead for the TGWHF board? "More money to do more," says Ms. Rogers.

Dr. Gosevitz concurs. "One of the ways Canada is the best in the world is health care, but you're not going to get the funding through tax dollars; it's just not going to be there," he says. "I think it's incumbent on private industry and on private donors to step up. And I think we need to get our foundation out there a little more and encourage people to donate. We have world-class things here, but, being Canadian, we don't talk about it."

"The Americans blow their horn – Canadians do not," adds Ms. Rogers.

She points out that it's also important to encourage everyone to donate, no matter who you are. "One thing [the foundation] tries to get across is, we want your small donations. If you can't do a big one, fine. Enough small ones add up to be a big one," she says.

"And, well, just think: You may need it one day." 🍁