San Francisco’s new trauma medical center has technological capabilities far beyond most public hospitals, but the new building also features the human side of care with an expanded acute-care ward for the elderly, public art and a rooftop garden accessible to employees, patients and their families.

The new hospital, which will open this spring, will be renamed the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital [1] and Trauma Center [2] in honor of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg [3] and his wife, Dr. Priscilla Chan [4], who donated $75 million toward the project. The contribution in February was the largest single private gift from individuals to a public hospital in the nation.

“We’ve said for many years that San Francisco General Hospital is the heart of the city, and now we have a building that reflects that,” Roland Pickens [5], the medical center’s interim chief executive officer, said during a preview of the new building Tuesday for the media. The public will have an opportunity to tour the hospital during an open house Saturday.

Supplementing voter bond

The 284-bed, 484,000-square-foot hospital, built adjacent to the city’s current general
hospital on the 24-acre Mission District campus, was primarily financed with a voter-approved $887.4 million bond measure in 2008. But that money covered only the construction costs, leaving it up to hospital officials to figure out a way to pay for the furniture, technology and everything else necessary to fill a hospital.

Zuckerberg and Chan helped bridge the gap with their donation, adding to the fundraising efforts by the hospital’s foundation.

?It was an opportunity to serve as leaders for a public institution, as public institutions are oftentimes underfunded. It felt like a really good fit for what the hospital offers to San Francisco,? Chan said in an interview with The Chronicle last week shortly after she toured the almost completed hospital with her husband.

Chan, who is expecting the couple’s first child, is a graduate of UCSF School of Medicine [6], where she completed her obstetrics and internal medicine training. She finished her pediatric residency at San Francisco General in July. During her training at the General, she was involved in a pediatric leadership program that focused on how to best to treat underserved patients and reduce inequities in care caused by socioeconomic factors.

?This hospital is amazing?

Chan continues to work at the hospital as a pediatrician.

?What you learn is that this hospital is amazing,? she said of her time there. ?There are social workers, nurses, case managers, people who take care of the space who are all incredibly dedicated to the mission of the hospital. It?s so exciting to give that core, that soul a new place to do even better work.

?The hope of ours, as supporters of the hospital, is we?re helping the core mission of the hospital, which is reducing disparities between quality of care.?

The couple’s donation helped pay for such technologies as CT and MRI imaging scans that will be placed in operating rooms. The idea is that having the machines so readily available to trauma patients will eliminate the risks that come with transporting them from one place to another. Having them there will also speed the time it takes to treat an emergency patient once a scan is done.

?When you?re rolling down the hallways to do those scans, it?s not optimal,? said Dr. Renee Hsia [7], an emergency physician and director of health policy studies in the UCSF Department of Emergency Medicine [8].

With 58 beds, the emergency department will be double the capacity of the old 27-bed unit, especially helpful in the event of a catastrophic event like a plane crash.

On the seventh floor, a unit for older patients ? the average age is 84 ? has been designed to encourage nonmedical approaches to aging issues, such as increasing mobility and socialization, to keep patients healthier and out of nursing homes after an acute stay.

The unit, called Acute Care for Elders [9], was based on a concept that San Francisco General pioneered for the state in 2007. It provides 26 private beds and features views of the city, a common dining room and a rooftop garden.
We redesign and re-engineer our care to focus on preserving function for older adults, said Dr. Edgar Pierluissi, the unit's director.

After the new hospital opens, the old one, which was built in 1976, will be used to treat the majority of ambulatory patients who come to San Francisco General for care. The two buildings are connected by a basement tunnel and a mezzanine skyway.

The entire project was designed with such thought and care, with the patient experience in mind, said Amanda Heier, chief executive officer of the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation, the hospital's fundraising arm.

Fundraising goal exceeded

Heier said the fundraising campaign, which will officially end in December, has exceeded its $135 million goal. We're incredibly excited by the fact we've had such success with the whole community to raise enough funds to help install and procure equipment that was beyond the hospital's wildest dreams, she said.

Chan called her experience with San Francisco General the soul of my training as a physician.

That soul carries on to the work I do in philanthropy and education, she said. It really has become a lens I see the world through.

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S.F. General tours

San Francisco's new hospital and trauma center will be introduced to the public Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 1001 Potrero Ave. Visitors are welcome to arrive at 10 a.m., and tours will be held in the afternoon.
