

## Every day is a gift

**O**ften the most intuitive and simplest revelations are overlooked. They hide in plain sight waiting to be discovered like shells washed up on the shore. Live life to the fullest. *Carpe diem* (seize the day). I imagine we all know these to be true.

It can be a challenge to seize the day or even the moment as we pack our lives full with work and a multitude of other activities. But sometimes we encounter someone who makes us think a bit harder about the quality of our own lives, and then we come face to face with an extraordinary event that drives that message home.

Last fall I had the opportunity to present the BCMA Terry Fox Award to Dr Victor Lam, an outstanding cancer researcher. At the awards gala, I met Terry's younger brother, Darrell. We spoke for a few minutes about the wonderful work of the Terry Fox Foundation and the amazing legacy that Terry left behind. I asked Darrell if it was sometimes hard being Terry's brother—wondering if the worldwide attention to their loss for more than 20 years had

been difficult. Darrell said that, in fact, it was a privilege to be Terry's brother, then shared Terry's philosophy that every day is a gift.

Every day is a gift. I found those words moving and thought about them quite often after that night. I wanted to pass on that simple and inspirational message from Darrell, and indirectly from Terry.

Then in February, my husband had an unexpected, life-threatening illness. We suddenly found ourselves on the receiving end of health care in a major way. Many of the 16 days my husband spent in hospital were inexpressibly difficult, but he is now safely home and doing well. We experienced professionalism and exceptional medical care from a very large number of competent, caring individuals to whom we will always be very grateful. Doctors, nurses, and other caregivers make a profound difference every day in a multitude of ways.

As physicians, we know that life is fragile and that we are all mortal. My understanding of this is not just intellectual now. Stopping to smell

the roses is much more than an old adage; it is a prescription for understanding how to live. It is about feeling, comprehending, and acknowledging that which you do every day, and not to simply go through the motions.

Every day is a gift. I now have a much deeper comprehension of Terry's philosophy, passed on by his brother. I will have no trouble remembering the life lesson that I have been taught so well this year.

—Margaret MacDiarmid, MD  
BCMA President



### BCMA Annual General Meeting & Convention

Saturday, 23 June 2007  
Sheraton Wall Centre  
1088 Burrard St

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