

Chez nous

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Montreal Canadiens visit

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Montreal Children's
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Montreal Canadiens

players provide holiday cheer with visit

By Paul Logotheis



► Seventeen-year-old Sandrine spent time with Brendan Gallagher, her favourite player, talking hockey while making holiday ornaments.



For Montreal Canadiens forward Brendan Gallagher, the annual visit to the Montreal Children’s Hospital provides perspective and joy during an always grueling NHL season.

“It’s something we look forward to and understand how important it is to be able to do things like this,” says the assistant captain. “It’s a privilege, an opportunity, and something the Canadiens have been doing for a long time and, as a team, this is something we get excited about.”

A tradition that burns bright

The annual visit was started by Canadiens great Jean Beliveau back at the Tupper Street site over half a century ago. On December 12, fresh off an overtime win over Atlantic Division rival the Ottawa Senators, Gallagher was one of 14 players to bring almost two hours of joy to approximately 150 of the Children’s patients and their families, friends, and the staff that care for them.

Goaltender Carey Price, defensemen Shea Weber and Jeff Petry, and forward Paul Byron were among the household names that joined Gallagher as the Habs provided their annual dose of holiday cheer across the MCH.



► Montreal Canadiens goalie Carey Price (right) and teammates visited even the smallest of patients.

Sandrine finally meets Brendan

Seventeen-year-old Sandrine Koros was prepared for the opportunity to meet Gallagher, her favourite player. Sandrine, who suffers from spina bi-fida, is awaiting her 31st surgery following her last operation in October. She has been having trouble swallowing and breathing and suffered a laryngo spasm – or breathing spasm – during an MRI, which led her to stop breathing. She was rushed to intensive care

and has remained at the hospital ever since, having suffered another spasm just days later which has left her vocal chords paralyzed and unable to eat on her own.

Sandrine and Gallagher first exchanged letters five years ago but she has been waiting for an opportunity to meet him ever since. Sandrine even prepared a cupcake decorated with Gallagher’s No. 11 jersey number on it, just for him.

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On the cover: Carey Price visits the Children’s NICU

Cover photo: Thibault Carron

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"I was very happy to meet him. He plays really well," says Sandrine, a sledge hockey player who first became a Canadiens fan at the age of 7. Her bed is draped with an enormous Habs blanket. "There was nothing to do but watch hockey. And I loved it. I was a Canadiens fan right away."

Sandrine was able to give Gallagher his cupcake and made holiday ornaments with her idol and his teammates, which included Byron, left winger Nick Cousins and defenseman Christian Folin, plus

four other patients on B9. Child Life specialists Kaitlen Gattuso and Krystalanne Pacheco Cabral led a group activity of filling clear ornaments with glitter, miniature presents and, of course, Canadiens logos.

"She was excited. Just to see her smile and distract her from whatever's going on makes it all worth it," says Gallagher. "And for me personally, I get a lot of joy out of that. It's fun to really take some time out with kids who are very positive, very energetic, and do a lot to bring your spirits up."

Sandrine's mother Sylvie couldn't believe her daughter finally lucked out in the chance meeting after so many near misses.

"Every time we're here, we hope 'we'll see him and then today it finally happened," Sylvie says as the ornaments created with the Canadiens players hung above her. "I'm inspired by my daughter; she never gives up. She's actually the stronger one of the two of us."

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An all-star staff

While the holiday-themed activity was underway on the 9th floor, Price, Cale Fleury and Jordan Weal were busy meeting with a group of psychiatry patients on B7 before providing parents in the NICU with a memory that will last a lifetime. That included a visit with fraternal triplets Timothy, Oscar and Arthur.

“It’s good to see they’re a team and a family here,” Price, a father to two infant girls, says of the work he witnessed being done at the Children’s. “It’s something the players should take note of.”

Meanwhile, Canadiens captain Weber – himself a father of three – led a group which included forward Joel Armia, and [continued >](#)



▶ Above: Paul Byron encouraging 2-year-old Prince Eden with a fist pump. Below: From left to right, 2-week-old fraternal triplets Timothy, Oscar and Arthur with Carey Price, Cale Fleury and Jordan Weale.





defensemen Ben Chariot and Brett Kulak through B8 and the ACU before providing a much-needed morale boost to the hard-working team in the PICU. Petry, fellow defenseman Victor Mete and forward Matthew Peca managed to find time to visit the Day Hospital and Complex Care to put spread some holiday cheer there, too.

“It’s really cool for our group and it’s something we look forward to every year,” says Gallagher. “It really puts a lot of things into perspective since a lot of times you get into a bubble where you feel like your issues are bigger than they are. But then you get to come and spend time with these kids, it really gives you an understanding of how lucky we are, how fortunate we are, and to just enjoy it as much as you can. To put a smile on a kid’s face for a brief moment, you get so much joy from it – it’s great for them and it’s great for us to be able to do this.”

Cousins summed up that feeling when told the visit would wrap up after he emerged from what was going to be the last room of the day. “What, already?” he chimed. ●







A day in the life of a... **Planning, Programming and Research Officer, Partnerships Office**

By Maureen McCarthy

Karine Frisou-Dugas's professional life has taken her to several countries and a few different work environments within the field of public health. There's a common thread that ties her experiences together: she has always worked in partnerships with others to build projects from the ground up. After receiving a Master's in Public Health, Karine moved to Morocco to work with Oxfam, and several years later, went to Jordan to work with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Upon returning to Canada, she spent several years in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, then in 2018, the Montreal native returned home to join the Network and Partnerships team at the Montreal Children's Hospital (MCH).

Recently, the Network and Partnerships team became part of the Partnerships Office, an MUHC-wide program led by Carole Lapierre, Associate Director. The MUHC Partnerships Office mandate is to facilitate access and continuity of care to those who need specialized and ultra-specialized services. By establishing local, regional and supra-regional professional alliances with healthcare network institutions, its work is centered on the patient in accordance with the particularities of diverse communities, and aims to simplify users' navigation according to optimal and integrated trajectories of services. Karine, like the entire Partnerships Office team, contributes to the creation of organized service networks which allow each patient to receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place, by the right caregiver.

► Top: Karine Frisou-Dugas

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Karine's two main roles within the team are services to Northern patients and inter-establishment clinical agreements.

Building on great ideas

The concept of a "typical" day is something that doesn't really apply to Karine's work. "My days are very different, but one thing that's pretty constant is I have a lot of meetings," she says with a laugh. Currently, there are 66 established pediatric agreements between the Children's and other healthcare establishments. Karine says that many physicians and healthcare professionals at the Children's have great ideas about how best to address the needs of a particular patient population.

For new proposals under development, Karine meets with the parties involved to draft and formalize the clinical agreement. Once completed, the agreement is added to a central database, which provides an ongoing and accurate picture for anyone needing information. "Over the past few years, there's been a move towards a more formalized structure around the ententes for collaborations. This has many advantages, not least of which is making the ongoing agreement sustainable even when key people take on new roles elsewhere or retire," she says.

She also emphasizes that the agreements are designed to work for everyone involved, and they work both ways, a recent example being the improved accessibility to network clinics for any family whose child is experiencing non-urgent symptoms from colds and flu.

Developing a co-management model

Karine works closely with both the Cree Health Board and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services to enhance services provided to children and their families from these regions coming to the hospital. She has been involved in interviewing for a social worker for the Nunavik patient population, and will be working with Cree Health Board representatives to interview candidates for nursing, social work and other positions, with the goal of having more support team members on site at the Children's. "This is a co-management model we're putting in place," she says, "and my contribution is to make sure that the key pieces link together. I follow up at every stage, take part in staff orientation, and make sure new staff are settling in."

Karine meets regularly with Carole Lapierre, and Drs. Johanne Morel and

Sophie Mauger from Northern Health at the Children's to review administrative needs for services to Northern populations.

Putting the pieces together

There's one aspect of Karine's work at the Children's which she sees as quite different to her previous jobs. "I've found that being based in a hospital is very concrete," she says. "I really enjoy it—that is, the systems and seeing how all the pieces fit together." She also finds that clinicians' ideas for ways to help and support the pediatric population are inspiring. "The goal is to operationalize these ideas and link to the right people," she says. "I'm really a facilitator for that."

As for what's next, Karine will continue to work on new projects as they come up. "There was recently a tour du RUISSS completed, so there may be some new developments that emerge from that. ●

► (l. to r.) Karine Frisou-Dugas and Carole Lapierre meet with Dr. Robert Barnes, Associate Director of Professional Services.



A safe space to talk shop

By Paul Logothesis

The Montreal Children's Hospital recently became the first pediatric institution in Canada to host hospital-wide Schwartz Rounds for caregivers. Born out of the Schwartz Center in Boston, Schwartz Rounds create a space for caregivers to ease distress, foster community, and allow colleagues to learn from others' experiences. The aim of the bi-monthly forum is to provide a space for staff to come together regularly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in healthcare, with a focus on understanding their experience from a social and emotional point of view.



What happens in Schwartz Rounds stays in Schwartz Rounds

Approximately 60 people – from physicians to nurses to administrative staff – attended November's launch session with its theme of 'My First Code.' The topic elicited a variety of personal experiences and anecdotes from a similar range of emotional takeaways that come with working at the Children's.

Feelings of guilt were vivid for most who had lived through a distressful episode such as a Code Blue, an emergency situation which is called when a patient is in cardiac arrest. These feelings are particularly strong when a patient in critical state did not survive. Feeling paralyzed or frustrated, especially when you have to move on from the Code Blue to treat

another sick child waiting with a frustrated family in the emergency room was particularly difficult for many.

The scars that remain for many staff include being unprepared for a family's emotional reaction when delivering bad news or their own disbelief after chatting with a teen patient one moment, and the next moment the teen has died.

Sharing difficult experiences with colleagues

One staff member shared a particularly intense story of leaving work in a daze following the death of an infant. On the drive home, in the cold of winter, they got a flat tire and pulled over. Sitting in their car by the side of the road, they began to scream in grief and rage.

As a tool for improving work climate and post-traumatic distress, Schwartz Rounds clearly provide a therapeutic setting for staff who have not always felt there was a clear outlet for discussing their experiences and the heavy emotional toll these can ultimately take on their lives. Experiences varied but the camaraderie was clear and the audience was engaged from the start thanks to the excellent work of the panelists and moderator, who did well to ensure all those who were keen to participate were heard, with a positive, supportive air filling the room from start to finish. While the stories shared recounted moments of distress, the ability to release these feelings in a safe environment was clearly appreciated.

Schwartz Rounds are open to anyone who works with patients and families at the Children's, and those working in Women's Health. If you have an idea for a future topic, please feel free to send your ideas to Maryse Dagenais, Matthew Park and/or Margaret Ruddy. The next Schwartz Rounds will be held on January 13, March 23 and May 11. ●

Cozy Cabin Holiday Party!



Montreal Children's Hospital staff brought toques, slippers and mugs for the 'Cozy cabin holiday party' at the P.K. Subban Atrium on December 11. There was a bounty of cheer and joy at the annual season-ending employee party with delicious cookies, cake pops, brownies, and cupcakes to go with a hot chocolate bar and a photo booth to snap some souvenir shots. A big thanks to the Quality of Life at Work committee for their efforts in organizing such a merry moment to close 2019 with! ●



Over 25 years of sewing for smiles

Vivien Chai, 84, is a petite woman with a big, warm heart. For over 25 years, she has dedicated her time, energy and sewing skills during the Holidays to making 120 stockings for Children's patients who find themselves in the hospital. The stockings are then filled by nursing staff who pick out personalized gifts collected by Child Life Services for every patient who will be waking up at the Children's on December 25. Vivien's project is a labour of love that takes well over two months to complete, requiring cutting, sewing and assembling from start to finish, with many of the details being hand-sewn. Unfortunately, this will be her last year given the volume of work required. But her trademark snowmen and abounding generosity has touched thousands of patients, families and staff members and won't be soon forgotten.

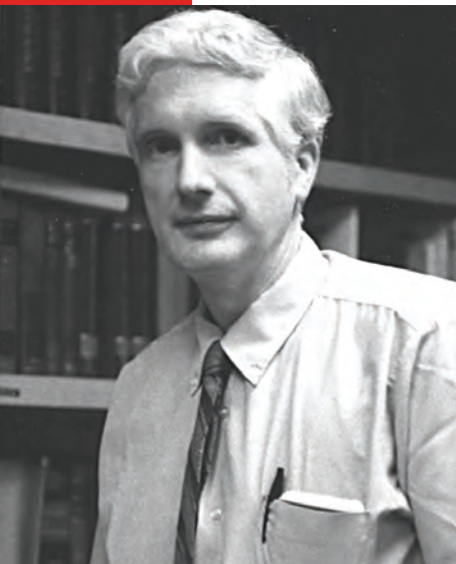
Her philosophy is simple, she says: "I always want to be helping people. It's what makes me happy. And when you're happy, others will feel it too. It's a very nice thing to do at Christmas time." As a type 1 diabetic for many years, Vivien says she felt even more motivated to give back to others while she had the opportunity to. "I figure sooner or later I will need someone to help me," she explains, "and when that time comes, I hope I'll be able to receive it, knowing I've been able to do this work."

Vivien also has a personal connection to the McGill University Health Centre. Her grandson, Brendan Timmins, is a nurse clinician working in Cardiac Surgery on D7 at the Royal Victoria Hospital and one of her biggest supporters, along with his mother, Fiona. He says his



grandmother's outlook on life is exceptional, and her commitment to this project is inspiring.

Please join us in thanking Vivien for her abounding kindness and generosity every Holiday season for the past 25 years and more. ●



► Dr. Charles Scriver, circa 1975. (Audiovisual Montreal Children's Hospital. MUHC Archives and Special Collections.)

Commemorating a public health victory

This year marks the 50th anniversary of a groundbreaking achievement, one that resulted from a collaboration between Montreal Children's Hospital geneticist Dr. Charles Scriver and businessman Arthur Steinberg.

At the end of the 1960s, the two men joined forces to tackle a significant public-health issue related to nutrition. Following extensive research, Dr. Scriver had discovered that babies suffering from rickets, a disease that affects bone growth and is caused by a vitamin D deficiency, were typically from poor families.

Facing some resistance from milk producers, Dr. Scriver called upon grocery store giant, Mr. Steinberg, who was his key ally in ensuring that vitamin D would be added to bottled milk throughout Quebec. Mr. Steinberg's actions helped combat the high rate of rickets among the province's poorest children, which went from one case in 200 to one in 20,000 almost overnight.

On November 18, the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation hosted an event in honour of this achievement bringing together Steinberg family and friends, and almost a dozen researchers from the RI-MUHC, several of whom worked alongside Dr. Scriver. ●