

## News from the Women's Giving Circle



Happy summer everyone! My name is Rachel Koven and I am delighted to be the incoming chair of the Women's Giving Circle.

As an epidemiologist, I am very passionate about research. I believe in the collective power of our group to help facilitate exciting developments in medicine. The seed capital that we provide to a researcher can really help them grow their ideas into bigger projects. These projects contribute to a better quality of life for patients.

On behalf of the group, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the outgoing chair, Lucille Davies, for all of her hard work, passion, and dedication to the Women's Giving Circle. I know that I have big shoes to fill and hope to continue her great work.

Please feel free to reach out to me at anytime if you have any questions. My email is [rlkoven1khsc@gmail.com](mailto:rlkoven1khsc@gmail.com). I look forward to seeing all of you at our Fall luncheon (date TBC).



*Rachel Koven, Chair*

## WGC Spring Research Tour

On April 2, members of the Women's Giving Circle had the opportunity to tour the Interventional Radiology Suites at KHSC. Dr. Omar Islam, Department Head, Diagnostic Radiology, and Dr. Ben Mussari, Associate Department Head, jointly presented a tour of the suites, where we observed images of actual procedures on the same screen used by members of the IVR team. Members of their staff were on hand to answer questions from participants.

Interventional radiology (IVR) uses minimally invasive, image-guided procedures to diagnose and treat diseases in nearly every organ system, in order to minimize risk to the patient and improve health outcomes. To do this, the staff use various imaging techniques (x-ray, CT, ultrasound, MRI) to allow them to direct small catheters to the body and, where possible, treat presenting conditions.



*Dr. Ben Mussari, Associate Department Head, Diagnostic Radiology, explained some of the procedures conducted in the Interventional Radiology Suites at KHSC.*

WGC member Jane LaPointe joined the tour and shared the following story with us.

Life is busy. It can be difficult to take time for "extra" invitations. I did take time on April 2<sup>nd</sup> to join the tour, drawn back by the purpose of the WGC and the shared values of the women that gather.

*(continued on page 2)*

The tour was exceptional; the medical team, professional and generous with their time. My final words to them as I left that day were: *"I hope to never see you again. But if I do, I will have complete confidence in the work you do"*.

Little did I know...

Twenty-three hours later, I would be with my mother running an errand. She tripped and due to underlying health conditions, required transport by ambulance to the hospital. I waved to her as she smiled and joked with the paramedics and said, *"I will meet you at emergency"*.

When I arrived at emergency, my mother was in critical condition. She had ruptured her spleen (already compromised due to her leukemia). In some strange "the universe has a way of taking care of us" moment, I found myself talking with a doctor from Interventional Radiology. He started to explain the procedure they hoped to do. Here I stopped him, paused, and said *"I was on the WGC tour yesterday. I understand what you hope to do"*.

My mother died 30 minutes later – never stabilizing enough for the procedure.

The power of this story is in the comfort and confidence I felt at a time of crisis. I had no idea just 24 hours after our tour how much my life would change. I am grateful to the medical team at the Interventional Radiology Suites for the work they do each day – and for taking the time to educate us.



*Jane Lapointe and her mother  
Ruth Lafarga*

## **June 20 Luncheon Recap**



*Highlights of the June luncheon included presentations by Dr. Steven Smith, Deputy Vice-Principal, Research, Queen's University, Lucille Davis, outgoing Chair, WGC, and Dr. Ana Johnson, Professor, Department of Public Health Sciences, Queen's University, and 2013 WGC grant recipient.*



*Also during the program of the June luncheon, incoming Chair Rachel Koven presented a cheque in the amount of \$36,000 to Dr. Susan Boehnke, this year's recipient of the WGC annual grant for research. Dr. Boehnke and her colleague, Dr. Fernanda De Felice, will address the Fall luncheon meeting of the WGC (date TBC), to explain their work in "Exploring the impact of social environment on neuroinflammation and brain architecture".*

### **Dr. Steven Smith summarized the process of awarding WGC monies raised**

The WGC executive committee works closely with Dr. Smith who is the President of the Kingston General Health Research Institute (KGHRI). We invited Dr. Smith to present the process involved in awarding grant money to deserving recipients. Each September, Dr. Smith meets with members of the executive committee

of the WGC and provides insight into current research. He then narrows the field by suggesting, in alignment with the wishes of the WGC, three areas of interest which will become the template for our ballot. Each member of the WGC has the opportunity to vote for one of these three fields of research. The field with the largest number of votes becomes the focus of the granting process. Each January, the KGHRI conducts a call-out to all researchers who fall under the umbrella of the designated field. Once the application process closes, the research projects are reviewed by a panel of experts from the Institute, who ultimately make a decision on which project will be awarded the grant.

Recipients have been most appreciative of our efforts, stressing that without funding from the WGC, they would have been unable to embark on their chosen field of research. We cannot thank Dr. Smith enough for his enthusiasm, positivity and tireless resolve to be one of our finest ambassadors. His medical acumen, warmth and stalwart decision to align with our cause are deeply felt by all.

*By Barbara Hammond, Executive Committee*

*Steven Smith, M.D., PhD  
Deputy Vice-Principal Research, Queen's University  
President and CEO, Kingston General Health Research Institute (KGHRI)*

**Watch for your invitation!**

Fall luncheon – date TBC  
Presentation by  
*Dr. Fernanda De Felice and  
Dr. Susan Boenhke*  
recipients of 2024 WGC grant

***Dr. Ana Johnson captivated the audience with ...***

Updates on her work in the medical sphere, for which she and her team were awarded a WGC grant in 2013. Their research, summarized as: “Health care utilization and outcomes of new oral anticoagulants in the elderly with atrial fibrillation”, went on to receive a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) grant. She believes that the seed money provided by the WGC paved the way for this grant and others, which in turn, led to collaborations with researchers from Ottawa and Toronto, linking with provincial data. Dr. Johnson highlighted the importance of the role of an early collaborator, a medical student at the time, Yan Xu, who has gone on to become a respected and accomplished research scientist and haematologist at the Ottawa Hospital.

Dr. Johnson framed her work and accomplishments in a context of poetry, literature and the practice of mindfulness. She shared one of many poems she has written: “We are all Unique” ([www.anajohnsonauthor.com](http://www.anajohnsonauthor.com)), and led us through sessions of mindfulness. Speaking for myself, and others at my table, we felt that Dr. Johnson’s presentation enabled us to better appreciate and understand the importance and relevance of the entire luncheon agenda.

*By Barbara Yates, Executive Committee*

*Ana P. Johnson, PhD  
Professor  
Department of Public Health Sciences  
Health Services and Policy Research Institute  
Senior Adjunct ICES Scientist  
Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES)*





*(Most of) the attendees of the June 20 Spring luncheon, held at the Cataraqui Golf and Country Club.  
A few members had slipped away before this photo was taken!*

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

Membership in the WGC currently stands at 98. 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>

Link to sign up or renew:

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

Membership is \$42 a month for women 40 and over. The monthly membership of \$21 is for women under the age of 40. If you would prefer to pay once a year, please contact our office by email [foundation@uhkf.ca](mailto:foundation@uhkf.ca) or by phone 613-549-5452.

*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

