

CREATING A WORLD FREE FROM THE FEAR OF CANCER

2026 Impact Report



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This Cricket event helps give cancer patients a better chance at life – a life in your control, a life that allows you to tell this illness that the dance of life is yours and yours alone.

- Anuj Madhok
Vocal cord cancer survivor

Anuj's connection to cancer began in India, where he stood by his mother's side through her journey with breast cancer. Years later, after moving to Canada, he faced his own diagnosis. For Anuj, The Princess Margaret represents a place that gives "people control of their lives."

He found the perfect opportunity to give back with our Cricket event. Participating allows him to combine his cultural passion with a profound sense of purpose, transforming a personal victory into a collective effort.

Anuj's story is a powerful testament to the impact of the funds we raise. It's a story of resilience, hope, and "counting every day as a blessing." By raising his bat, Anuj is not just playing a game; he's helping to ensure more patients get to celebrate their own milestones.

Thank you for carrying the fire. With your support, we will realize a bold vision: a world free from the fear of cancer.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Cancer is personal.

It has touched every one of us – whether directly or through those we love.

Scientists are calling cancer the defining health issue of our time. The World Health Organization has predicted that global cases will rise 77% by 2050. Two in five Canadians will experience cancer in their lifetime.

But cancer researchers are also calling this a golden age. Never before have we seen this depth of scientific understanding and breadth of therapeutic options. That's why it's time to double down so that we can transform cancer outcomes for patients and their loved ones – not just at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, but across Canada and beyond. They are counting on us.

Your support of The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation over the past year ignited our work in cancer care, research, and education:

- You helped drive large-scale diagnostic screening to prevent cancer before it happens.
- You supported better, more tailored therapies to improve outcomes, enhance precision and efficacy, and reduce side effects.
- You put the needs of patients and their loved ones first and ensured that they have vital emotional and mental health support as they go through their cancer journey.

You seized this pivotal opportunity to Carry The Fire and lead the world in redefining cancer care.

We have a vision to fundamentally transform the cancer experience – to turn it into a disruption instead of a devastating diagnosis – and you are lighting the path forward.

Together, we can imagine a world free from the fear of cancer. And thanks to your support, we are closer than ever before.

With great gratitude,



Dr. Miyo Yamashita

President & Chief Executive Officer,
The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation



CRICKET'S IMPACT: \$1.3 MILLION RAISED IN 2026

In 2026, we hosted Season Two of Canada's largest street cricket fundraiser: over 650 participants, 55 teams, and 100 volunteers helped us keep this new tradition going. We all raised a bat and raised hope for cancer patients here in Canada and around the world by raising \$1.3 million in The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation Cricket Event. Together, we Carry The Fire for a world free from the fear of cancer.

All funds raised were directed to the Cancer Centre's highest priority needs and by focusing on the highest priorities, we can make the largest impact exactly where it is needed most. With the generous support of our donors, we're advancing early detection methods, innovative treatments, and comprehensive support to improve outcomes for cancer patients here in Canada and around the world.

Early Detection

The Princess Margaret is at the forefront of developing new diagnostic approaches so cancer can be detected as early as possible. This results in better outcomes for cancer patients and may eliminate the need for invasive treatments altogether.

Innovative Treatments

The Princess Margaret leads the way in pioneering new cancer treatments. Our world-renowned research has translated into new, kinder and more effective treatments. With an emphasis on the unique needs of the individual cancer patient, we are developing treatments with the potential to replace traditional chemotherapy, easing the physical, as well as the mental and emotional, challenges associated with cancer care.

Comprehensive Support

The Princess Margaret is committed to improving the cancer experience for patients by developing new compassionate models of care in one of the most research-intensive ecosystems anywhere, benefiting cancer patients, survivors, their families, and caregivers everywhere.



Here are a few of our breakthroughs this past year – made possible thanks to your support – that have ignited hope.



EARLY DETECTION

Early detection changes the course of Luana's life.

Long before I knew about The Princess Margaret, there were five of us: my mom and dad, my sister Manuela, my brother David, and me. But cancer, in the form of an incurable brain tumour, took my sister's vision, her health, and eventually her life. She was only nine years old.

Just three years later, cancer returned. My mother died at age 36, leaving behind a heartbroken husband and two children who still desperately needed their mom.

Just after my 25th birthday, while pregnant with my first child, my world was again upended with a diagnosis of breast cancer. I spent the end of my pregnancy in a fog of emotions – the excitement of becoming a mother interrupted by trips to The Princess Margaret, and by moments spent grappling with the possibility that I might not live long enough to raise the child I was about to bring into the world.

And that might have been my story, had it not been for The Princess Margaret. My first doctor told me, "We're going to do everything we can to ensure your son does not become an orphan."

Years later, genetic testing uncovered the cause of my family's repeated encounters with cancer: Li-Fraumeni syndrome (LFS), a condition that carries a near 100% lifetime risk of cancer. Armed with this knowledge, we followed the Toronto Protocol, a screening program designed to catch cancers early.

Thanks to those tools, and to Dr. Raymond Kim, I have survived five additional diagnoses, from skin to lung cancer, without undergoing a single round of chemotherapy.

I've heard the words, "You have cancer," more times than anyone should, but my scars feel minor compared to those who've endured later-stage diagnoses and harsher treatments. That is the power of early detection – it has given me what cancer stole from them: time. At The Princess Margaret, they don't just treat patients; they

push science forward. They find better ways to detect cancer earlier. They design treatments that save lives. They dream of – and work for – a world free from the fear of cancer. Thank you for giving my family more days, more weeks, more years – and more trips around the sun.



Luana Locke (centre) and her children

Better health care in OurGenes.

The Princess Margaret and Helix have partnered to launch the largest comprehensive genetic screening program in Canada. The OurGenes study, led by Dr. Raymond Kim, will sample up to 100,000 participants and Helix will analyze and screen samples for genetic syndromes including BRCA1/2, Lynch syndrome, and familial hypercholesterolemia. This first-of-its-kind study will improve early detection for an unprecedented number of participants and their families and allow them to make proactive decisions that could delay or prevent cancer and heart disease.

Source: [University Health Network's Princess Margaret Cancer Centre partners with Helix to test 100,000 patients for hereditary risk of cancer and high cholesterol](#)

Slowing the spread of brain tumours.

Drs. Federico Gaiti and Gelareh Zadeh identified normal brain development processes that glioblastoma tumour cells can hijack to spread throughout the brain. One of those processes is called NOTCH signalling, a communication pathway used to regulate cell decisions such as proliferation and death. Glioblastoma cells masquerade as normal cells to take advantage of this mechanism. The findings suggest that targeting this pathway and the regulatory programs involved may limit tumour spread.

Source: [UHN study offers new insights on how to limit brain tumour spread](#)

Reducing blood cancer risks.

Dr. Steven Chan has discovered that metformin, a drug used to treat diabetes, may help treat clonal hematopoiesis (CH), a condition in which mutant blood stem cells form, increasing risk of illness, including blood cancer. CH-mutated cells have higher metabolic activity than normal cells, giving them a competitive advantage. Researchers found that metformin reduces this competitive advantage, suggesting it could be used as a preventative treatment for some CH patients at higher risk of developing blood cancer.

Source: [Reducing blood cancer risks](#)

Research to real-world impact.

In fall 2025, the inaugural Princess Margaret Cancer Prevention Symposium brought together more than 150 global and local researchers, clinicians, trainees, staff, and community partners in Toronto. The two-day symposium highlighted the latest advances in cancer prevention and explored how to translate foundational research into real-world impact. It marked an important step toward building the partnerships and frameworks needed to make prevention a reality for more people.

Source: [Inaugural Princess Margaret Cancer Prevention Symposium 2025](#)





INNOVATIVE TREATMENTS

Tracey finds hope in precision medicine.

I was a nurse for 33 years. I knew all about prevention and screening and regularly had a mammogram, pap test, and colonoscopy.

In 2020, I noticed some abdominal bloating. Concerned, I called my family doctor. He immediately sent me to the emergency department, where they found a significant amount of fluid in my abdomen, as well as two large ovarian masses. One was the size of a grapefruit, and the other the size of an orange.

I had no other symptoms. But as a nurse, I knew the significance of these findings.

I was immediately referred to a gynecologic oncologist. Four weeks later, I had a full hysterectomy, followed by four months of chemotherapy.

Thirteen months after my diagnosis, a CT scan showed a recurrence. I had to have four more months of chemotherapy. The cancer returned five months after that.

By then, the disease was making my life difficult. I had fluid retention, abdominal pressure, shortness of breath, brain fog, fatigue, nausea, weight loss, and back pain. Even getting out of bed was exhausting. I felt defeated and that time was running out.

Fortunately, I was referred to Princess Margaret Cancer Centre to explore experimental treatment options. Dr. Stéphanie Lheureux told me about a three-year clinical trial called REVOLVE and helped me get access to it. I was patient number one.

A team of experts do a genetic breakdown of your tumour to identify biomarkers that can predict treatment response. It is precision medicine – not a cookie-cutter approach, but one that recognizes each person is unique.

My tumours have shrunk and my quality of life has improved. I have been able to travel with my husband, attend both my daughters' university graduations, and celebrate my eldest daughter's wedding. In November 2025, I welcomed my first granddaughter.

Without this treatment, I would have missed these milestones and the opportunity to make memories. As a "cancer pioneer," I am grateful to be a part of changing the future of ovarian cancer treatment.



Tracey Keighley Clarke

Colour coding the tumour microenvironment.

Dr. Ralph DaCosta has discovered a dynamic tumour microenvironment surrounding pancreatic cancer cells that could help oncologists tailor treatment for patients with this cancer. The tumour microenvironment contains low oxygen levels and excessive connective tissue, which is linked to more aggressive cancer and treatment resistance. Dr. DaCosta's team has developed a new imaging method that can measure oxygen levels and changes in connective tissue, enabling them to monitor tumour growth in the lab and offering potential new treatment targets.

Source: [Colour coding what's happening in the tumor microenvironment](#)

Decoding leukemia's hidden pattern.

A team led by Dr. John Dick analyzed over 1.2 million leukemia cells from 318 acute myeloid leukemia (AML) patients to see how genetic mutations drive the disease. They identified 12 key patterns of leukemia development, offering clearer insight into AML subtypes. These findings could help tailor treatments to each developmental pathway and target the disease earlier.

Source: [Decoding leukemia's hidden pattern](#)

Rare cancer cells fuel tumours.

Dr. Long Nguyen and team used a new technique involving genetic barcodes to show how specific cells in a tumour drive their growth and spread. By tracking the descendants of individual cancer cells, the team discovered rare clones that divided rapidly to become the dominant cell type. This work could lead to therapies that target these tumour-driving clones, particularly in solid cancers such as breast and lung cancer.

Source: [Rare cancer cells fuel tumours](#)

A made-in-Canada cancer discovery.

After more than a decade of pioneering research, Dr. Gang Zheng has advanced porphyrins – nanoparticles that naturally accumulate in tumour cells – from breakthrough discovery to a new Health Canada-approved clinical trial. These light absorbing particles stand out for their ability to both illuminate and treat cancer: they enhance tumour imaging and surgical precision, enable light-based therapies that destroy malignant cells, and can be loaded with drugs or radioisotopes for targeted delivery. This made-in-Canada innovation showcases national leadership in cancer research and holds real promise for transforming care for people with cancer.

Source: [A Canadian cancer discovery](#)





Pinpointing chatty cells.

Dr. Gregory Schwartz and team have developed a new AI tool, called CellNEST, to better understand how cells communicate with each other in diseases such as cancer. CellNEST can identify complex cell-to-cell communication patterns, revealing key messages linked to disease progression and treatment response. This innovation could open new avenues for understanding how diseases spread and block harmful cellular interactions through targeted therapies.

Source: [Pinpointing chatty cells](#)

Exploiting immune-boosting microbes.

Drs. Bryan Coburn and Anna Spreafico found that a mix of gut bacteria, called MET4, can trigger a beneficial immune response in patients who are receiving immunotherapy. This finding may aid in designing optimal microbial treatments to boost cancer therapies.

Source: [Using gut microbes to treat cancer](#)

Removing a hidden roadblock.

Dr. Tracy McGaha found that after treatments such as chemotherapy or immunotherapy, immune cells clean up dead tumour cells and release a protein called IL-33, which then drives resistance to these therapies. Blocking or removing IL-33 can boost the immune system's ability to fight cancer and improve therapeutic responses. These findings open the door to new combination therapies that could enhance the effectiveness of cancer treatments by removing this hidden immune roadblock.

Source: [Improving cancer treatment](#)

Unlocking a new cancer cell weakness.

Radiation and chemotherapy can help some small cell lung cancer (SCLC) patients, and their effectiveness may improve with radiosensitizers – drugs that make cancer cells more vulnerable to radiation. Using CRISPR, Dr. Benjamin Lok identified HDAC3 as a promising target: disabling this gene made SCLC cells more sensitive to radiation.

Source: [Improving radiation sensitivity](#)



COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT

Global Cancer Program fellow champions palliative care in Rwanda.



Dr. Christian Ntirimira

When Dr. Christian Ntirimira came to The Princess Margaret from Rwanda, he focused on learning patient-centred care. During his fellowship, he deepened his knowledge of palliative care and holistic treatment by integrating global perspectives.

Through a partnership with the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), The Princess Margaret hosts experts like Dr. Ntirimira for short-term exchanges. Called the Global Cancer Program, these exchanges foster global collaboration and train future cancer leaders around the world.

One major insight for Dr. Ntirimira was a difference in family dynamics. He noticed that many Western patients had photos of loved ones rather than family by their bedside.

"In Rwanda, we don't have pictures, we have people," he says. "They are there 24/7."

He believes African palliative care must reflect this communal support. "When vulnerability appears, the community helps. We need our own model of palliative care in Africa – one that restores humanity to those who are suffering."

Although palliative care is advanced in the West, he says it remains stigmatized in Africa. At The Princess Margaret, he was introduced to psycho-oncology by Dr. Gary Rodin, who pioneered the field in Canada. His work with Dr. Rodin and the Palliative Care and Psychosocial Oncology teams strengthened his resolve to address inequities back home.

Dr. Ntirimira is now helping develop a psycho-oncology program in Rwanda's first radiotherapy centre. He hopes to shift perceptions of palliative care from an end-of-life service to a way to revive Ubuntu – the African philosophy of shared humanity. But to do so, he says palliative care must be decolonized.

"We've never had the chance to develop our own model. Most concepts came from the colonial period, when palliative care was seen as hopeless."

"Once we recognize the power of treating the whole human being, I believe it will become one of the most beautiful medical practices," he says.

Caregiver program offers Darci therapy and skills.

Darci's life changed overnight when her husband, Mike, was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. She immediately became his caregiver – managing medications, tracking symptoms, attending every appointment – while also raising their seven-year-old daughter.

"It was all-consuming," Darci says. "All you think about is keeping your loved one comfortable and living as long as possible."

At The Princess Margaret's Psychosocial Oncology Clinic, Darci found support to guide her family through the experience. The clinic helped her cope with fear, manage stress, and make the most of the time they had left together.

"With any advanced disease, the family is the main unit of care," says Dr. Sarah Hales, psychiatrist and researcher at the clinic. Yet she notes that health systems often overlook caregivers, even as people with advanced disease live longer and rely on them more.

Darci felt that burden deeply. Mike struggled to accept his illness, and she worried about how their daughter would cope. Supporting both of them while navigating her own grief left her overwhelmed.

"I was terrified," she says. "Terrified my husband would suffer, and terrified about what my daughter would witness."

Dr. Hales helped Mike shift from "dying with cancer" to "living with cancer," leaving each appointment feeling stronger. She also guided the couple through telling their daughter about his diagnosis, helping them create a script a child could understand.

"As a teacher, I thought it would be easier," Darci says. "But it wasn't. Without Dr. Hales, I would have been lost."

When Mike transitioned to hospice, Darci again relied on Dr. Hales' advice to support her daughter through the pain of that moment.

"What Dr. Hales did for me was unbelievable," Darci says. "I will never forget the impact she had on our family."



Darci Palter (centre), with her husband, Mike, and their daughter

A Message from our 2026 Honorary Chairs

Dear PMCF Cricket Community,

What an incredible season.

It was our privilege to serve as your Season Two Honorary Chairs and witness the passion, generosity, and spirit that make PMCF Cricket so special.

Together, 60 teams, along with thousands of donors, volunteers, sponsors, and supporters, came together to raise an incredible \$1.3 million for life-saving cancer research at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre.

While this fundraising milestone is remarkable, the true impact lies in what those dollars will make possible. Every contribution helps advance groundbreaking discoveries in cancer research, bringing hope to patients and families today and for generations to come.

Throughout the season, we saw teammates rally around one another, communities unite, and powerful stories of hope, resilience, and remembrance shared both on and off the pitch. It was a reminder that PMCF Cricket is about much more than the game—it's about making a meaningful difference together.

To the participants, captains, donors, volunteers, sponsors, ambassadors, and supporters: thank you. Your dedication, generosity, and belief in this mission continue to grow this incredible community and bring us closer to a world free from the fear of cancer.

As we look ahead to Season Three, we are excited to build on this momentum and invite you to join us once again. Together, we can make an even greater impact.

With sincere gratitude,



CREATING A WORLD FREE FROM THE FEAR OF CANCER

Carry The Fire is about bringing light to something that can often feel dark and difficult to face. Our goal is to unite Canadians in a collective effort to push the boundaries of cancer research, treatment, and care. It reflects the relentless resolve and optimism that drive our team every day to realize a bold vision: **a world free from the fear of cancer.**

WHO YOU SUPPORT

#1

specialized oncology hospital in Canada

TOP 10

in the world (Newsweek)



Collaborations with **500** institutions across **107** countries



Only cancer centre in Canada to treat all **200+** cancers



The Princess Margaret is home to 2,194 researchers (Principal Investigators, staff, postdoctoral fellows) and 1,586 health professionals (oncologists, nurses, staff)

Caring for

91,550

patients annually

21,050

new patients

780,000

patient visits

18,388

overnight stays at Princess Margaret Lodge

Delivering

87,249

radiation visits

5,384

surgeries

497

stem cell transplants, including **220** allogeneic bone marrow transplants

59,430

systemic therapy and malignant hematology day unit visits

Sharing knowledge with

446

students, residents and fellows

21,000

Patient & Family Library visitors

2.5 MILLION

virtual learners in **160** countries

And conducting

941

clinical trials with **16%** of patients enrolled

HOW YOU CARRIED THE FIRE

\$190 MILLION

granted by the Foundation to The Princess Margaret in 2026

\$32.164 MILLION

raised by 13,141 event participants in Road Hockey, Cricket, Journey, Walk, Ride, and Ride North



The Princess Margaret
Cancer Foundation  UHN

CRICKET

The Princess Margaret
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CARRY THE FIRE 

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