Congratulations to the 2009 Awards of Excellence winners!

The Awards of Excellence were presented on May 7 at a breakfast attended by many staff, volunteers and friends of the MCH. Congratulations to this year’s 10 Award of Excellence recipients for their dedication to making the MCH a great hospital.

Administrative and Clinical Support Staff: Terry Séguin
Community Leadership: Alex K. Paterson
Leadership: Dr. Aurore Côté
Medical: Dr. Jose-Luis Montes
Nicolas W. Matossian Junior Community:
Marc Normandeau
Nursing: Heather Davies
Professional Staff: Sara-Andrea Bazinet
Research: Dr. Jacquetta Trasler
Technical Support Staff: Robert Campbell
Volunteer: Abe Sluser

Thank you to our nurses

Message from Barbara Izzard,
Associate Executive Director of Nursing at The Montreal Children’s Hospital of the MUHC

To mark Nursing Week 2009, I want to take this opportunity to recognize all the members of our nursing department at the Montreal Children’s Hospital. The commitment and caring that each of you brings to your work, to the children and their families and to your colleagues continues to be inspiring. This is the time of year where we celebrate the outstanding contribution of our colleagues. At our MCH Nursing Awards of Excellence on May 11 we showcased some of our most deserving staff.

The dedication to providing the highest quality of care to our patients and families is ever more challenging in this time of staff shortages and increasing complex care needs of our patients. In spite of some very real issues affecting your work environment, the degree of professionalism and the quality of the care delivered remains extraordinary.

I would like to thank each of you for your contribution to our department, and the excellence that I see everyday.
**MRI Suite: Look how far we’ve come!**

Construction of our Intra-Operative MRI suite began in early January 2009 under the worst of Montreal winter conditions. However, blowing snow and blistering temperatures of -40°C did not deter the dedicated construction workers from the task of putting up the structure for the future intra-operative MRI suite. Since then, in only four short months, the work has continued at a relentless pace and the envelope which will house the magnet and a state-of-the-art operating room is almost 90% complete. Only the front facade remains to be closed, but this will not occur until the actual magnet and other equipment have been delivered.

In the past months, a new ventilation system was installed on A3 and A4 and has been operational since the end of April. The Hematology/Oncology Day Treatment Centre was relocated to 7C2 on April 21 in order to allow for the necessary renovations to be carried out in this area. The overall reinforcement of the structure was completed and finalized with the pouring of an impressive 26 inches of reinforced concrete flooring. By the end of June, patients and staff will be returning to a renovated reception and waiting area complete with a beautiful skylight.

In the next couple of months, the interior finishes will be carried out and all the equipment will be installed and tested. Stay tuned on June 23 for the delivery of the actual magnet that weighs over 13,000 pounds! The objective for the completion of the project still remains mid-July and everyone is working extremely hard to meet this target.

We would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all hospital personnel especially those situated in the A wing and B wing for their patience, understanding and collaboration during many a noisy day!

*Teresa Di Bartolo*
Manager, Architectural Services

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**Chez nous wants your opinion!**

Do you have any ideas or comments you’d like to share about Chez nous, the MCH employee newsletter? Well, here’s your chance to let us know what you think. Please take a few minutes to fill out our short survey, and by doing so, you’ll also have a chance to win a $75 gift certificate for any of the retailers at Place Alexis Nihon.

There are two ways to complete the survey. A hard copy is included in this issue of Chez nous, or you can complete the survey online by visiting the Chez nous section on the MCH website (www.thechildren.com, under News and Events).

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**A great turn-out for the MCH Blood Drive**

Congratulations to all of you who rolled up your sleeves for the Annual MCH Blood Drive. A total of 156 people gave blood at the drive held May 6 at the Pepsi Forum, which significantly surpassed the day’s goal of 125 people. Thanks to everyone for giving the gift of life!
The Caring for Kids Radiothon was a resounding success, raising $1.6 million for our Hospital in just one single day! This total was achieved thanks to radio stations Virgin Radio 96, CHOM 97.7 and CJAD 800 of Astral Media Radio, who turned over their airwaves in support of our hospital, and their generous listeners who dutifully answered the call to join the Circle of Hugs.

The Radiothon’s phone bank was once again sponsored by Dormez-Vous? and nine other companies contributed to our cause by becoming Miracle Hour sponsors. They included Adorable Kids, Air Canada Kids Horizons, Bell, Bastone & Associates, Concordia Computer Science and Engineering Association, Foresters, Revolution Textiles, Scotiabank and Shire Canada.

The success of the event also depended on the help of numerous volunteers, from the people who answered the phones, to dozens of brave young patients and their families, who shared their remarkable stories on air with listeners. “This year, more than ever, our medical staff went the extra mile to provide us with strong patient stories. We are extremely thankful to all of them,” says Danielle Gabrielle Roy, Director of Communications at the Foundation.

This year’s Radiothon was held in conjunction with Astral Media Radio’s national day of Caring for Kids on April 30, where 50 of the network’s stations in 28 Canadian cities raised funds for pediatric hospitals across the country.

McGill and MCH discovery of cancer spread mechanism picked as “Discovery of the Year”

Readers of Québec Science magazine have selected a recent cancer breakthrough by Dr. Janusz Rak and his team as “Discovery of the Year 2008”.

Dr. Rak, a professor in pediatric oncology at McGill University’s Faculty of Medicine and a researcher at the Research Institute of the Montreal Children’s Hospital of the MUHC, identified a fundamental mechanism by which tumour cells spread. Dr. Rak and his colleagues, Dr. Khalid Al-Nedawi and Brian Meehan, found that cancer cells communicate with their more healthy counterparts by releasing vesicles. These bubble-like structures – called oncosomes – contain cancer-causing (oncogenic) proteins that can merge into healthy cells and “contaminate” them. These findings could change our view on how cancerous tissues work and lead to major clinical innovations.

This breakthrough was one of 10 chosen by Québec Science as the top discoveries of 2008. The prestigious ranking was published in the magazine’s February issue. Readers were then asked to vote for one top discovery. Their choice was announced on April 30 at an event honouring Dr. Rak and his team held at The Montreal Children’s Hospital.
Child Life and Leucan help teens ‘look good, feel better’

In a continued collaboration with Leucan, the MCH Child Life department facilitated the recent “Look Good, Feel Better” workshop for some of our Oncology patients.

The activity took place on April 20 at the MCH and three professional make-up artists guided the two-hour workshop for three oncology patients. Gradually the young girls became more comfortable asking questions about their skin, and what they can do to improve the way they feel about themselves. They learned how to apply makeup to enhance their appearance, and each of them was delighted to receive a box filled with moisturizers, make-up remover, powder, foundation, mascara, and eyebrow pencils, and a Hugo Boss duffle bag filled with perfume, nail polish, and more.

The “Look good, feel better” workshops are led by industry-trained cosmetics advisors who generously donate their time and expertise to teach the girls about skin care, cover-up, eyes and colour. The volunteers understand the changes that cancer, radiation and chemotherapy can have on someone’s appearance and they provide solutions to help women and young girls deal with their fears about the changes in their appearance.

Activities such as these are supported by Child Life at the MCH in order to provide our young patients with opportunities to build confidence, while socializing and providing some moments of enjoyment at the hospital. Child Life looks forward to continue working in partnership with Leucan in order to bring positive experiences such as these to the Children’s.
This is the second of a two-part series. Part one of the series focused on the hospital’s efforts to recruit nurses to the MCH. If you would like to read this article, visit the MCH website (www.thechildren.com/en/news) and select Chez nous. Part two focuses on the MCH efforts to retain its nurses and the MUHC efforts to rethink the job of a nurse.

Canada is in the grip of a nursing shortage and the MUHC and the MCH are feeling the pinch. The MCH currently has permanent or temporary vacancies in virtually all departments, with some units struggling with well over a 25% vacancy rate. With so many openings, the job market is paradise for any nurse considering a career move. And that is why the MCH is paying particular attention to creating a healthy work environment and stepping up efforts to try to make sure the 486 nurses who work here feel appreciated, rewarded and challenged.

“To retain our nurses, the MCH has to be committed to becoming the best employer possible,” says Barbara Izzard, Associate Director of Nursing at the MCH. “We want our nurses to be proud members of the MCH team and we want new nurses to see this as “the” place to work.”

Retention activities range from the On the Spot Recognition Program, started by MUHC Human Resources, which rewards employees for going the extra mile; the annual Nursing Week Activities in May; and career counselling opportunities for nurses looking for new challenges. The Nursing department has also recently joined the MCH Quality of Life at Work Committee, which through fun activities recognizes the hard work of employees.

Making sure new nurses enjoy their jobs

Several other retention initiatives focus on making sure new nursing recruits settle in to their jobs at the MCH. The statistics are a bit alarming: between 35% and 60% of new graduate nurses change positions within the first year of employment. In addition, eight of every 10 graduates leave hospital nursing. So not only does the MCH have to battle to hire new nurses, they also have to struggle to keep them.

To respond to this, the MCH Nursing department started the Comité de jeunesse in January 2008 to support new and young nurses as they adjust to their new careers and develop their skills. (see “Hiring Nurses is Half the Battle”, Chez Nous, December 2008, at www.thechildren.com).

The Comité de jeunesse specifically targets nurses with less than five years experience or nurses 35 years of age and younger who have just joined the nursing team at the MCH. This accounts for about 33% of the MCH’s nursing workforce. The Comité offers a wide variety of social events and educational activities for its members.

Later this month, the MCH will be completing a year long Mentorship Pilot Project. Twelve nurses with less than three years experience took part.

“I believe my role as coordinator for Healthy Workplace Retention and Recruitment is paying off because I’ve become known as the ‘go to person’ for work related issues,” says Sandy. For example, Sandy recently learned about a young nurse who was seriously thinking of leaving the MCH. Sandy met with her only to realize the nurse, with about a year’s worth of experience, was feeling completely overwhelmed by the job and the amount of information and knowledge she still needed to absorb. Sandy spoke with the young woman and together they spoke with the unit’s head nurse. The young recruit learned that her supervisor thought she was doing an outstanding job especially for someone so new to the job. Luckily Sandy’s intervention convinced the nurse to stay at the MCH.

Nurse retention: following best practice guidelines

MCH senior nurse Sandy Bradford-Macalanda was named Coordinator of Healthy Workplace Retention and Recruitment in 2008. The MCH nursing department is working hard to make sure the retention and recruitment dossier doesn’t have to complete with clinical needs since the all-too-common scenario is that clinical work becomes overwhelming and the non-clinical mandate gets pushed aside.

“Making the MCH the best workplace for nurses requires a whole host of initiatives and the collaboration of everyone from nursing leadership, to the nursing union, to MUHC Human Resources,” says Sandy. “Everyone has to work in partnership if we want to be successful.”

Nursing shortage felt coast to coast and around the world

MCH uses creative strategies to recruit and retain nurses

By Lisa Dutton

By Lisa Dutton
“The MCH nursing leadership knows that nursing retention is important. We make sure to be accessible to the members of our team,” says Barbara. “We have an open door policy and are available to talk about career planning, conflict resolutions, continuing education or anything else that is on nurses’ minds.”

Another way the MCH makes sure nurses’ views are heard is through the Nursing Practice and Development and Quality Management Committee (a.k.a. the Council of Nurses). This committee, started in 2003, is under the chairmanship of Eren Alexander and has 27 members. They look at a diversity of nursing issues from the quality of care the MCH provides to the quality of the workplace. It even looks at how nurses can help the MCH become more environmentally friendly.

“We encourage our nurses to sit on committees such as the Council of Nurses,” says Barbara. “It gives them a voice and it gives them the tools to effect change.”

Financial aid for nurses continuing their education

When it comes to continuing education, bursaries of up to $500 per semester are readily available to any nurse who wants to pursue their nursing education. Nurses wanting to do a Nursing B.A., Masters or Ph.D. are also eligible for a flexible schedule allowing them to work and go to school part time.

Finally, for any nurse who does decide to leave the hospital, the MCH tries to do an exit interview. The goal is to find out why the nurse is leaving to determine if there was anything the hospital could have done differently.

Rethinking the job of a nurse: MUHC gets to work

With the current worldwide nursing shortage and with demand for nurses increasing as our population ages, there is no simple solution to the dire lack of nurses. This is why MUHC Human Resources has been given the mandate to look at work reorganization in various areas of health care, particularly nursing. Under the leadership of Johanne Brodeur, MUHC Associate Director of Training and Organizational Development, work started a while back beginning with focus groups. Ms. Brodeur is currently putting together a steering committee and the MCH will have a place at the table.

The idea behind work reorganization is to rethink the job of a nurse to determine exactly what the nurse must do and what jobs could become the responsibility of another member of the health care team.

The MCH has adopted the Healthy Work Environment Best Practice Guidelines developed by the Nursing Association of Ontario

1. Developing and sustaining nursing leadership
2. Professionalism of the nurse
3. Embracing cultural diversity
4. Developing and sustaining effective staffing and workload practice
5. Collaborative Practice among nursing team
6. Workplace health, safety and well-being of nurses

MUHC and MCH Context

MUHC
- 2840 nurses
- Average age: 41.3 years
- Bacc or higher education: 50%
- Turnover rate: 11.45 to 12.67%

MCH
- 486 nurses
- Nurses over 55 years: 7% (34)
- Bacc or higher education: 58%
- Previous turnover rate: 9% now 11%

Pick up a copy of the latest issue of Enfants Québec to read Dr. Dominic Chalut’s advice for parents in the regular feature « Questions de parents ». 
Events

Harvey Guyda Day—June 3

A day to honour Dr. Harvey J. Guyda’s dedication to children’s health will be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2009. To register for the scientific conferences and gala dinner, visit the website at www.harveyguyda.ca. Registration deadline is May 26.
The MCH Quality of Life at Work Committee is pleased to announce that the lunch walks will resume Tuesday, May 12, at 12:25 p.m.

Please join Mary Ranallo, coordinator, outside the main entrance, and enjoy the group walk with your colleagues. The lunch walks will take place every Tuesday and Thursday from 12:25 to 1:05 p.m. (rain or shine). We hope to see you there with your colleagues!

**Info:** Mary Ranallo, ext. 22669 (mary.ranallo@muhc.mcgill.ca)

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**June 15 is Road Safety Day at the MCH**

As a Trauma Centre, our primary responsibility is to provide excellence in pediatric and adolescent trauma care to the children and teens of Quebec. We also have an important role in injury prevention which is truly the desired treatment of choice for trauma.

According to the Société de l’Assurance automobile de Québec (SAAQ), in 2007 there were 90 deaths and over 10,000 injuries in children and adolescents (under 19 years of age) involved in motor vehicle collisions. Pedestrians, motorists, passengers and cyclists must know and respect all safety rules of the road. We share the road and we share the responsibility of ensuring everyone’s safety.

On June 15 members of MCH Trauma including representatives of our different programs will be answering questions in the 2B clinic area about various aspects of road safety including demonstrating the proper fit of a bicycle helmet, providing information about car seats and distributing pamphlets about road safety information. We will also have a highway safety code quiz for people to complete and have their names entered in a raffle for exciting prizes. Come join us for an informative and fun-filled activity.

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**On June 8, the MCH will Pedal for Kids!**

Patient and event spokesperson Sean Clayton invites you to participate in the 2009 edition of Pedal for Kids taking place June 8 to 12, 2009. On Monday, June 8, come out and support the Hospital’s two teams: the Multidisciplinary Group and the “Happy Gang” team. To support your colleagues by making a donation, please visit www.pedalez.com. For information, contact Stephanie Normandin at the Foundation at ext. 29226.
Mini-Med School at The Children’s – Fall 2009

The MCH Mini-Med School Fall 2009 season has just been announced. The six-part series will run from early October to mid-November. Visit mchminimed.com for info and registration.

Missed last year’s presentations? Visit the MCH media portal (montrealchildrenportal.com) to see lectures from the 2008 Mini-Med series.

MCH Annual BBQ & Garage Sale

Come join in the fun as we celebrate the beginning of summer with a BBQ, garage sale and music! Tickets for lunch cost $3 and are available at the Cafeteria, Boutique and Security.

Date: Thursday, June 18 (rain date June 19 or 22)
Time: 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Where: outside, near the MCH Emergency

Please note that the Short Stay Unit will be closing for the summer on May 17, 2009. For more information: Josefina Revuelta, ext. 22380

Continuing Education

Annual Research Day
The Montreal Children’s Hospital
Wednesday, May 27, 2009
8:00 a.m. to 12 noon
Amphitheatre, D-182

Graduate Students, Fellows and Residents from the Montreal Children’s Hospital will make presentations outlining the progress of their research. Further information is available from the MCH Research Administration, ext. 23023 or 24300.

Awards and Nominations

Dr. Sam Daniel honoured

On May 1, the Globe and Mail announced its ‘Top 40 Under 40’ for 2008. Among those honoured was Dr. Sam Daniel, Director of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery at the MCH and Director of Pediatric Otolaryngology at McGill University. The ‘Top 40 under 40’ is a prestigious national award programme that recognizes forty Canadians in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors under the age of 40 based on their vision and leadership; innovation, and achievement; impact; community involvement and contribution; and strategy for growth.

Welcome Aboard

The Pediatric Emergency Department is pleased to welcome Dr. Joey Podavin to the team.
“Can we improve the care we provide our patients and their families?” asked Josie Revuelta, when she came up with the idea of creating a Medical Day Hospital at The Montreal Children’s Hospital.

Josie, who works as interim nurse manager of 6C Pediatric Medicine, the Short Stay Unit, the Renal Clinic and the Medical Day Hospital, knew that the outpatient services offered by a Medical Day Hospital would contribute to helping patients and families cope better. The Day Hospital would achieve this by offering a one-stop-shop type of service. Basic tests like blood work would be provided in the Medical Day Hospital while appointments outside the Medical Day Hospital, such as x-rays, would be coordinated for the patient. Professionals such as physiotherapists, nutritionists, and physicians would come to the patient for evaluation and follow-up.

In November 2005 the Medical Day Hospital opened. It contained two beds and the necessary equipment for basic care, such as blood tests, blood pressure tests, and delivery of oxygen. At the time, Josie was the only nurse running this outpatient service.

“Genetics took onto us fast,” says Josie, “since they have a lot of patients that require a lot of different services, such as dieticians and physiotherapists. With the Day Hospital these specialists come to these patients without the patients having to travel. We put all the care into a nice package.”

Soon two beds weren’t enough so they had to open up a room that had three to four spaces. Their patient population went from about 95 per cent inpatients, to 45 to 65 per cent inpatients with the rest being outpatients from other services. If a child being followed by a certain department at the hospital got sick at home, the department could send the patient to the Medical Day Hospital instead of to the Emergency Department. At the day hospital, these patients can be assessed by the service that knows them best. It also helps the services that are not open on the weekend; the Medical Day Hospital has daytime hours on Saturday and Sunday which means patients can be seen there on weekends.

“Every day we are branching out and getting more and different types of patients,” says Josie. “We are even doing work-ups now for the patients from Northern Quebec. Patients who have complex issues are flown to the MCH once a year to get an A-to-Z work-up. We are told ahead of time that they are coming so we book all the appointments within two to three days. It used to take up to 10 days.”

In May 2008, the Medical Day Hospital got the green light that it had passed the “pilot project” phase. Today it has three nurses with Dr. Claudette Bardin helping Josie reach colleagues to recruit more patients from other services.

So back to Josie’s question “Can we improve the care we provide our patients and their families?” The answer was a definitive ‘yes’.
Believing in miracles...

A family marvels at their baby daughter’s strength as she undergoes five surgeries and countless procedures

By Sonia Ponari, second-year Cegep student at Centennial College

The moment little Kayla Marcovecchio was born into this world she was rushed to the Montreal Children’s Hospital, where she underwent immediate head surgery for an abnormal growth that was detected by ultrasound three months before she was born. “To be told our unborn child had this growth was the most terrifying thing to hear,” say Kayla’s parents, Patrick and Lisa. “We had to choose whether to keep the baby or not because we were told that she could have died after birth.” While they knew they would have to battle fear and stress, they decided to keep their baby and on March 31, 2003, little Kayla was born.

“Both the Royal Victoria and The Montreal Children’s staff were so supportive—we knew with their support everything would be fine,” say the young parents. “It was a very comforting feeling.”

Following Kayla’s birth, two MCH nurses accompanied her by ambulance to the Children’s. At the hospital she was put into the Intensive Care Unit where numerous tests were performed. Her first brain surgery was scheduled for April 2, just 48 hours after she was born. After determining that the mass was not cancerous, the doctors decided to put a shunt in her head in order to remove the water in the tumour. Twenty-four hours later, Kayla’s body started to reject it and doctors had to immediately operate. After numerous attempts at trying to put the shunt back into place, the doctors decided to take a risk and removed the shunt permanently. The doctors were amazed at how Kayla’s body coped so they decided to leave it that way to see how things would turn out.

That was six years ago. From April 2 to July 4, 2003, Kayla underwent five surgeries, but she has not had one since. She is, however, being closely monitored through check-ups every six months. According to her parents, the tumour is as big as an orange. It hasn’t grown for many years but they still worry that at any point it could start to grow.

Kayla recently celebrated her sixth birthday, and although it’s a very happy occasion, for Kayla’s parents it always brings back memories of the day she was born. Patrick reflects on what she has been through in her young life. “She’s had countless MRIs, doctors’ appointments, examinations and follow-ups at the Children’s,” he says. While spending so much time at the hospital, especially after Kayla’s birth, Patrick and Lisa became friends with other parents too. The experience made them more aware of the serious problems in life, and they came to realize that life can be short and you should never let it pass you by.

Kayla has battled major obstacles, and her parents are happy to have a healthy little girl whose biggest worry is which doll to play with. “My mommy and daddy told me I’m a miracle baby,” says Kayla. And her parents have a few words of wisdom for other people going through the same thing. “Don’t worry, never give up and always let chances come through your door. It might be painful and scary but at the end of the day, you have to stay strong and believe everything will work out.”
A lifetime of learning
Eren Alexander manages MCH office for continuing nursing education

By Lisa Dutton

When you sign up to become a health care professional, you’re signing up for a lifetime of learning. Medicine changes day by day thanks to new discoveries and improved protocols, or because of emerging diseases and viruses. A nursing degree earned at CEGEP or university is just the beginning of the journey.

Eren Alexander, MCH Nursing Practice Consultant for Staff Development, is in charge of continuing health education for nurses. Her role involves working as manager for the nursing professional development educators, the education plan, the orientation of new nurses and continuing education. She has held this position since October 2008.

“It’s a new job for me and there is a lot to learn,” says Eren. “I miss the challenges of clinical nursing, but I now have a whole new set of challenges.”

One challenge Eren is grappling with is how to make learning materials more accessible to nurses who are already very busy. She’s focusing her efforts on organizing workshops and creating online learning modules. For example, a dozen nurses recently completed a vascular access workshop at the McGill Simulation Centre. The MCH Nursing department has also recently added two new learning modules—one on asthma, the other on chest tubes—to the MCH Staff Development section of the MUHC intranet site.

Eren comes from a family of health professionals so her decision to plan a career in nursing was essentially keeping it in the family business. She started at the MCH 15 years ago as a nurse in the PICU. “Nursing is a very rewarding profession,” says Eren. “Of course, it has its share of difficulties, but the MCH Nursing Department is very supportive. We’re always striving to make the job better and easier.”

When Eren is not at work, she spends much of her time doing learning of a different sort: buying a farmhouse near Cowansville has taught her plenty about do-it-yourself renovations. And while there is a passel of dogs: a Labrador retriever, a Labrador-Bernese Mountain dog mix and the newest addition, a seven-month old Bernese Mountain dog puppy—a big puppy to say the least.

Eren fell in love with the admittedly dilapidated farmhouse five years ago and now spends the better part of her weekends swinging a hammer and paintbrush.

“It’s a bit of a money pit. We spend our weekends renovating. We’ve replaced the roof, had the septic tank ripped up, replaced some of the windows and we plan to install a heat pump,” says Eren. “We love the house, but it is taking us longer to fix up than expected.” Definitely a learning curve... but Eren’s used to that.