They wheeled Anna Seely into surgery at Randall Children's Hospital on Christmas Eve, 2014. She was 11 years old and she had leukemia.

Anna was a whip-smart sixth-grader, curious, mature and active. But she'd come to Randall a few days before, unable to shake a cold, a fever and various infections. She bruised easily.

The numbers tell an excruciating story: Anna underwent three surgeries. She endured four rounds of chemotherapy. She spent 133 nights at the hospital.

Today, the numbers tell a different story: Anna is 16 years old. She's a junior in high school with a 4.1 GPA. She's a dancer, a dance instructor, and the class treasurer. She's a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society. During the summer, she went to Peru with her Spanish class.

Now Anna is starting to look at colleges. She's interested in pediatric oncology.

Anna Seely is a cancer survivor.

“We are forever indebted to your kindness and commitment to caring.”

– Kim Seely, Anna’s mom, to the staff at Randall Children’s Hospital
patient profile: building hope

Verdella Whareham was on a cruise in Asia a few years ago when she stumbled on the stairs, leaving a bump beneath her right breast. It didn’t seem like a big deal. But, just to be certain, she visited her primary care physician.

The bump, it turns out, wasn’t a big deal. But a mammogram the doctor ordered that day found something else: breast cancer. Soon Verdella had surgery at Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center, followed by radiation at Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center, close to her Vancouver home.

Verdella says providers at the two medical centers who guided her through treatment and recovery eased the challenges that a cancer diagnosis brings.

“They listened,” she says, “they cared about me.”

Verdella is a generous donor and a trustee on the Salmon Creek Hospital Foundation Board, helping to raise money for the hospital’s new comprehensive cancer center and other crucial services.

The foundation supports bricks-and-mortar projects. But it also gives patients something that can’t be measured by architects or construction crews.

“Every one of those dollars,” Verdella says, “builds hope.”

good advice from a good doctor

Joe Frankhouse, M.D., wants you to know something vitally important, advice that could literally save your life:

Colonoscopies aren’t so bad.

And they are critical procedures to prevent or diagnose cancer. There are other options for screening, says Frankhouse, medical director of colorectal surgery at Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center. But colonoscopy remains the gold standard.

Finding and removing pre-cancerous polyps during a colonoscopy reduces the risk of colon cancer. Almost all polyps can be removed without surgery. About 20 percent of the population older than 50 has polyps. Putting off screening or skipping it altogether raises your risk for cancer.

Surgical advances have made colorectal cancer treatment and recovery easier on the patient.

Most operations are now minimally invasive and done with a laparoscope or a surgical robot, which makes the procedure more efficient and speeds recovery.

Frankhouse says rates for length-of-stay after surgery at Legacy Good Samaritan “are better than or rival any major cancer center in the United States.”

He credits donors with improving outreach efforts to encourage good health, in general, and cancer screening, in particular. Their generosity is a crucial tool in the ongoing fight against cancer.

healing the scars of breast cancer

Breast cancer patients come to Dr. Emily Hu at Legacy Meridian Park Medical Center after their initial diagnosis. They turn to her for options, answers and understanding.

Then it’s up to her to minimize their scars, physically and emotionally.

Dr. Hu is a reconstructive surgeon who works with women who’ve had mastectomies or lumpectomies, restoring their breasts to near-normal shape and size. Her work also restores their self-esteem and confidence.

“It’s really not cosmetic,” she says, “as much as emotional.”

Dr. Hu performs multiple surgeries on a single patient to hide scars and restore the nipple and areola. Her goal is a seamless reproduction of the real thing.


Jenn Leddin was diagnosed with cancer two years ago and underwent a double mastectomy. She came to Dr. Hu with specific ideas about the reconstruction of her breasts.

Dr. Hu understood that Jenn, who is now cancer-free, didn’t want her surgical scars to serve as a daily reminder of her mastectomy.

“She wanted to honor my wishes,” Jenn says. “I trusted her and felt really good about it.”

advancing cancer care

Early this year, for the first time, two breast cancer patients at Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center were treated with a transformative radiation device that may limit, or even eliminate the need for follow-up radiation and improve their odds for disease-free survival.

From February 1 to September 19, 23 patients have benefitted from the Zeiss Intrabeam 600.

Nathalie Johnson, M.D., medical director of the Legacy Cancer Institute and the Legacy Breast Health Centers, believes the new therapy may reduce the potential for recurrence for women with especially aggressive cancer.

The hospital purchased the device late last year with a philanthropic gift from the Swigert Foundation and additional support from Good Samaritan Foundation.

“We are incredibly grateful to the donors,” Dr. Johnson said. “My entire team feels such gratitude for this gift. It will help us expand the care we offer our patients and bring exciting new research to Legacy.”

During surgery, the Zeiss Intrabeam 600 provides a precisely targeted dose of radiation directly to the tumor bed where the cancer had been removed, targeting micro tumors invisible to the eye. This is known as intraoperative radiation therapy.

Research has shown this therapy may boost the immune response for patients with breast cancer and lessen the chances of recurrence. It may be especially helpful for those with aggressive cancers. For patients with less aggressive forms of cancer, the therapy could mean shorter follow-up radiation or none at all.

“It’s really a privilege to help Dr. Johnson and her team to ease the pain of treatment and recovery for breast cancer patients,” said Liz Warren, a trustee for the Swigert Foundation.

Dr. Emily Hu and Jenn Leddin

Cory Donovan, M.D. and Nathalie Johnson, M.D., with the new Zeiss Intrabeam 600 radiation device.