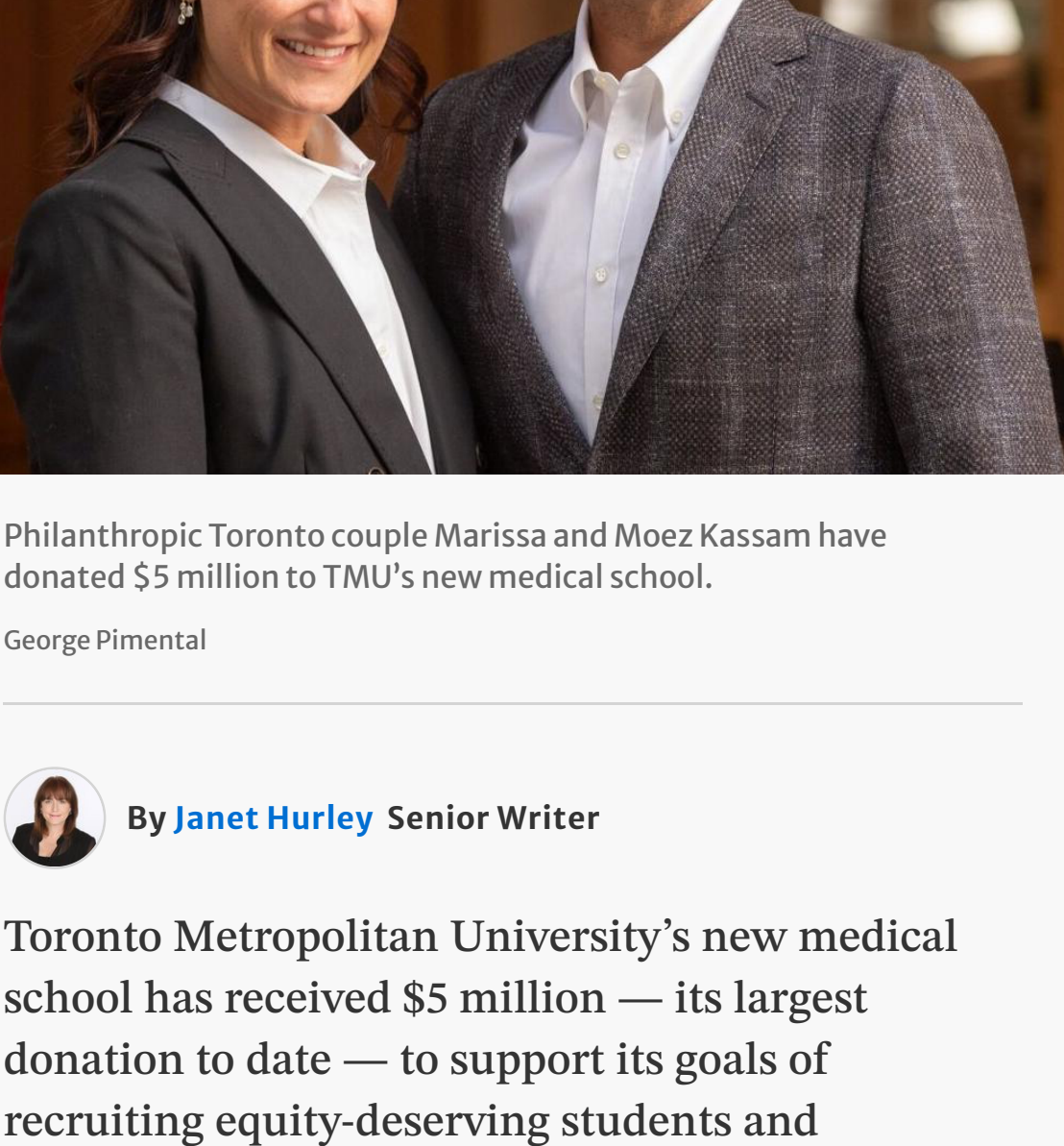


New TMU medical school's equity goals attract \$5 million donation

It will be the first new medical school in the Greater Toronto Area in a century.

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Philanthropic Toronto couple Marissa and Moez Kassam have donated \$5 million to TMU's new medical school.

George Pimental

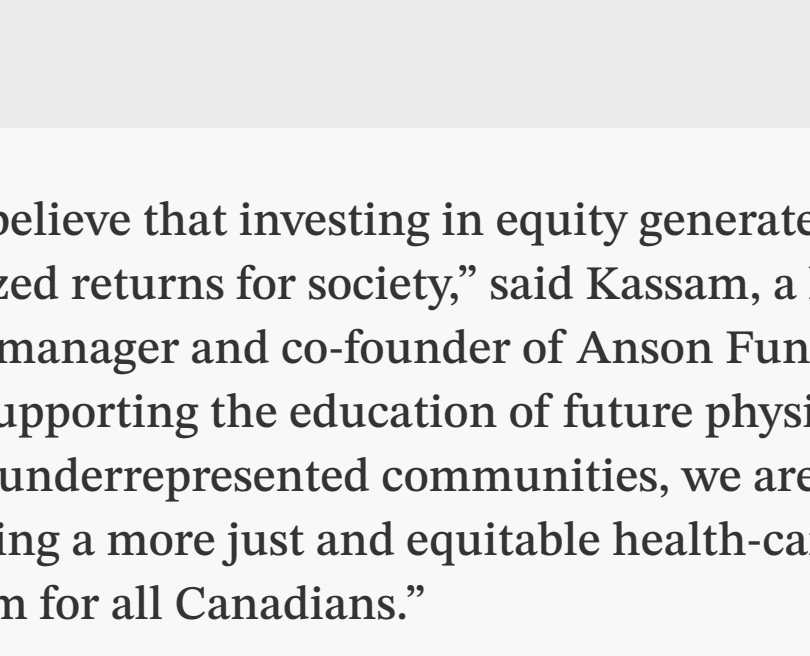
By Janet Hurley Senior Writer

Toronto Metropolitan University's new medical school has received \$5 million — its largest donation to date — to support its goals of recruiting equity-deserving students and transforming the health-care system.

“We were drawn to the TMU School of Medicine because of its bold vision for the future of health care — one that prioritizes equity, community engagement and a commitment to serving those who need it most,” said Moez Kassam, who together with his wife Marissa, made the investment announced by the university Tuesday.

The gift, through the [Moez & Marissa Kassam Equity Fund](#), will establish student scholarships and help fund the capital costs of transforming the former Bramalea Civic Centre in Brampton into the school's new facility, slated to open next summer. It will be [the first new medical school in the Greater Toronto Area in a century](#).

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“We believe that investing in equity generates outsized returns for society,” said Kassam, a hedge fund manager and co-founder of Anson Funds. “By supporting the education of future physicians from underrepresented communities, we are building a more just and equitable health-care system for all Canadians.”

[Dean Dr. Teresa M. Chan](#) said the university is grateful to the Kassam family, who “like TMU, believe in levelling the playing field for excellent students who traditionally face challenges in access to medical education.”

TMU faced backlash for its [equity-focused, holistic admission strategy](#), which [prompted the Doug Ford government to reach out to the university](#) to emphasize that qualified students, regardless of background, should fill the seats. That was followed by [a clarification earlier this month](#) from university president Mohamed Lachemi, who indicated TMU has never set a quota on who will get in.

The school has said it will recruit and “purposefully admit” Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving students in a bid to address the “persistent underrepresentation of these groups in medical schools and the medical profession.” The school is seeking students who are interested in practising primary care in medically underserved areas such as Peel Region.

Applications for the first cohort of students are due Dec. 2. A TMU spokesperson said the school is anticipating more than 5,000 applicants for just 94 seats. Offers will start rolling out in May.

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The Moez & Marissa Kassam Excellence through Equity Scholarships make up the school's first comprehensive scholarship program. Recipients will be awarded \$30,000, which will be potentially renewable for each of four years. The annual tuition for the MD program has been set at \$25,604.

“By removing financial barriers to medical education, we are investing in the diverse talent that will shape the future of health care,” said Marissa Kassam, former vice-president of philanthropy for Royal Bank of Canada Capital Markets.

The Moez & Marissa Kassam Equity Fund (formerly the Moez and Marissa Kassam Foundation) was founded by the Toronto couple in 2016 as a charitable platform focused on addressing “symptoms of inequality and exclusion.”

Moez Kassam, who is a member of TMU's [Innovation Circle](#), has been included as one of [Toronto Life's most influential Torontonians](#) the past two years “[because he shares the wealth](#).”

TMU announced it will name the medical school's central gathering hub in Brampton the Moez & Marissa Kassam Atrium.

In September, the [school also welcomed a \\$1 million gift](#) from entrepreneur and philanthropist Surjit Babra and his wife Remy Babra, whose names will grace the school's largest classroom.

Janet Hurley is a Toronto Star journalist and senior writer covering culture, education and societal trends. She is based in Toronto. Reach her via email: jhurley@thestar.ca.