

Chez nous

MCH EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

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The Habs surprise patients with special visit

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Hôpital de Montréal pour enfants
Centre universitaire de santé McGill



Montreal Children's Hospital
McGill University Health Centre

It snows Red-White-Blue at the Children's!

The Montreal Canadiens bring joy to patients and families during annual hospital visit

By Stephanie Tsirgiotis

It's always a special treat when the Habs visit the Montreal Children's Hospital — and this year was no different. Staff, patients and families lined the hallways and patient rooms, waiting patiently to meet their hockey idols. The team visited patients on all the inpatient units and the media was invited to follow P.K. Subban, Lars Eller, Andrei Markov and Jarred Tinordi on the 8th floor. Thanks to wider hallways and individual patient rooms, the visit also felt more intimate than in previous years.



Maxence Gosselin, who had a Canadiens logo and “Go Habs Go” painted on his head bandage, thought he was in a dream when the players first entered his room because he was still half asleep. “Once he realized that this was reality he got so excited and asked if we could follow them around the floor,” says his mother Geneviève Verret. The four-year-old from Quebec city is recovering from a surgery for his epilepsy. Maxence’s entire family are huge Habs fans and Geneviève was delighted that the players were able to say hello to her other two sons and husband on the phone. “What a special day.” ■



▼ MCH patient Darcy gave her best smile while posing with Andrei Markov, Lars Eller, P.K. Subban, and Jarred Tinordi.

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▶ The players handed out gifts to all the patients. Mariana loved her teddy bear.



▶ Massimo might have been too young to know who the players were, but his father was very excited to meet them!



▼ MCH staff and physicians waited patiently for their chance to meet the players too.

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Did you know you're reading an award-winning magazine?

Chez nous came in second for best internal health care newsletter in Canada! The award was given by the Health Care Public Relations Association of Canada.

On the cover: P.K. Subban, Maxence Gosselin and Geneviève Verret.

Cover photo: Owen Egan

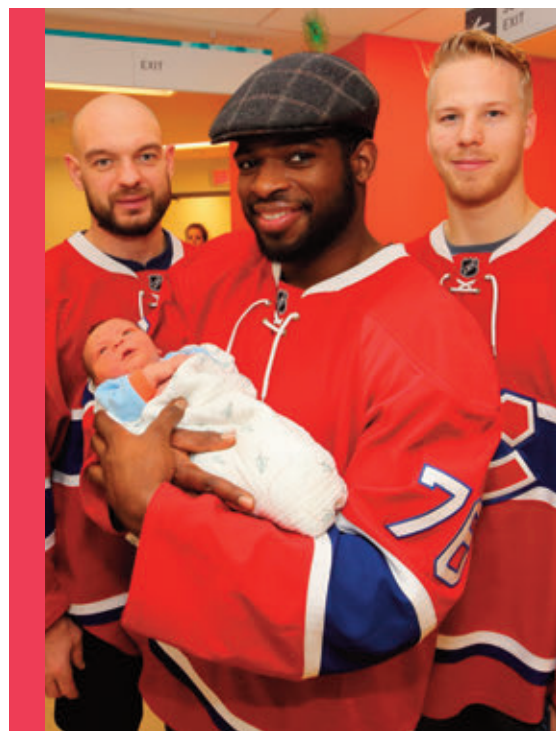
Montreal Canadiens bring joy... (cont'd)



▼ Emmanuelle was picture perfect ready for her visit.



▼ Raphaël couldn't wait to meet her favourite players.



▼ P.K. Subban jumped at the chance to hold Massimo's little brother.

Message from Martine Alfonso

A new year, new ideas



Martine Alfonso

As December moves by at its usual speed, I'm sure you're all looking forward to the holiday period to spend time with family and friends and get ready for a brand new year. And after such a busy year, what a well-deserved break it will be for everyone at the Children's!

When I talk of the busy year we had, it's not only about accomplishing our successful move and transition to the Glen but it's about the many new projects that have got under way since the move. One thing that has always impressed me about the Children's is how people from across departments take an active interest in finding new ways of doing things to continuously improve the care we provide to patients. Over the past few months, a number of our colleagues have been busy developing new projects to take us into 2016 and beyond.

You've no doubt heard about some of these initiatives. The recently launched "We should talk" campaign aims to encourage everyone involved in a child's care to let their voice be heard. The Lean Six Sigma training program is another project that will be phased in next year to give as many staff as possible concrete problem-solving tools to improve efficiencies and workflow in their departments. The Patient and Family-Centred Care model is also playing a more central role in our delivery of care as staff and families learn more about the Mutual Learning Mindset model and get opportunities to develop their communication skills.

All of these projects are working together to help make the Children's an even better hospital and I'm truly excited about these developments. I'm sure as these new programs become more integrated into our way of working, they'll benefit everyone at the hospital.

I'd like to wish each and every one of you a very happy holiday. I'd also like to say a special thank-you to those of you who will be working over the holidays; your efforts will help ensure our patients and families who can't be at home will feel well cared for at the Children's.

Martine Alfonso

*Associate Executive Director
Montreal Children's Hospital*



Our Holiday Helpers



A couple of thoughts from our staff about working over the holidays

By Maureen McCarthy and Pamela Toman

It takes a team of dedicated Holiday Helpers to ensure that our patients get the care they need when they need it. Here are some of our devoted staff members who will be working over the holidays, all while doing their very best to bring some festive cheer with them.



Chennel Campbell



“Being in the hospital — no matter what time of year — is an unfortunate circumstance, so I always do my best to ensure that I get patients through registration as quickly as possible,” says Chennel Campbell, an administrative officer in the Admitting Department of the Montreal Children’s Hospital. Chennel will be working the evening shift at Registration in the Emergency Department on December 24, and says that she plans to keep things festive by dressing up in holiday sweaters with colleagues and decorating her work area.

On Christmas, Chennel says she is most looking forward to spending time with family and friends and sharing a delicious meal together. “My mom is an amazing cook, and loves to make a ton of food during the holidays. We end up being a big group and enjoying her delicious dishes!”



Conall Francoeur



“During the holidays especially, we’re very sensitive to the fact that parents of some of our patients have other children at home. We try to remind them that we will take good care of their child, and encourage them to head home and spend

some time with their other children to normalize an abnormal situation,” says Conall Francoeur, a fellow in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). “We also find ways to bring holiday festivities to the unit, by putting up decorations and handing out gifts through our Child Life department. Some of our staff members even wear Christmas scrubs!”

Conall will be working on and off throughout the holidays, and says the nurses usually organize a potluck party for all those working on New Year’s Eve complete with non-alcoholic champagne to make the day a little more festive. And when it comes to organizing holiday celebrations at

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home, Conall says his family is extremely accommodating. "My sister and dad are both doctors and my mom is a nurse – we all make it work together!"

Tracey Mulholland

In the 27 years that Tracey Mulholland has been a nurse at the Children's, she can count on one hand the times she hasn't worked on Christmas. "There's always been a nice feeling in the hospital over the holidays," she says. "It's hard for patients and families to be here but we try to make it fun for them. Everyone on staff gets in the spirit; we put up decorations and some people get out their festive uniforms too." Tracey says one of the highlights for her has always been Santa's visit to the kids.



In her first years on the job, Tracey worked overnight on Christmas Eve, but eventually switched to the daytime shift. She now works in the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit as part of the Critical Care Float Team, and this year will be the first time she's working over New Year's instead of Christmas.

Despite having worked almost every Christmas Day of her career, Tracey says her family has always been very understanding. "They really plan Christmas around me," she says with a laugh. "One year we had our family dinner on December 26. My nieces and nephews were still young enough that they didn't realize it was a day late!"

Jessika Truong



Jessika Truong is a pharmacist in the Oncology and Transplant unit at the Children's. She hasn't missed a single Christmas day since starting at the Children's 10 years ago. "I do it by choice. It's actually a magical day to work," she says.

The days leading up to December 25 are usually very busy on the unit. "We try our best to stabilize as many of our young patients as possible so they can go home to be with their families – even if it's only for 24 hours," she says.

For those children who need to stay in hospital though, the staff do everything in their power to make sure it's no ordinary day. "Pretty much everyone who works on Christmas day wants to be here," says Jessika. "If the kids can't be at home, we work extra hard to make the day special. And that goes for everyone at the hospital from the staff on the unit to the people in housekeeping and food services."

Jessika also says it's great when the Child Life staff drop by with gifts and other surprises. "It's a special day even for the children who don't celebrate Christmas," she says. "What matters most to all of them is the spirit of the holiday – the spirit of sharing and love." ■

The Gift of Sound



Karina Théorêt becomes first patient in North America to receive new bone-anchored hearing implant

By Stephanie Tsirgiotis



Stacey and François stand proud next to their children, Olivier and Karina.

As a toddler, Karina Théorêt's parents, Stacey Hoirch and François Théorêt, noticed that she wasn't speaking at the same level as other children her age. Her pediatrician reassured them that it was probably the result of growing up in a bilingual home, and that such children usually take longer to speak. But as time went on, her parents began to fear that something was wrong.

At three years old, Karina was referred to the Otorhinolaryngology department at the Montreal Children's Hospital (MCH). Doctors confirmed that she was suffering from

hearing loss in her right ear. Sadly, it could not be restored. "It was hard news to hear, but we felt reassured to know what the real problem was," says her mother, Stacey.

Deafness does not run in the Hoirch-Théorêt family and the family underwent many rounds of genetic testing to find out the cause of Karina's deafness; all the results came back inconclusive. Early on, the family decided not to treat Karina any differently and go on with life as normally as possible. "I only started to notice that I was partly deaf when I got to elementary school," says Karina. "But it didn't upset me because I thought it made me special and different."

Karina started to swim competitively and she excelled in school. As a child, she became interested in studying medicine and would spend hours reading a medical book about the digestive system. "I couldn't put it down," she laughs. "I even watched YouTube videos about surgeries and started thinking about becoming a surgeon myself." Even though

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Karina's implant will be barely visible under her hairline.



Dr. Sam Daniel and Karina Théorêt

school wasn't a problem for Karina, the classroom still led to some frustrations. "I always had to think about where to sit to make sure I could hear everything properly," she says. "Or, I'd have to move my friends to my good side, because otherwise I'd be stuck asking them to repeat something three times before I could understand."

When Karina turned 15 her mother decided to make one last appointment at the Children's before she became an adult. They met with audiologist Anne-Marie Forget, who explained that there were now different types of technology on the market compared to what was available twelve years ago. She suggested a couple of different alternatives and made an appointment for Karina with Dr. Sam Daniel, Director of Otorhinolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the MCH.

Little did they know that Dr. Daniel had just come back from a conference where he had learned about a new technique called Minimally Invasive Ponto Surgery (MIPS). After meeting with Karina, he determined that she would make a perfect candidate for the surgery. "The procedure had been evaluated in Europe, but this would be the first time it was done in North America," says Dr. Daniel.

MIPS is designed to minimize complications during and after surgery and leaves no scarring since it's a suture-free

operation. The bone-anchored hearing implant is placed 50 mm from the ear canal and is barely visible under the hairline. The 10-minute surgery only requires local anesthesia and the patient can go home the same day. "During the procedure, the patient may feel pressure or vibrations similar to an electric toothbrush, but they don't experience any pain," explains Dr. Daniel.

On November 18, Karina underwent the surgery and was excited to be awake during the operation. "I got to see the inside of an operating room for the first time in my life," she says. "It was so exciting. I felt like I was in Grey's Anatomy." During the operation, Dr. Daniel punctured a small hole in the side of Karina's head and drilled a screw into her skull. Over the next month, the screw will fuse to the bone and doctors will finish the procedure by attaching a small external microphone that will conduct vibrations through the implant and along her skull. "She will then pick up and process these sounds through her left ear," explains Dr. Daniel.



Olivier and Karina had fun playing foosball in the MCH's Teen Lounge.

Stacey and François are very proud of their daughter and her decision to have the surgery. "Karina read everything she could about this surgery. She made the decision to get the implant," they say. "We can't even imagine what it feels like to go from not hearing to hearing." Of course this also means

that things will change around the house for Karina. "I guess I can't use my deafness as an excuse to get out of doing chores anymore," she laughs. ■

'Tis the season to be jolly!

The Montreal Children's Hospital starts off the holiday season on the right foot



Grammy Award winner and two-time Juno nominee Jennifer Gasoi performed an intimate concert for patients and families in the Family Resource Centre on December 7. The beloved children's performer has a unique gift for creating clever, upbeat, catchy jazz-based children's songs that inspire kids and adults alike to live from their hearts and follow their dreams.

A brass quintet from McGill's Schulich School of Music rang in the holiday season with a free concert in the P.K. Subban Atrium on December 7. Ben, Joon, Hillary, Will and Peter, all volunteered their time to play at the MCH. The 45-minute performance brought much joy to those in attendance. "It was really beautiful," says Lukas Rowland, an administrative agent at the MCH.



MCH staff, physicians, patients and families were all invited to this year's Christmas party on December 9 in the P.K. Subban Atrium. A choir made up of McGill students from medicine and dentistry performed for the crowd, while Dr. Claire Leblanc and her singing elves kept everyone entertained. Two Westjet tickets were also raffled off and \$600 was raised for the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation. Even physiotherapist Carlo Galli got dressed up as Santa Claus!