



## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION'S FESTIVAL OF TREES LAUNCHING VIRTUAL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES**

*Don't let COVID steal Christmas! Enjoy the magic of the Festival from the comfort of your own home.*

**Edmonton, AB – September 30, 2020** – The University Hospital Foundation's Festival of Trees is going virtual this year. After making the difficult decision to cancel the 36<sup>th</sup> annual Festival of Trees in-person events, the University Hospital Foundation and Festival of Trees volunteers are offering a new way to experience the magic of the Festival.

"We know everyone's holidays will look different this year, but that does not mean that we cannot get in the festive spirit, and support a great cause," said Dr. Jodi L. Abbott, President and CEO of the University Hospital Foundation. "We need to continue to support advancements in healthcare, as the community and healthcare system continue to face a challenge unlike anything any of us has experienced. While we may not be able to physically come together and celebrate, we can all still pull together and support each other."

This year the Festival of Trees will be transformed into personal, virtual experiences right in the comfort and safety of your own home. There are wonderful activities for Festival lovers of all ages, including one-on-one or group video visits with Santa, story time with Mrs. Claus, an online auction featuring more than 150 items, including the Festival's magical Christmas trees, and Festival in a Box for children or adults – where the spirit of Festival is delivered right to your home.

Enjoy your annual traditions and create special memories for your family, in an innovative, exciting way. Activities run from November 20 until December 20. Learn more about all the Festival of Trees fundraising activities at [FestivalofTrees.ca](https://www.festivaloftrees.ca).

Proceeds from purchases of the items and experiences will go to the University Hospital Foundation in support of [Alzheimer's research](#) at the University of Alberta.

"Funds from the 2020 Virtual Festival of Trees could help make Alzheimer's disease a mere memory," said Dr. Abbott. "Researchers at the University of Alberta have found a way to restore memory in mice that develop Alzheimer's disease, and they are excited about this possible breakthrough for people with this devastating condition. Support from the Festival of Trees will help them begin human clinical trials sooner, and move much closer to neutralizing the devastating impact of Alzheimer's disease."

This research could impact millions of people all over the world. In Alberta alone, it is estimated that 50,000 people have Alzheimer's. Based on recent population trends, that number is only going to increase.

Since 1985, the University Hospital Foundation's Festival of Trees has served as one of the Edmonton area's largest and most cherished holiday celebrations and has raised over \$22 million for the University of Alberta Hospital, Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute and Kaye Edmonton Clinic. This kick-off to the holidays brings together the community to enjoy the spirit of Christmas – all to raise money to support healthcare for Albertans.

Past donor support has had a major impact on every area of healthcare provided at the University of Alberta Hospital site, from heart care, including providing advanced life support equipment and the cardiovascular intensive care unit (CVICU) at the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute, to brain care, and trauma and emergency care.

The University Hospital Foundation truly appreciates the incredible support for Festival of Trees from our volunteers and the community. We are excited about this year's virtual activities, and look forward to seeing you in-person again in 2021.

### **University Hospital Foundation**

The University Hospital Foundation raises and manages funds to advance patient care, research and healthcare innovation at the University of Alberta Hospital, the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute and the Kaye Edmonton Clinic. For more information visit [GivetoUHF.ca](http://GivetoUHF.ca).

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