

Chez nous

MCH EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

February 14, 2013

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Hôpital de Montréal
pour enfants
Centre universitaire
de santé McGill



Montreal Children's
Hospital
McGill University
Health Centre



MCH couples say 'I DO'

to our Valentine's Day Special



**Joanne Pavelak,
Ophthalmology and
Michel Gougeon,
Technical Services**

Joanne Pavelak instantly lights up every time Michel Gougeon walks into the room. "I never thought I'd find my soulmate," she says. "I've been working here for 25 years and this had never happened before." The pair met over two years ago in the hospital. She was attracted to his personality and he instantly fell in love with her charm. "When we first started talking, Michel told me that he had a sailboat and asked if I'd like to go sailing," she says with a big smile. "And, we've been sailing ever since."

"I know we both have pretty tough reputations and I'm sure some people ask themselves, 'How does Jane put up with him?'" admits Dr. Pekeles with a smile. "But there's a great bond between us and a lot of mutual respect." The two have been married for 27 years and first met in Toronto while completing their pediatric residency at Sick Kids. They also have three daughters and have lived and worked together in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda. As for words of advice for other MCH couples: "The best advice I can give is this - never, ever sit on the same committee at the same time," says Dr. Pekeles. "Never!"



**Dr. Gary Pekeles, pediatrician
and Director of the Northern
Child Health Program, and
Dr. Jane McDonald, Director
of Infectious Diseases and
head of Microbiology**



**Juan Fuentes, Patient Care
Attendant on 8D, and Suzanne
Lamoureux, Administrative
Assistant for the Craniofacial
and Cleft Palate unit**

Juan Fuentes and Suzanne Lamoureux will be celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary this summer. The pair first met in a restaurant in the Old Port where Juan was working as a cook, but they really hit it off after bumping into each other at a downtown salsa club. "We spent the night laughing and dancing," says Suzanne. "It felt like we had known each other forever." They married a few years later and somehow managed to cram 70 people into their tiny apartment for the wedding reception. "It was 36 degrees that day - but we had such a great time," laughs Juan. The dancing duo still love to entertain family and friends, es-



pecially if it involves their two daughters. “Oh, and don’t forget our granddog and grandcats,” says Suzanne. “Still working on grandkids though!”



Dr. Ana Sant’Anna, Division of Gastroenterology, and Dr. Guilherme Sant’Anna, Division of Neonatology ▼

“**T**here’s something you should know about my parents,” says Gabriela Sant’Anna, the couple’s eldest daughter. “They watch *Grey’s Anatomy* every Thursday. They love analyzing all the doctor shows!” Originally from Brazil, Dr. Ana Sant’Anna and Dr. Guilherme Sant’Anna first met while volunteering in Rio de Janeiro as young medical students. They married in 1990 and moved to Montreal almost ten years later. They now have two grown daughters, with one interested in pursuing a career in medicine. “Even though we both work at the MCH - we only see each other when we need to,” says Dr. Ana Sant’Anna. “It’s nice to have our own space at work.”

“**L**ots of people don’t even know we’re married,” admits Dr. Sharon Abish. “A few years ago we invited a bunch of medical students to our house without telling them that we were a couple. It was funny to watch them put two and two together!” The pair first met at the hospital after Allan’s supervisor, Maureen McCrory, decided to play matchmaker. “Maureen would tell me that Sharon had her eye on me,” laughs Allan. “And, then she’d go up to Sharon and tell her that I’d been asking about her!” The happy couple have now been married 18 years and have two sons. “Even with our busy jobs, we try and find time to do fun things together,” says Allan. “Like the time we climbed Mount Kilimanjaro!” ▼



Dr. Sharon Abish, pediatric hematologist-oncologist, and Allan Ptack, head of Allied Health Services

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A message from the Editor-in-Chief

The most recent issue of *Chez nous* featured a cover story on one mother’s experience at the MCH. In the article, Sabrina talked about the tremendous care her infant son received but she also shared her thoughts on where our services were not up to par.

Since publishing the article, we’ve received feedback from a number of people in the hospital. While some employees told us they appreciated reading a mother’s candid account of her stay and that it was a learning opportunity and a call to do better, others told us they felt the article was too negative and didn’t provide a balanced treatment of the situation.

It was never our intention to insult or offend any department or staff member at the MCH. Our decision to publish the article was to provide a perspective that we don’t often read about, that of parents and family members who have used our services

and spent time in our care. We felt Sabrina’s story gives a picture of one mother’s experience, good and bad. For all of us who know the hospital and its people well, we don’t always realize that a parent who is here for the first time doesn’t know how the hospital works and who to turn to for help.

We thank all of you who shared your thoughts and concerns about this story. It’s important to us to find out what you’re thinking and we appreciate your suggestions on how to make *Chez nous* a valuable publication for every MCH employee.

Lisa Dutton
Editor-in-Chief, *Chez nous*



MCH endocrinologist motivates students to pursue a career in medicine

The Montreal Children’s Hospital hosted a two-hour event for over 30 high school students from the English Montreal School Board on Thursday, January 17. The students, who are all interested in pursuing careers in medicine, had the opportunity to speak with pediatric endocrinologist Dr. Preetha Krishnamoorthy who is an assistant professor at McGill University and attending physician at the MCH. Dr. Krishnamoorthy spoke frankly about her career and the importance of balancing a busy family life. She also spoke about why she loves her job, and admitted she had a difficult time during the first two years of med school. “I could tell the students got a lot out of this talk,” says Tania Percio, a member of the EMSB Student Services department. “Hopefully this will help them with their CEGEP applications in March!” •





A celebrity joins the MUHC's renowned trauma teams



Terry DiMonte (kneeling) with members of the MCH Trauma team

Our internationally renowned trauma centres at the Montreal Children's and Montreal General hospitals have added a new celebrity member to their team.

CHOM 97.7 morning man and beloved Montrealer Terry Dimonte is now serving as ambassador to the MUHC's trauma programs, and will help promote the expertise and excellent care they provide to the tens of thousands of trauma patients who come through our doors each year.

In addition to using his radio show and social media to help spread the word about the MUHC's trauma care, Dimonte will also be at various community outreach events helping to promote prevention and fundraising initiatives.

To learn more about the MUHC's trauma programs, and for tips on how to avoid becoming a trauma statistic, visit muhc.ca/trauma and thechildren.com/trauma. •



RESPECTING A FAMILY'S SCHEDULE

— *By Imma Gidaro, MCH Coordinator for Patient- and Family-Centred Care*

When a patient and their family are given an appointment at the hospital, they have to alter their daily schedule to attend the appointment. This could mean taking the day off work, getting a babysitter for their other children, organizing a car pool, or reorganizing other appointments, all while dealing with the anxiety they may feel in preparing for the appointment.

As healthcare professionals, we should keep this in mind at all times. We should respect appointment times, reduce the need for multiple visits whenever feasible, and make each visit as positive an experience as possible.

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Tuesdays and Thursdays
from 9:00am – 3:00pm
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Stop, reflect and laugh

How to manage stress at work and at home — By Stephanie Tsirgiotis

Most of us are being pulled in a million different directions and it's easy to get stressed out or burnt out in the process. Recent data show 50 to 70 per cent of Canada's disability and health care costs are now dedicated to psychological illnesses. In fact, the number one reason workers take a leave of absence is because of major depressive and anxiety disorders. There are, however, steps we can take to reduce the chances of it happening to us.

Establishing priorities

If you've noticed a decrease in your self-esteem, concentration, motivation, libido, sense of humour, creativity and quality of work - then you might be suffering from stress. In order to reduce stress, Dr. Robert Béliveau, a former family doctor who currently leads stress and anxiety workshops at the Montreal Heart Institute, suggests establishing your priorities by organizing your life into four quadrants: important/urgent, important/non-urgent, not important/urgent, not important/non-urgent. We should then devote most of our energy to important/urgent priorities, followed by important/non-urgent priorities. Establishing these priorities enables us to be realistic about our expectations and maybe even say 'no' to certain things without feeling guilty. It also lets us act more effectively and efficiently, all while doing more with less.

PRIORITIES	URGENT	NON-URGENT
IMPORTANT	Personal crisis: illness, depression, burn out, crisis involving family; Projects with a deadline; Urgent breakdown: car, house	Prevention: exercise, rest, meditation; Development: both personal and professional; Time: planning at work, delegation, training, meetings
NOT IMPORTANT	Other people's problems; Email, telephone calls	Cleaning the garage

Learning your ABCs... and T

"We live in a very demanding environment and it's more important than ever to maintain one's balance and health," says Dr. Béliveau.



In fact, he says living in balance is as simple as ABCD (T). We need to be **aware** of our mental health by learning when to stop, rest and stay calm. We also need to focus on our **body** and its needs by taking more time to exercise and eat well. Dealing with the people around us means **communication** is also key and so is devoting more **time** to organizing our priorities. "It's also important to have a good sense of humour about things," he says. "Don't take yourself too seriously." Over time that perfect balance between work and life can be attained with a little bit of reorganizing, discipline and communication.

Dr. Béliveau also suggests taking some time each day to stop, sit and breathe. Try dedicating one minute at least three times a day to meditation. All you have to do is close your door, sit down, get comfortable, and close your eyes. Try concentrating on the sound of your own breathing for one minute. This will help you calm down and refocus, and studies have shown that regular meditation can have a positive impact on people suffering from stress, anxiety and depression.

Managing your stress does not have to be stressful. We just have to learn how to stop, reflect and laugh once in a while. Anyone know a good joke?

*In order to help you better prepare for our big move to the new Montreal Children's Hospital, **Chez nous** will be running a special series on adapting to change. It will include tips and advice on how to deal with stress, the power of positivity, and finding balance when everything around you is in flux.*



EVENTS



Memorial Service

A memorial service is planned to remember the children who have died recently at the MCH. We shall also commemorate the children who have died of SIDS. All staff members are warmly invited to attend the service, which will be held on **Tuesday, February 26, at 2:00 p.m. in the MCH Amphitheatre (D-182).** •

Pilates at the MCH

For employees

- When:** Mondays, and/or Wednesdays, 5:00 to 5:55 p.m., starting March 4 and 6, for 10 weeks.
- Where:** Rm D-292, MCH
- Cost:** \$100 one class per week, \$180 two classes per week
- Registration:** Contact Karen at **514-489-7717** or **karenkunigis@gmail.com** before February 27.

St-Valentine's Day

Invitation to all MCH staff

To mark Valentine's Day, the Quality of Life at Work Committee and the MCH Foundation invite you for a coffee and muffin in the Cafeteria and to meet a few colleagues while you're at it.

- Date:** Thursday, February 14
- Time:** 7:30 AM to 9:30 AM
- Where:** MCH Cafeteria

See you there!



THE 2011-2012 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF THE MUHC AT THE MONTREAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Now online at:
thechildren.com/en/research

In this issue of the annual report, we present the latest work of researchers and trainees at the Montreal Children's Hospital (MCH) under the theme of "Child health research: Growing with our strengths."

We invite you to meet our five research recruits and find out what is happening in the labs of five MCH investigators with high-impact programs.

Your feedback on this report is welcome. Please send your comments to Alison Burch at alison.burch@muhc.mcgill.ca.



Two MCH docs to compete in *Dancing with the Docs* this April

It's time once again to throw our support behind the two Montreal Children's Hospital doctors who will be trading in their stethoscopes for dancing shoes at the MUHC's hit fundraiser, *Dancing with the Docs*.

Last year's sold-out event was so popular that the MUHC is bringing it back for a second edition on Saturday, April 13 at La TOHU (2345 Jarry Street East). The spectacular competition will feature 10 new dancing docs, including the MCH's very own Dr. Claudette Bardin and Dr. Christos Karatzios.

Each doctor will be paired with a professional dancer from the Arthur Murray Dance Schools, and compete to win the hearts and votes of both the audience and a panel of celebrity judges. Returning to the celebrity judges' panel is ballroom dance champion Jean-Marc Généreux, from *So You Think You Can Dance*, CJAD 800 morning host Andrew Carter, CTV News Anchor Mutsumi Takahashi and international dance champion Méryem Pearson.

Also returning is Mosé Persico, entertainment host on CTV Montreal who will once again be emceeing the evening.

While the competition is modelled after the hit show *Dancing with the Stars*, the evening is much more than just a dance show. Guests enjoy a gourmet cocktail dinatoire with a limited open bar, live performances by Montreal Rhapsody, and an open dance floor once the results have been announced.

Tickets for a reserved table of four are \$600 while tickets for a VIP table, which includes a bottle of champagne and waiter services for your table, are \$1,000. You can choose to direct your donation to the MCH's *Best Care for Children* Campaign to support the New Children's.

For more information, and to get your tickets early before they sell out, visit dancingwiththedocs.ca, or call 514 934-1934, ext. 23622. •



Dr. Claudette Bardin, program head of the Medical Day Hospital and member of the Pediatric Consultation Service, and Dr. Christos Karatzios, who works in the Division of Infectious Diseases and takes care of children with HIV. He also works as an attending physician on the pediatric wards and sometimes works weekends in the Emergency Department. For a full list of the 10 doctors and their photos, visit the new dancingwiththedocs.ca website.



The Pediatric Consultation Centre —a valuable service

From teaching to consulting to diagnosing — *By Julia Asselstine*

For clinics at The Montreal Children's Hospital (MCH) and in the community, the MCH Pediatric Consultation Centre (PCC) is a very valuable resource. "We see children referred to us who require a comprehensive evaluation," says Dr. Linda Samotis, a pediatrician who works in the PCC. "For example, if a child who is being seen in the Ear, Nose and Throat Clinic at the Children's is having problems other than what they are being seen for, we organize and manage the follow-up, such as lab work, and then we ensure they are treated accordingly."

The PCC is located in the 2B clinic area of the MCH and is staffed by experienced, general consultant pediatricians who provide consultative opinions regarding a wide gamut of pediatric problems. Patients may also be seen at the MCH outreach clinic at the Lakeshore General Hospital.

"Problems may include chronic headaches, developmental issues, language delays, recurrent abdominal pain, failure to thrive, gastroesophageal reflux, school and behavioural problems, or any pediatric problem for which a physician wants a second opinion or more intensive investigation," says Dr. Richard Haber, director of the PCC. "Consultation is by referral only."

Multiple clinics provide multiple teaching opportunities

In addition to its general consulting clinics, the PCC includes a School Problems Clinic and Multicultural Clinic. There is also a Residents Continuity Clinic (RCC) where pediatric residents provide ongoing care for a select group of patients.

"We are a big teaching centre in general pediatrics for family resident trainees and medical students who are doing their clerkships," says Dr. Haber, who estimates they train about 60 to 70 people a year.

"We do not offer primary care or first-line services, however the RCC's purpose is to provide residents with the experience of continuity of care so they develop small practices of maybe 25 to 50 families who they follow throughout their four years as residents."

"The RCC allows us to do things like counsel families about nutrition, breast-feeding, sleeping, pacifiers—day-to-day things that we don't normally deal with in a teaching centre, where most of the cases are complex," says Dr. Robert Sternszus, the recent past RCC chief resident, who is a pediatrician working with the PCC. "We are able to forge relationships with families over time. It is good prep work for people who will want to work in a clinic in the community."

The residents who follow these patients and families review cases with the PCC pediatricians. "We discuss diagnosis and management," says Dr. Samotis. "Sometimes we will see a patient with the resident if required. It is pure clinical teaching."

The multicultural clinic offers services to refugee claimants, asylum seekers and immigrants—many of whom have not had any kind of health care, while the School Problems Clinic provides consultations for physicians regarding poor school performance. "Looking ahead to the new MUHC we are hoping to place more emphasis on teaching, which I have progressively done over the past decade as director," says Dr. Haber, "with patient- and family-centred care always at the forefront." •



Dr. Richard Haber



Dr. Linda Samotis



OUR HEROES

Never give up hope

Despite battling a chronic illness, 10-year-old Natalia Klaric's spirit remains strong — *By Jennifer Charlebois*

Natalia was only a year old the first time her mother Zora Gojtan noticed the ulcers in her daughter's mouth. Having battled Behçet's disease her whole life, Zora knew exactly what the problem was. But, to her knowledge, there was nothing that could be done about it.

Behçet's disease is a rare autoimmune disorder that causes chronic inflammation in blood vessels and otherwise healthy tissues throughout the body. "For me, it was a silent illness," says Zora. "I went through it all my life with doctors saying, 'You just have to live with it.'"

After bringing it up with Natalia's pediatrician, it seemed to Zora that Natalia would have to suffer the same fate. However, in 2008, Natalia battled a particularly severe and unrelenting flare-up that lasted nine months straight.

"She was in kindergarten, and she never had a break," says Zora. "Without treatment, the pain and the ulcers were constant."

When her symptoms worsened to the point that she couldn't walk, Zora took Natalia to Emergency at the Montreal Children's Hospital. She was admitted immediately, given morphine to help manage her pain, and referred to the Rheumatology department at The Children's.

It was there that Natalia was treated by Dr. Sarah Campillo and Dr. Suzanne MacDonald, and Zora finally felt that there was hope.

"They were really there for us, going above and beyond the call of duty for her," Zora says. "They helped put my fears to rest." Zora's suspicions were confirmed when Natalia was diagnosed with Behçet's disease. While symptoms vary from person to person, the disease frequently manifests itself through painful mouth sores, genital ulcers, inflammation inside the eyes, and



Natalia Klaric

skin lesions. The exact cause of Behçet's is unknown, and it is very difficult to diagnose because there are no specific tests to confirm it. As such, doctors must examine the patient, and through process of elimination, rule out other conditions with similar symptoms.

"I am very grateful that Natalia won't have to face what I did. There were times in my life where I felt like people didn't believe me," says Zora. "Her disease has a name now, and people understand that she is in pain."

Behçet's is not contagious, though it is likely hereditary. Although there is no cure, most patients go into remission, and flare-ups are managed with medication.

Natalia was treated with prednisone, a corticosteroid to help reduce pain and manage the inflammation. Unfortunately prednisone also often causes weight gain and fluid retention. Zora and Natalia are hopeful that positive results from an upcoming appointment with Dr. Campillo will show that Natalia's adrenal glands are working well, and that they can begin to slowly wean Natalia off the steroid drugs. Natalia is also being treated with Enbrel which helps to manage the symptoms and inflammation by controlling her overactive immune system.

For now, says Zora, it's manageable. "Natalia won't be free of ulcers, but our goal is that she only gets them once in a while, and that the disease is manageable and under control."



After another year, they will slowly reduce the dosage of Enbrel, and see how Natalia does. If the flare-ups have subsided, they will let her go drug free for as long as they can. If not, they'll stick with Enbrel until the disease goes into remission.

"We try to be positive about it, because she is also a child. I don't want her to look back on her childhood and only remember her illness, and hospitals and pain," she says. "I try to remind her that when something bad happens, something good will also happen. Illness is one thing, and medication can do so much, but attitude makes a big difference. When you are positive, everything is easier to overcome."

This optimistic approach has helped the family battle the ups and downs of the disease, and Natalia herself is eager to share her message of persistence and patience. "Never give up," she says. "Stick with your dreams, and don't give up hope." •



Awards and nominations

Dr. Mirko Gilardino, director of the *H.B. Williams Craniofacial and Cleft Surgery Unit* at the Montreal Children's Hospital, was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal on Wednesday, February 6, by his Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada. •

Dr. Claire Leblanc will assume the position of Director of the Division of Pediatric Rheumatology at the MCH on March 1. •

Awards of Excellence

The Awards of Excellence are back! The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation invites you to nominate your colleagues and volunteers for their outstanding work at the MCH. There are nine categories to be filled and fabulous prizes to be won. Each Award winner will receive \$1,000 to use at his or her discretion and two tickets to attend the Ball for The Children's on May 23 at Windsor Station. Winners will also direct \$9,000 to an area of need in the Hospital of his or her choice and another \$15,000 will go to meet the hospital's most urgent needs. Brochures and nomination forms are available at the MCH Information Desk or online at www.childrenfoundation.com. Deadline is March 22, 2013. •

PRIX D'EXCELLENCE
AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

2013

La Fondation de l'Hôpital de Montréal pour enfants
The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation

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