

West Vancouver philanthropist donates \$15M to UBC brain centre

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Djavad Mowafaghian heads a North Vancouver foundation that has helped build 26 schools in Iran.

Photograph by: submitted, for North Shore News

Djavad Mowafaghian was already discussing a major donation to the UBC School of Medicine's Brain Centre when he suffered a stroke last April.

Suddenly, the donation had a personal element, as the West Vancouver philanthropist was rushed to Lions Gate Hospital for brain treatment himself.

"My story is a successful one, as I was very fortunate to have been taken to the hospital immediately and to have received such wonderful care from the staff and physicians at Lions Gate Hospital," he said in an email, as he still has some difficulty speaking one year after the stroke.

"I was in Lions Gate Hospital for two full months and experienced firsthand the impact a brain illness

has on one's life."

While still recovering, Mowafaghian quickly finished the negotiations and earlier this month announced a \$15-million donation to the centre.

The new 12,500-square-metre facility is a partnership between UBC and Vancouver Coastal Health and is scheduled to open in 2013, bringing together researchers and clinicians from a range of disciplines.

"Dr. Mowafaghian's generous gift will unite research in neuroscience, mental health and addiction medicine, while bringing research and patient care under one roof," said UBC president Stephen Toope, who joined Mowafaghian at the announcement at the UBC Vancouver campus.

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, 14,000 Canadians die from strokes every year, making it the leading cause of long-term disability in adults worldwide.

Mowafaghian moved to Vancouver from his native Tehran, Iran, in 1987, establishing a commercial real estate firm and, in 2003, the Djavad Mowafaghian Foundation, which aims to help children through health and education.

The foundation has offices on Lonsdale Avenue and has helped build 26 schools in Iran, as well as donating to local organizations.

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