



Fall 2025
Foundation Focus



A Season of Gratitude and Growth

Dear Friend,

With autumn in full swing, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude on all that we've accomplished together this year. This season reminds me that progress in health care comes through change and renewal—made possible by supporters like you!

In this issue, we're excited to introduce a fresh new look for our quarterly Foundation Focus Newsletter, designed to bring you closer to the stories that keep our mission thriving. You'll read highlights from the **39th Annual Top Hat Gala**, see how donor generosity helped us complete a **\$12 million campaign** to expand the UCSF-Washington Cancer Center, and be inspired by spotlights on special members of our shared community.

As health care continues to evolve in the face of uncertainty, support from our local community is more important than ever. **Every story is proof that your partnership allows Washington Health to deliver exceptional care for everyone who comes through our doors.**

Thank you for standing with us as we continue to advance health care, together.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Sarah G. Gemski



Executive Director
Washington Health Foundation



A Magical Night in the Emerald City

The 39th Annual Top Hat Gala, held on Saturday, October 11, transported guests to the Emerald City for an evening of celebration and generosity.

Beneath the twinkling lights of the Grand Tent and Outdoor Garden at Washington West, more than 600 attendees gathered to support the Surgical Robotics Program at Washington Health.

Together, donors, physicians, and community partners helped raise an incredible \$1,470,000 in gross revenue to advance the future of surgical care close to home. Guests enjoyed a Wicked-themed evening complete with emerald décor, gourmet dining, live bidding, and dancing. Attendees even experienced a live demonstration of the da Vinci Xi Surgical Robot and Ion Lung Biopsy Robot—seeing firsthand how this technology is transforming minimally invasive procedures.

Our event co-chairs, Sharon Gallacher and Dr. Kranthi Achanta, each shared personal stories that captured the heart of this innovation. Dr. Achanta explained that this technology isn't just about shorter Hospital stays, but restored dignity and time:

“One of our first robotic patients—a young mother from Fremont—feared spending weeks away from her children. Instead, she was walking the next morning, home the next day, and back to school pick-ups in less than a week. She told us, ‘The robot didn’t just heal me. It gave me my life back.’”

Our heartfelt thanks go to every sponsor, donor, and volunteer who made this event such a success.

[View Gala Photos](#)

The Foundation would like to recognize
the following sponsors:

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...and all our amazing sponsors and supporters!



A Milestone for Cancer Care Close to Home

We are proud to announce the successful completion of the \$12 million campaign to expand the UCSF–Washington Cancer Center—a defining moment in Washington Health’s mission to bring world-class cancer care to our community.

Construction is nearly complete on the expanded 15,000-square-foot facility , which will feature state-of-the-art technology, additional space for collaboration among specialists, and new resources to support patients and their families. The result—compassionate, advanced care that remains close to home.

“The campaign’s success reflects the generosity and unwavering commitment of our community members, physicians, staff, and leaders,” said Kimberly Hartz, Chief Executive Officer. “We are grateful for the continued support of donors who recognize the value of exceptional care offered locally.”

The completion of this campaign marks a new beginning. As the new Cancer Center prepares to open its doors in early 2026, we are building on this momentum to strengthen cancer services for generations to come.

Give with Purpose: Maximize Your Year-End Contribution

Did you know? Starting January 1, 2026, new tax provisions on charitable giving may change your opportunities and modes of giving. That means a gift to Washington Health Foundation before December 31, 2025, may be an important way to maximize your deduction under current rules—while providing lifesaving and life-enhancing care for our Tri-City area.

Three Ways to Make a Meaningful Impact in 2025

Many Washington Health Foundation supporters find that these popular gift types help them meet their charitable goals and long-term financial planning needs.



#1 Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs):

Make a gift, receive an immediate tax deduction. You can also recommend grants to your favorite non-profits.



#2 Stock and Securities:

Transfer appreciated stocks or securities to avoid capital gains tax and receive an income tax deduction for their fair market value.



#3 Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs):

If you're 70½ or older, donate up to \$108,000 per year from your IRA tax-free.

Ready to make your 2025 gift? Our team can help you choose the option that works best for your situation. Contact Sarah Gemski at foundation@washingtonhealth.com or [510.818.7350](tel:510.818.7350) today to get started.

Explore Your Options



Honoring the Next Generation of Leaders in Medicine

Each year, the Washington Health Foundation proudly awards the Dr. Albert V. Assali Scholarship to aspiring medical professionals who embody excellence and a commitment to serving others. We're grateful to Cora Assali and her family for continuing to support this scholarship and carry forward Dr. Assali's legacy as a respected physician and patient advocate.

This year's recipients, **Anika Rao** and **Azhahini Krishnamoorthy**, exemplify these values through their academic achievements, leadership, and volunteerism. Their passion for making a difference reflects the spirit of Dr. Assali's work and the mission of Washington Health.

"It was after volunteering at Washington Health that I decided to become a doctor, hoping that I could someday save lives by contributing research to the field of regenerative medicine."

- Anika Rao, 2025 scholarship awardee

Congratulations to Anika and Azhahini! Their accomplishments remind us that every act of generosity helps nurture the caregivers and innovators of tomorrow.

[Learn More](#)



Foundation Spotlight: Trudy's Story

When retired Washington Health employee, Trudy Tsai, needed care earlier this year, she was deeply moved by the compassion and skill of everyone she encountered as a patient. "Every person in the Hospital gave me extremely nice service," she shared. **"My heart was really touched, and I wanted to give something back in appreciation."**

To express her gratitude, Trudy made a generous donation to the **Washington Health Foundation's Indigent Care Fund**, which helps ensure patients facing financial hardship have access to the same compassionate care and essential medical support.

Trudy also wanted to recognize several staff members who made a lasting impression during her recovery, including Dr. Eldan Eichbaum from Neurosurgery, NaNa from Physical Therapy, Jermaine from Occupational Therapy, and her former coworkers in the lab—Eulina, Maribeth, and Neeloo. "They are all wonderful people who helped me get well so soon," she said.

[Join Trudy with Your Gift](#)



Welcome, Katie Reitter!

We are thrilled to welcome **Katie Reitter** to the Washington Health Foundation team as **our new Major Gifts Officer**.

A seasoned philanthropic leader with more than 18 years supporting mission-driven organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area, Katie specializes in building donor relationships and inspiring community giving. Originally from Castro Valley, **Katie cares deeply about the well-being of Bay Area residents and was drawn to the Foundation's mission to improve community health.** Outside work, she spends time with her husband and children, baking, singing karaoke, and hosting family dance parties.

Please join us in welcoming Katie to the Washington Health Foundation family!

[Connect with Katie](#)

Events and Updates



A New Way to Drive Change for Washington Health

We're excited to partner with CARS (Charitable Adult Rides & Services) to make supporting Washington Health Foundation easier than ever! Donate your car, truck, or RV—running or not—and CARS handles pickup and paperwork. Visit our CARS page or call 855-500-RIDE to donate today!

[Donate Your Vehicle Today](#)

Holiday Open House—Monday, Dec. 1

Join us for a festive celebration at Washington West (2500 Mowry Avenue, Fremont), starting at 5:00pm! Enjoy holiday activities with family and friends, and bring the kids for photos with Santa.



[Add to My Calendar](#)



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 **Washington
Health**
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The Washington Health Foundation inspires investments in health by engaging the community to provide critical support for our strategic partner, Washington Health.

[Make a Gift](#)

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