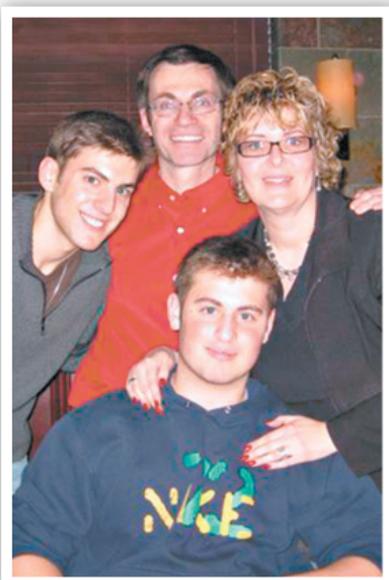


## LOCAL HERO

# Fundraising for change

**Cancer patient helps raise \$420,000 to bring treatment to Canada** by Samantha Peksa



**Yaron Panov with his wife Rochelle Schwartz and their two sons, Elan and Adi**

Four years ago, Thornhill native Yaron Panov was told by Toronto doctors that he had four to six months to live. His diagnosis: terminal soft tissue sarcoma, the same type of cancer that claimed the life of Terry Fox. Today, thanks to a groundbreaking treatment available in the United States, Panov is currently cancer-free. Since the treatment, Panov and his wife Dr. Rochelle Schwartz have worked tirelessly to bring the very technology that saved his life to Toronto — with the hopes that it will provide other Canadians with an affordable and effective means of battling the disease.

It was Champions Oncology's mice avatar technology, developed by Dr. David Sidransky at Johns Hopkins

Medical Center, that saved Panov's life.

"The whole environment of the tumour is implanted into the flank of a mouse avatar," Schwartz explained, and it is then treated accordingly. "If it works on the mouse, there's a 94 per cent chance it will work on the patient."

Panov's resilient optimism hinged on the fact that he was able to avoid the arduous trial and error process — that drawn-out period of "physical suffering" a patient is forced to endure before his or her genetic mutation responds positively to one of the prescribed treatments (various rounds of chemotherapy), which may or may not happen.

"It is an educated guess," Panov explained, "even with the so-called 'sexy' [high-profile] cancers, like breast cancer, we can group people and say, this particular treatment or chemotherapy might work for 60 per cent of the patients, but it still can't work for everyone."

"I felt that he was failed by the Ontario health system," said Schwartz, "but as we learned, cancer doesn't have to be a death sentence."

Grateful, the couple lobbied the medical community, threw various fundraising events, and have raised \$420,000 toward a not-for-profit validation study to convince the federal government to bring the technology to Canada. They are now working with Dr. Albi Razak, head of sarcoma oncology and research at Mt. Sinai Hospital. The program, which has 50 sarcoma patients ready to participate, needs another \$200,000 if it is to start January 2015.

## DEVELOPMENT APPS

### 240 Thornhill townhouse units approved by council

City of Vaughan Council has approved an amended development application by Nine-Ten West Limited, thereby allowing them to proceed with its Ward 4 development. The development will consist of 240 low-rise, mixed-use townhouses, two to four storeys in height, located on the west side of Crimson Forest Drive and north of Rutherford Road.

City of Vaughan, Development/Transportation Engineering confirmed the area's serving capacity for all 240 units in their report to the Committee of the Whole. The amended application includes minor changes pertaining to individual lot size and exterior side yard setbacks.

### Council considers Richmond Hill development

Following a public meeting that was scheduled for mid-September, the Town of Richmond Hill Council was to consider an amended application by Emerald Developments Inc. to construct a high-density residential development that includes two buildings: a five-storey residential apartment with 103 units and an eight-storey residential apartment with 161 units to be located at 11488 Yonge St. and 49 Gamble Rd.

The land is currently home to a new home sales pavilion at 11488 Yonge St. and an existing residence at 49 Gamble Rd. There is also a creek on the property that empties into the Rouge River.