

Chez nous

MCH EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

May 6, 2014

Special edition: Awards of Excellence 2014 Winners

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Dr. Sharon Abish

While at McGill Medical School, Dr. Sharon Abish quickly decided that Pediatrics was her preferred field. After graduating with the Class of 1983, Dr. Abish proceeded to Halifax for her pediatric residency at IWK Health Centre (formerly, the Izaak Walton Killam Hospital for Children), affiliated with Dalhousie University. She then continued her training at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, where she did a Fellowship in pediatric hematology/oncology and in 1990, she returned home to pursue a career in pediatric hematology/oncology at the Montreal Children's Hospital.

Her first experience with oncology was as a medical student at the Children's. Later, during her residency, she had the occasion to spend more time on the hematology/oncology ward, where she became very involved in the care of children. Dr. Abish says it was her contact with those young patients, and with their families, that sealed it.

"All the members of our team get very involved with our patients and their families at a time that can be very difficult and emotional," says Dr. Abish. Never in want of inspiration, she speaks of her appreciation for contact with varied medical issues. These include oncologic diseases like leukemia as well as other blood disorders, like sickle-cell disease. "I learn something every day, both medically and personally, and value the opportunity to share my interest and excitement with those entering the field of medicine and pediatrics."

Groupe Jean Coutu is committed to improving the quality of life in its communities by supporting vital healthcare initiatives. It is the reason why, for several years now, it has been our great pleasure to partner with the Montreal

Children's Hospital by sponsoring the Jean Coutu Medical Award of Excellence.

Hematologist-oncologist Dr. Sharon Abish is the kind of front-line healthcare specialist who has earned the Children's its stellar reputation. Her list of professional achievements is impressive, but the greatest testament to Dr. Abish's quality of work can be found in the testimonials of her patients. They all agree that she embodies the perfect combination of compassion and expertise. There can be no higher praise. Congratulations, Dr. Abish. We salute your dedication.



Dr. Sharon Abish is the recipient of the Jean Coutu Medical Award of Excellence.

Jeff Dichter

Jeff Dichter and his family were rocked by news that changed their lives forever when their two-and-a-half-year-old son Zak was diagnosed with a rare brain tumour. They were told the malignant tumour would rob them of their son within nine months.



Jeff Dichter is the recipient of the National Bank Community Leadership and Volunteer Award of Excellence.

Doctors at the Children's analyzed the case and returned with a proposal for a bold treatment protocol – one that had never been applied in Canada. It involved chemotherapy, combined with radiation therapy and a series of surgical operations. The result was astonishing: all traces of the tumour were eradicated. Zak would live. He recently celebrated his 26th birthday. While the tumour is gone, it left traces. Jeff says his son lives

with several deficits: he has learning disabilities, hearing impairment and some paralysis on his right side. But the after-effects take nothing away from the amazing outcome and have never diminished Jeff's gratitude. He set out to make a difference for the Children's.

Jeff took a year from his life and went to work organizing a major fundraising event he called "7". It involved selling tickets to a sumptuous seven-course dinner, prepared by seven chefs, each course with its own exquisite wine. "7" raised roughly half-a-million dollars for the Montreal Children's Hospital.

Jeff could have stopped there. Of course, he didn't. Following the "7" event, he opened m:brgr, a restaurant that has garnered considerable success over the last six years. Jeff and his partners at m:brgr donate a portion of their restaurant's profit to charity, with the Children's always remaining among the main beneficiaries.

At National Bank, we are proud of our employees' and retirees' commitment to sharing and giving. To recognize this commitment and boost its impact, we recently revamped our volunteer program to turn every hour of volunteer work into a \$1 donation to a youth organization. That is why we are proud to sponsor the Community Leadership and Volunteer Award of Excellence. Volunteers are people who make things happen and this year's award recipient, Jeff Dichter, has certainly done that by helping to change the lives of patients and staff at the Children's through his generosity and hard work.

A grateful parent and restaurateur par excellence, Mr. Dichter has made giving back an integral part of his life. He is a wonderful ambassador for the Children's and inspires many others to follow his lead. Our community is fortunate to be able to count on such an exemplary person.

Michelina Iorio

Imagine being a patient in a hospital populated by doctors, nurses and medical technicians—and no one else. No hospital ward, department, clinic or service could operate for long without administrative and clinical support. Providing such support at the Montreal Children's Hospital Otolaryngology department is the task appointed to Michelina Iorio.

Michelina worked for 14 years at a private medical clinic in Cote-St-Luc before coming to the Children's in 2002. She began on the seventh floor—the surgical floor at the Children's—and soon moved through other departments in need of support: from Cardiology to Hematology, Admitting, Biochemistry and, finally, Otolaryngology, where Michelina has worked for the past five years.

Much of her time is spent booking surgery and pre-operative appointments and keeping everything and everyone moving smoothly along the healthcare paper trail. But the support she lends is more than just administrative and clinical. Michelina also finds herself tending to patients and their families as they look for information about the care they are receiving. If the information isn't readily available, Michelina goes looking for the doctor, nurse or medical technician who may have the answer.

Finally, she often gives moral support to family members, anxious about a loved-one's surgery or other medical care, who may need some reassurance or just a sympathetic ear.

Staff at the Children's regularly go the extra mile so that young patients and their families receive only the best care possible. We at TransForce make it our priority to recognize such exemplary efforts.



Michelina Iorio is the recipient of the TransForce Administrative and Clinical Support Staff Award of Excellence.

Michelina Iorio takes care of surgical booking for ENT (Otolaryngology) at the Children's. It is a job that demands enormous coordination, which Ms. Iorio executes with ease. Surgeries range widely in their gravity and complexity but to Ms. Iorio, all must be coordinated with absolute care. Families regularly call her simply to thank her for how attentively she addressed their concerns. TransForce wishes to thank her too, by presenting her with the TransForce Administrative and Clinical Support Staff Award of Excellence. Congratulations, Ms. Iorio!

Dr. Caroline Quach

Dr. Caroline Quach, a graduate of the Université de Montréal Medical School, is a medical microbiologist and pediatric infectious diseases consultant at the Montreal Children's Hospital. As a clinician scientist, Dr. Quach focuses her research on preventing infections.

She is interested in understanding the risks associated with healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and vaccine-preventable diseases, particularly in children most at risk (premature infants in the neonatal intensive care units and children with chronic conditions). Such work is of vital importance as hospitals in Canada and the United States grapple with an estimated one-in-ten occurrence of HAIs, with up to 90,000 new cases per year in Quebec alone. Up to 10 percent of patients acquiring an HAI will die.

It is because of a pediatrician she met as a medical student that Dr. Quach was set on the path to her specialization. "I found her approach to patients and their families inspirational," says Dr. Quach. She later was further inspired by a pediatric infectious disease specialist at McGill while doing her post-graduate training in Infectious Diseases and Medical Microbiology. It was during her first year at McGill that she found her field of research interest. "I realized that I needed many more tools and much more knowledge to answer some questions that remained daunting and that were largely still unanswered."

Dr. Quach is currently co-director of the MUHC Vaccine Study Centre, physician in charge of Infection Control and an Associate Professor at McGill University's Departments of Pediatrics and Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Occupational Health. She serves on the Quebec Immunization Committee (CIQ) and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). She is currently president-elect of Canada's Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease (AMMI-Canada)

The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation is proud to present this Research Award of Excellence to Dr. Caroline Quach, a very talented individual who has demonstrated tremendous passion and drive in her pursuit of knowledge.

Dr. Quach's area of research, the prevention of infections, is hugely important to the future health and safety of our children. As a clinician scientist, Dr. Quach combines her research activities with caring for patients. Her relentless spirit inspires great hope and optimism among parents and healthcare professionals alike.

We salute the outstanding work of Dr. Quach, and congratulate her on receiving the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation Research Award of Excellence.



Dr. Caroline Quach is the recipient of the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation Research Award of Excellence.

Dr. Maria Ramsay

It is said that “music hath charms to soothe the savage breast,” but psychologist Dr. Maria Ramsay discovered that it can also help feed a fearful baby.

Dr. Ramsay came to the Montreal Children's Hospital as a psychologist trained in child development in 1984. Among the first children she was asked to see was a five-month old baby who wasn't feeding. At that point, the study of feeding disorders had hardly begun in Canada and Dr. Ramsay knew she had to think outside the box. She hit on the idea of using music to soothe the infant at meal times and turned to some of the more peaceful works of Mozart, which she found closely mimicked the sound of the human heartbeat. The

music had a dramatic effect on the baby in her care. Calmed by the soothing sounds, the baby stopped fighting the feeding tube and began to take small amounts of formula orally. The infant was soon feeding normally and was finally able to go home.

Working with underweight newborns and babies up to two-and-half-years-old, Dr. Ramsay began focusing on appetite, as well as on oral-motor and sensory-motor issues and, in 1988, was responsible for initiating the Feeding Disorders Clinic—a precursor of the present-day Pediatric Feeding Program of the MCH.

Dr. Ramsay has been instrumental in pioneering the study of feeding disorders in babies and small children and along the way, has helped parents shed their anxiety over their baby's inability to gain weight.

At Global Montreal, we recognize the importance of teamwork. That is why we are delighted to partner with the Children's—the hospital that continues to play such a vital role in the care of our children and our families.

As a news organization we have covered numerous stories about the innovative care that can be found at the Children's. Dr. Maria Ramsay is one such innovator. Her groundbreaking work in the field of pediatric feeding disorders has dramatically improved the lives of children here in Quebec and around the world. Her achievements have empowered countless parents to take a more active role in their children's eating habits, leading to healthier, happier families. For being a great innovator, mentor and clinician, we are proud to present the Global Montreal Professional Staff Award of Excellence to Dr. Maria Ramsay.



Dr. Maria Ramsay is the recipient of the Global Montreal Professional Staff Award of Excellence.

Zoe Saskin

Zoe Saskin was forced to fight from day one. Shortly before she was born, an ultrasound revealed the presence of a tumour in her chest. Doctors were taken aback by how fast the tumour appeared to be growing and ordered an emergency C-section. Zoe's survival was uncertain, and her parents, Tammy and Adam Saskin, were told to prepare for the worst, as it appeared unlikely that she would make it.

A short time later, the situation took a turn for the better. Thanks to her amazing spirit, and to the skill of the doctors and staff of the Montreal Children's Hospital, Zoe had won her battle. She would live.

Now some five and a half years later, this fantastic little girl, who later underwent a second operation to remove a re-growth of the tumour, bears no outward sign of her battle and bounces merrily along.

Tammy and Adam resolved to show their gratitude and give back to those who had given them back their daughter. They rallied their family and friends, and in 2009, held the first annual Ski for the Children's event in Stowe, Vermont. With Zoe's spirit infusing the event, it was an immediate success, and has continued to grow every year. This year's Ski for the Children's raised approximately \$176,000, bringing the total raised over the six years of the event to a stunning \$765,000.

For over 25 years, TD has been a loyal supporter of the Children's. We are particularly proud to present the TD Nicolas W. Matossian Junior Community Award of Excellence because we believe in recognizing the outstanding efforts made by children. They inspire us and can even teach us a great deal.

Sick children often demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of illness. For adults, it can be both humbling and eye-opening to witness. Zoe Saskin waged a greater battle in her first days than many of us know in our entire lifetime. Her parents transformed a horrific ordeal into an impressive annual fundraiser called Ski for the Children's. Six years later, Zoe is convinced of two things: she loves the Children's and she wants to do everything she can to help her hospital. We are humbled by Zoe, and we salute her great work!



Zoe Saskin is the recipient of the TD Nicolas W. Matossian Junior Community Award of Excellence.

Alison Steeves

Alison Steeves is many things to many people: administrator, teacher, counsellor, confidant, leader and friend. But above all else, she is a nurse.

Alison is the assistant head nurse on the Hematology-Oncology Unit of the Montreal Children's Hospital (MCH). She began her training at John Abbott College, where she studied health sciences, graduating in 1998. After a year of practical nurse training at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Alison went on to the University of Ottawa for her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. From there, it was straight to the

general medical floor of the MCH, working there for a few months before moving over to the oncology unit of the Children's, where she has worked since.

Beyond her work as an administrator—overseeing the daily operations of the oncology unit and dealing with staffing issues, bed management issues, scheduling and patient assignments—Alison serves as teacher and mentor to new nurses. On Alison's floor, there is cancer diagnosis and treatment and, sometimes, end-of-life care. "You can laugh and cry on the same day on our unit," Alison confides. "Some days are hard, but most are good," she adds.

Alison also provides patient care, which regularly puts her in direct contact not only with young patients, but also with their families. "The family is the key to successful nursing in pediatrics," says Alison. "It's essential that all care is family-centered. It's a collaborative relationship throughout."

At the Gustav Levinschi Foundation, we know that nursing is among the most challenging of jobs and that nurses are the heart and soul of any hospital. That is why we are proud to pay tribute to a profession that is one of the cornerstones of great healthcare.

Alison Steeves, Assistant Head Nurse on the hematology/oncology ward at the Children's, is a tireless crusader for patients and their families. She instills confidence in her patients and their families, who are facing tremendously difficult circumstances. Sensitive to the demands of the job, she is also there to support her fellow nurses who look to her for guidance and leadership. Congratulations Ms. Steeves. We are honoured to present you the Gustav Levinschi Nursing Award of Excellence.



Alison Steeves is the recipient of the Gustav Levinschi Nursing Award of Excellence.



Confronting concussions head on

West Island teen credits the MCH Trauma Centre's mild Traumatic Brain Injury Program for her recovery — *By Pamela Toman*

It happened in just a split second – not once, but twice. Colleen Lobo, now 18, says while her memories of her concussions during high school are a bit fuzzy and both of them happened very differently, the aftermath felt remarkably familiar.

"If you've never had a concussion before, it's hard to understand what it feels like," she explains. "A constant headache, loss of focus and concentration, dizziness, nausea, disorientation, sensitivity to light and noise...it really feels like you're completely out of it."

Two concussions two years apart

Colleen's first concussion happened in her grade 10 math class, of all places. A fellow classmate tilted her chair to the side while she was sitting in it, and Colleen took a spin and hit her head.

"I didn't even know what a concussion was, so I thought I could rest over the weekend and feel better. I never did start to feel better though."

After four days of suffering, her parents and teachers insisted she seek medical care at the Montreal Children's Hospital's (MCH) Emergency Department (ED), where Colleen was diagnosed with a mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI), otherwise known as a concussion.

Just two years later, she found herself in the same position when she went up for a rebound during a high school basketball game. A fellow player accidentally hit her in the temple.

Her most recent experience, she says, involved a six- to seven-month recovery period that often tested her patience, but ultimately

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Colleen Lobo



taught her how to balance the demands of her fast-paced student lifestyle with her new limitations.

“When you’re not concussed, you know how far you can push yourself,” she explains, “but when you have this kind of injury, you have to learn what your new boundaries are, and that can be really difficult to accept.”

Managing concussions through a proactive, comprehensive approach

Thanks to a proactive interprofessional approach developed by MCH Trauma specialists as part of the mTBI Program and Concussion Clinic, patients like Colleen are offered comprehensive assessments, and interventions from a variety of specialists ranging from initial consultation with the Trauma Coordinator, Helen Kocilowicz, who conducts screening and coordination of care, to the physiotherapists, the psychologist, the neuropsychologist, and other consultants as appropriate.

“I was able to get medical help from Dr. Sasha Dubrovsky to manage my headaches, but I also had weekly interventions with Lisa Grilli, my physiotherapist to help me get back on my feet and start working on my balance. Dr. Yves Beaulieu also helped me talk out my frustrations and gave me tricks to help with my concentration and accepting the boundaries of what I was now able to do,” says Colleen, adding that this approach helped make her feel like she was being supported on all fronts.

“Because each child is different, our approach is individualized,” says Debbie Friedman, MCH Trauma Director. “Specific needs must be addressed taking everything into consideration: the patient’s symptoms, previous medical history, academic issues, family reaction, stressors, sports and extracurricular interests and personal goals.”

Looking towards the future

For her part, Colleen is thrilled to have overcome her concussions with help from the entire team. “I honestly wouldn’t have been able to have gotten to this point without them,” she says.

Learn more about Colleen and the MCH’s mTBI Program and Concussion Clinic at www.thechildren.com/ConfrontingConcussions •

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National Nursing Week

Chez nous is celebrating National Nursing Week from May 12 to May 18 by highlighting a special group of people - our Nursing Resource Managers. They work evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays, making them the go-to people after hours.



Cindy McCartney

Cindy McCartney has always loved a good challenge, which is why she felt drawn to her current position as a Nursing Resource Manager (NRM). "When I started teaching nursing at McGill, I realized how much I enjoy problem-solving and being the go-to person," she says. "So I started thinking of different ways to make this part of my daily life." In June 2012, after working on 7C1 for eight years, Cindy decided to apply for an NRM position. She got the job and now works mostly evenings from 3:15 to 11:15 p.m., a shift she says works extremely well for her young family. She also rotates between night and weekend shifts with the rest of the NRM team.

Cindy's main objective is to make sure the hospital runs smoothly after hours. She does this by taking part in a bed management meeting at the beginning of her shift, followed by two rounds on each unit, and she also keeps track of all requests or

problems in a detailed log she submits to the rest of the team before she heads home. "I talk to all the nurses on each floor to make sure they have everything they need, and I constantly have a pager or phone by my side," she says. "We are extremely resourceful, hence our name!" On some nights, the calls she gets are endless, but it all comes with the territory. Luckily for Cindy, she has a long list of numbers on speed dial. "I don't always have an answer for everything, but I make sure I get the information needed," she says. "I never come across the same problem twice, which means I'm learning something new every day."



Serge Soucy

Serge Soucy has been working at the Montreal Children's Hospital for the last 30 years, and has spent 11 of those as a Nursing Resource Manager. His previous experience as a float nurse, surgical nurse, neonatal nurse, and emergency nurse,

Continued >>>



has helped tremendously with his current role. "I know this hospital inside and out, which helps when I have to make tough decisions," he says. "I always focus on what is best for our patients and families, which allows me to prioritize myself on very busy nights." In certain cases, Serge must decide whether to move a patient to a different unit in order to accommodate a new, more critically-ill patient. He looks at the impact this decision would have on the unit and its staff, as well as the patient's safety. "At the end of the day, it is not about how many patients we have, but about the quality of care we provide," he says. "If something is in the patient's best interest, I will make that call."

Another aspect of Serge's job is to support the Emergency Department (ED) when a trauma patient comes in. He helps the trauma team and the ED decide where a patient will be best suited depending on their medical condition. Serge and the other NRMs are also responsible for answering and attending all codes called, and should there ever be a Code Orange (disaster or mass casualties) called after hours, they are in charge of opening up the Control Centre. "This job comes with a lot of responsibility, but I know my limits and when I have to get senior management involved," he says. "I can see the broader picture and the impact my decisions will have on the hospital as a whole." •

A special thank-you to the rest of the Nursing Resource Managers team (Dale Dell'elce, Susan McIlvinney and Carmela Jumeras) for their hard work and dedication throughout the year!

Awards

Prix Florence 2014

Janet Rennick is the 2014 recipient of the Prix Florence from l'Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec (OIIQ) for research in nursing science.

The award aims to highlight nurses who can serve as role models for all of the members of the OIIQ. The research in nursing science category highlights the exceptional contribution of a nurse to the advancement of knowledge and to the development of nursing practice through their research work and its dissemination. •

Nursing Awards of Excellence winners

Lorine Besel Award for Leadership in Nursing

Alison Steeves, Assistant Nurse Manager,
Hematology/Oncology Unit (8D)

Laraine Imperial Award for Partners in Practice

Thamarr St-Armand, Administrative Officer, Ward 7C1
Rosanna Barrafato, Administrative Technician,
Complex Care Service

Evelyn Malowany Award for Clinical Practice

Geraldine Schaack, Clinician Nurse, Complex Care Service

All staff are invited to this year's Nursing Awards of Excellence on Friday, May 16 at 1:00 p.m. in the Ampitheatre (D-182).



You asked, we answered!

Answers to frequently asked questions about the Glen

Are there plans in place to improve parking for employees at the Glen site?

There will be distinct parking areas at the Glen site for employees and visitors. Block F will be reserved for employees and will have space for 1,260 vehicles. Block G will be reserved for patients, families and physicians and will have 1,592 spaces.

If we look at current parking facilities at the Royal Victoria Hospital, the Montreal Children's Hospital and the Montreal Chest Institute, there will actually be 600 more spaces at the Glen than currently available at these three hospitals. In addition, the parking garage will be a covered structure, which will save time and money on snow removal. The new parking facilities will also be well lit, have security cameras, panic buttons and elevators with direct access to the hospital for both visitors and employees, all factors which will contribute to a safe and secure parking environment, and easier access to the hospital.

Parking is a service that the government does not subsidize, and parking prices at the Glen site will have to be increased slightly due to the new construction facilities. The MUHC Parking Services, however, intends to keep the rates as reasonable as possible. The new MUHC is close to the Vendôme intermodal station, which includes the metro, three commuter train lines, and 11 bus routes—all great alternatives to taking your car.

What type of recycling services or programs will be in place at the Glen site? And what "green" measures are being implemented at the new site?

Before even welcoming its first patient next year, the MUHC, in partnership with Groupe immobilier santé McGill, is looking at obtaining the *LEED Silver Certification—New construction*, which signifies that 75% of construction waste will be recycled or reused, and 20% of the building materials are being produced within an 800 km radius of the new hospital.

The Glen site will have a waste management centre capable of recycling paper, cardboard, electronic waste, metal, glass and plastic. There are also plans to add organic waste recycling to this program.

Once the new hospital is open, the site will have the following features:

- 300 bicycle parking spaces plus showers for bicycle commuters
- 79 charging stations for electric vehicles
- One third of the site will be allocated as green space
- Energy efficiency measures will decrease energy consumption by 35% compared to other hospitals across Canada.

Events

Annual Research Day at the MCH

Wednesday, May 28, 8:00 a.m. to noon, Amphitheatre, D-182

The Montreal Children's Hospital (MCH) community is invited to attend presentations by graduate students, fellows and residents from the MCH on the progress of their research. A panel of judges will select the best clinical and basic research presentations.

For more information, call extension x23023.