

World-leading surgery program gets \$1 million boost

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London, Ont. - London's Crich family, owners of the Auburn Group of Companies, is backing a world-leading surgical program at London Health Sciences Centre with a \$1 million gift announced April 12.

The funds, donated through London Health Sciences Foundation, will help finance the latest da Vinci Si Surgical Systems currently in use at the hospital's CSTAR program (Canadian Surgical Technologies & Advanced Robotics).

"Because our family has been touched by the wonderful caregivers LHSC, most particularly Dr. Kiaii and Dr. McKenzie," explains family spokesperson Jamie Crich, "we are making a commitment to ensure that patients will continue to experience the exemplary care made possible when skilled and caring surgeons have access to the latest and most innovative technology."

While the gift is the result of the family's experience with care received at LHSC, Crich said the donation also follows his father's philosophy and example. This donation continues a long philanthropic tradition in the family that includes supporting health care in London. The late Don Crich believed in building and investing in communities and his family is noted for their charitable contributions.

The idea of donors supporting changes in the way treatment is delivered has a long history in London - even when it comes to surgical equipment, starting in 1901, when Sir Adam Beck made an in-kind donation by purchasing a surgical table and surgical instruments for the hospital. Before then, each surgeon was required to supply their own instruments.

Similarly, donors have funded every previous robotic surgical platform at LHSC. The availability of this advanced technology helped attract skilled surgeons to the city and surgical teams using this technology were able to pioneer 24 national and international medical firsts.

"I can't express my thanks enough," says LHSC Chair/Chief Cardiac Surgery Dr. Bob Kiaii. "Without donor support like this, we would have been unable to provide care to patients with heart disease in the same way we have over the past several years. I believe that as robotic-assisted surgery continues to rapidly evolve, we will have the ability to provide even better patient care in the future."

While this particular donation by the Crich family was made in the context of cardiac care, the availability of the da Vinci Surgical System also benefits patients with a variety of other conditions including certain types of cancers and gastrointestinal disorders.



Photo: LHSC Chair/Chief of Cardiac Surgery Dr. Bob Kiaii (right) explains to donor Jamie Crich how a two-camera setup in one of the da Vinci's four robotic arms produces high-resolution 3D images to help guide surgeons.