



Public art collection at the Glen site helps create a truly healing environment

Upon its opening in Spring 2015, the Glen site of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) will become home to a prestigious collection of public art for patients, visitors, health-care professionals and members of the community to enjoy. While contributing to the healing environment being cultivated at the new site, these pieces will also serve to showcase the outstanding talents of the local Quebecois and Canadian artists who designed them.

On display in 11 architectural spaces around the site, the collection offers viewers a diverse overview of artwork that will fit harmoniously within this hospital setting while evoking feelings of optimism and hope. Together, they will add to the current MUHC collection comprised of thousands of artefacts, including historical medical equipment and art works donated to the MUHC founding hospitals over the past 120 years.

“These pieces have been selected amongst a large number of submissions not only because of their artistic merit and allure, but also for their potential to engage the public and reflect the MUHC’s mission to heal, teach, and innovate,” says Karine Raynor, associate



Je suis là ! Multidimensional and interactive work by Michel Saulnier (one of 11 art works of the Glen). The bear balancing on the sphere was designed to inspire calm, confidence and courage.

director and curator of the MUHC Heritage Centre. “Each piece underwent a rigorous selection process overseen by a committee of government officials, art industry experts, and MUHC personnel.”

According to the Quebec Ministry of Culture, the addition of these 11 works makes the MUHC public art collection one of the largest in the province’s history. This initiative was made possible thanks to their Politique d’intégration des arts à l’architecture program, which requires public construction projects to reserve one per cent of their budget for the integration of public art.

The pieces are currently being installed on the Glen site through July to September 2014. While they will not be open for public viewing until the hospital opens in Spring 2015, the public can learn more about each piece and the artist who designed it at www.muhc.ca/muhc-heritage/Glenpublicart. Through a series of photographs, users can also follow the entire creation process, from design to studio to eventual installation at the Glen. The MUHC invites you to discover these impressive pieces of art that will contribute to the building of a truly healing environment.

Claire Duchesneau: from hearing loss to cancer battle, from music to healing



MUHC SOCIAL WORKER AT THE CENTRE OF A DOCUMENTARY

On July 29 was the world premiere of *In the Key of Claire: A Story of Music and Healing*, which highlights the many facets of Claire Duchesneau’s life, a McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) social worker at the Montreal Chest Institute for 27 years specializing in HIV/AIDS.

Born into a musical family, Duchesneau started singing at a very young age and never stopped, despite later suffering from significant hearing loss. Four years ago, she began a battle with cancer. Fearing that chemotherapy would further impair her hearing, she recorded an album called *Not Until Today* before beginning her treatment.

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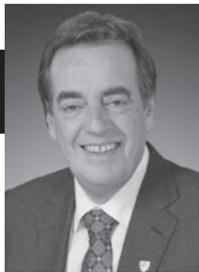
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Message from **NORMAND RINFRET**

My turn to say bravo

The current *enBref* demonstrates the extraordinary efforts deployed throughout the organization as we prepare for the opening of the Glen and the transfer of programs and services across our six sites within the next seven months. This entails the completion of harmonizing practices and processes, consolidation of teams, training of approximately 8,000 employees, and completing the detailed patient transfer plans. We have a unique opportunity to shine in our transformation as a world class healthcare organization and I have all the confidence that our teams will deliver.

In parallel, the healthcare network is also transforming the way care is being delivered across the province with the objective of providing services closer to patients' homes. The network is investing in primary and secondary care at CSSSs, while designating academic centres to more tertiary and quaternary care. As a result, the MUHC will enhance its focus on providing specialized care as well as research, teaching and technological assessment services. There are very few hospitals in Quebec that have this mandate. Given the short timeframe to implement our 2007 clinical plan, adjusted with CAPS, the MUHC will pave the way for the network's redirection in care delivery. Because patient care is our *raison d'être*, we will continue to work intensely with our network partners to establish corridors of services as well as pooling of missions within the McGill RUIS in order to make sure quality of care remains the focus of all institutions in the transformation of the patient experience.

We can all be proud of the unprecedented turnaround of the performance and efficiency in our clinical activities and our constant journey towards equilibrium. In an effort to share best practices and initiatives that contribute to our performance, we are working with our colleagues of the Jewish General Hospital. We are also establishing our Year-1 budget with the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux. Funding will be based on the volumes set out in our clinical plan, which have not only justified the investment in our new facilities but will also determine the workforce plan.

All these unprecedented changes would not be possible without your continuous efforts. As you will appreciate with the Bravo trophies summer rounds, colleagues throughout the organization have been recognized for going the extra mile. If you have participated in an exceptional clinical outcome or received a testimonial from a patient who would like to share their story, I encourage you to inform our Public Affairs team or post it on our various social media platforms.

This is indeed an exciting moment in our history. It provides us with a great opportunity to showcase our world class academic healthcare institution and revitalize our reputation for excellent patient care.

Non-Glen Transfers

As part of the MUHC's re-organization in 2015, a small number of departments and services will be transferring somewhere other than the Glen site. Transfers will begin on January 25 with the move of the long-term-care patients from the Montreal Chest Institute to their new home in the Camille-Lefebvre Pavilion of the Lachine Hospital. A series of additional departments and services at the Royal Victoria Hospital will be moving to the Montreal General Hospital or off-site during the last week of March. For updates on the move sequence for all non-Glen transfers, please visit the Intranet Transfer page.

Guidelines on the use of social media

Today, more than ever before, people are participating in a public dialogue by sharing their stories through social media networks. Here at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), we recognize the importance of providing our personnel with an open forum for discussion that can lead to creating different initiatives and seizing new opportunities to connect with others.

To reflect this, the MUHC has published a social media policy that highlights our institutional values of transparency, honesty, patient confidentiality and respect. In summary, it states that when using MUHC social media platforms our personnel should:

- be mindful that patient confidentiality rules extend to social media too. Don't divulge any patient information;
- not provide any medical advice;
- use courteous and respectful language and tone;
- be respectful of others;
- be honest and transparent;
- know that any information posted on an MUHC social media channel is monitored and may be flagged for removal and/or discussed with an immediate supervisor.

You can find the full document on the Intranet under: Quick links > Administrative policies > ADM 615 – Social Media Policy.

FALL LEGACY YEAR EVENTS: Free Skate at the Bell Centre and Heritage Exhibits

PLUS, HOCKEY MATCH BETWEEN THE DOCS AND STAFF!

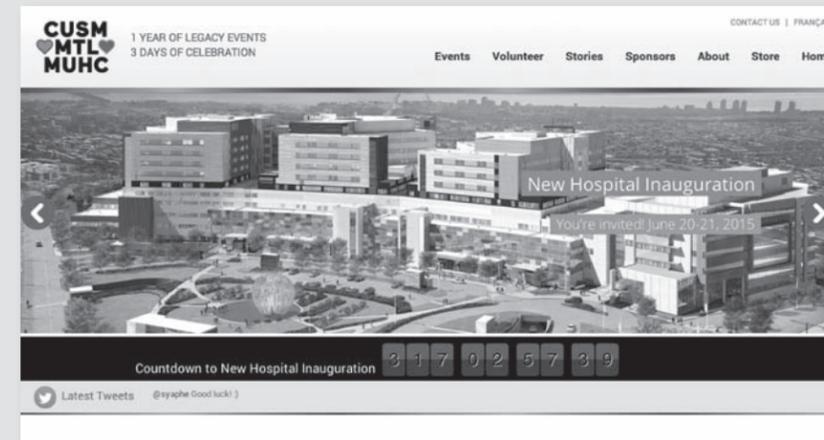
Have you ever wanted to bring your family skating at the Bell Centre? Or watch physicians go head-to-head against hospital staff in a friendly hockey match?

You'll be able to do both and much more at the **MUHC Family Day and Hockey Match** taking place on Sunday, November 30, 2014 as part of the hospital's Legacy Year celebrations – a year of events, activities and tributes taking place across the MUHC that will culminate in the official inauguration of the new hospital at the Glen site on **June 20, 2015**.

Organized by the Montreal General Hospital Legacy Committee, this event is open to all MUHC employees and their families and will include a free-skate as well as plenty of off-ice activities, such as face-painting and family-friendly kiosks.

Leading the physicians in the "friendly rivalry" hockey match will be Dr. Ed Harvey, the team captain, and their coach Dr. David Mulder – the long-time chief physician for the Montreal Canadiens. The staff team will be led by Technical Services Manager Joseph Ferrera and coached by MUHC Director General and CEO Normand Rinfret.

To give the match a professional flavour, a live play-by-play will be provided during the game by CTV's Brian Wilde and TSN 690's Elliott Price.



Doors open at 12:30 p.m. and the free-skate begins at 1 p.m., which will be followed by the hockey match. For more information and to purchase tickets go to muhclovesmtl.ca/events and scroll down to the event notice.

Other Legacy Year events coming up this fall include free clinical heritage exhibits at both the Montreal General and Royal Victoria hospitals. They will feature educational and historical displays that showcase the clinical evolution and accomplishments of various departments from both hospitals.

The MGH exhibit runs from September 16-17 in Livingston Hall while the RVH exhibit takes place on November 11 in the H4 Lounge.

For more information about the MUHC's Legacy Year, great stories from the past and the full list of events, please visit muhclovesmtl.ca.

The Neuro turns 80!

This year, on September 27, the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital-The Neuro, at McGill University and the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) -marks its 80th anniversary. From a small, six-storey building conceived by The Neuro's founder and first director, Dr. Wilder Penfield, the institution has become the largest specialized neuroscience complex in Canada.

Today, The Neuro hosts the full reach of modern neuroscience disciplines. Among these are molecular biology laboratories, a brain tumour research centre, nanotechnology research laboratories, as well as the McConnell Brain Imaging Centre, where cutting-edge brain imaging technology is being developed.

For 80 years, The Neuro has rigorously maintained Penfield's vision of research scientists working side by side with neurologists and neurosurgeons. Penfield was convinced that such interaction was the best way to find the causes of debilitating

neurological diseases and to offer the best patient care.

The Neuro has become an essential treatment centre. Among its specialized clinics are those for movement disorders, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, pain, brain tumours and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Last year, it received more than 42,000 ambulatory patient visits, more than 28,000 diagnostic tests were carried out and brain surgeons performed some 1,800 procedures.

Always at the forefront of innovation, The Neuro was the gateway to Canada for technologies like encephalography (EEG), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), positron emission tomography (PET), and computer-assisted tomography. Not long ago, The Neuro was among the few medical facilities in Canada to obtain a neurosurgical simulator, a device that allows neurosurgeons to practice a surgical procedure in virtual reality before attempting the procedure on a patient.

Proud member of McGill University's network of teaching hospitals, The Neuro has trained many research fellows who pursue distinguished careers both in Canada and around the globe. Some former fellows have established institutes and centres based on The Neuro model in their home countries, including in Japan, China and India.

In the neuroscience field, The Neuro is the largest single recipient of funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the main source of funding in Canada for biomedical research. Neuroscience subjects range from epilepsy (a Neuro specialization from its earliest days) to cognitive neuroscience.

The Neuro begins its ninth decade at a high point, led by internationally renowned clinician-scientist Dr. Guy Rouleau. In the coming years, The Neuro's move to the MUHC Glen site will mark a new milestone in its history.

The summer Bravo Trophy recipients revealed!

From the kitchens of the Children's Hospital to the Housekeeping Department of the Royal Victoria, the Bravo trophies successfully made their summer rounds. Through tears, laughter and hugs, our trophy recipients were more than grateful to receive this token of appreciation from a colleague.

While the plan was to only feature the Bravo Trophy tour during summers, due to popular demand we have decided

to make this a year-round event. However, the trophy will now travel between recipients every month rather than every two weeks.

Keep an eye out—YOU could be next!

Here are the trophy recipients from this summer. Congrats everyone! And thanks for keeping the appreciation train rolling.

2155 GUY



THE GENERAL



THE ROYAL VICTORIA



THE NEURO



THE CHEST



LACHINE



THE CHILDREN'S



Thank You Corner

Dr. Guy Rouleau is the Director of the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital of the McGill University and McGill University Health Centre—The Neuro. Below is a heartwarming letter that came to him this past May following the announcement that he was awarded the Prix d'excellence du Collège des médecins du Québec.

Dr. Rouleau,

I want to first congratulate you on your Prix d'excellence du Collège des médecins du Québec!

I also want to thank you for something truly more personal. Sixteen years ago my son was sadly diagnosed with schizophrenia. At the time you asked if we could participate in your study on the illness. We agreed with one promise, I asked you that if one day my other children wanted to seek your advice you would meet with them. You kept that promise and spoke to my daughter and her future husband. She and her husband wanted to make a well informed and intelligent decision about having children. You answered all the questions that were worrying her, my son and her twin.

She was sincerely grateful for the time you allocated her. Today, she is married and expecting her first child, my future grandchild, in August.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart to have kept your promise. It was truly extremely honourable on your part. Despite your achievements and awards, 16 years later you remained truly "human, honourable and compassionate" at heart. I was hopeful but had seen it too many times that once researchers achieve they forget their subjects and their families. But you didn't! Amazing. You kept your promise after all these years.

A true beautiful added component to your achievements and to your person.

Kindest and deepest regards and appreciation.

(This person wishes to remain anonymous)

Board of Directors highlights

In order to keep the community apprised of its decisions, our Board of Directors has decided to report regularly on resolutions that it has passed. The items below relate to decisions taken at the June 17 and July 15, 2014 meetings.

The Board of Directors approved:

- The 1750 Cedar Settlement Agreement Proposal and Renunciation of Prescription Agreement. Furthermore, the MUHC shall signify its approval of the said agreements to Syscor and Syscor II and recommend their acceptance thereof and finally, that Normand Rinfret be authorized to intervene on behalf of the MUHC in the 1750 Cedar agreements, if need be;
- The Rapport financier annuel AS-471 for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2014;
- The Rapport annuel de gestion du CUSM (Exercice financier 2013-2014) pursuant to section 295 of An Act respecting health services and social services;
- The extension of the appointment of Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton as MUHC auditors for the fiscal year 2014-2015;
- The revised policy MMA 280 - Delegation of Power for Expenses (Requisitions) related to the Acquisition of Goods, Equipment, Services and Construction Work;
- The appointment of Andréanne Saucier as the MUHC Director of Nursing;

- The appointment of Chantal Souigny as the Associate Director of Nursing – MCH;
- The project to link the Montreal Children's Hospital and the Shriners Hospital for children (Canada) by an indoor walkway on the ground floor to be completed before the official opening of the Shriners Hospital (SHC);
- A plan to transfer orthopedic and musculoskeletal clinical and surgical activities from the MCH to the SHC in order to improve access to other operating tertiary specialties at the MCH conditional to:
 - The SHC secures a recurrent budget for its overall new clinical plan;
 - The MCH receives, from the MSSS and the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal, a modified clinical plan which will allow for more specialized surgical activities other than orthopedics and musculoskeletal;
 - The Trauma program remains at the MCH;
- The Budget détaillé Établissements publics 2014-2015 to be presented to the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal;
- A draft Protocol for the acquisition by the Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT) of a MUHC parcel of land near the Vendôme station, subject to the approval of the Agence de la santé et des services

sociaux de Montréal, of the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Conseil du Trésor.

On recommendation from the Council of Physicians, Dentists and Pharmacists, the Board approved:

- The appointment of Dr. Antoine Chehade as Interim Chief, Department of Dentistry and Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery;
- The appointment of Dr. Guy Rouleau, as Interim Chief, Department of Medical Genetics;
- The extension of Dr. Armen Aprikian's appointment as Chief, Department of Urology with the assistance of Dr. Peter Chan as Associate Chief until June 30, 2016;
- The appointment of Dr. Jean-Pierre Farmer as the Division Director of Neurosurgery at the MCH;
- Additions to the designated signatory list for the RAMQ.

The Board of Directors acknowledged receipt of:

- The Annual Report prepared by the Multi-disciplinary Council of the MUHC;
- The 2013-2014 Annual reports prepared on behalf of the nine Research Ethics Boards of the MUHC.

The MUHC's biomedical engineering team: A cornerstone of the Glen construction

Over the past four years, engineers and physicists from the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) have been working hard at the existing sites and at the Glen to bring the Redevelopment Project to a successful conclusion.

While thousands of MUHC employees have started thinking about moving to the Glen, a dozen members from the Department of Biomedical Technology are already there practically full time.

"This MUHC team is the only one that has been working at the existing sites and the new campus over the past four years," states Julien Hudon, the MUHC's director of Equipment Planning and team supervisor.

These engineers and physicists represent a key component of the MUHC's redevelopment. They have lent their expertise throughout all steps of the Glen planning, from design to construction.

"They're the ones who have tackled the many problems we've had to solve. SNC-Lavalin, our private partner who designed the hospital, relied on their expertise in a significant way," explains Hudon.

To set up spaces from ORs to patient rooms, the team members used the same process: initial work with plans, testing with a model,



In this future observation room, engineers from Julien Hudon's team and two partners from SNC-Lavalin work on the anchoring system that was custom-designed for the room's functionalities.

and fine tuning in the field. They purchased 28,000 pieces of equipment and redid the inventory for tens of thousands more.

"All sectors had to be re-equipped," says Hudon. "This project has been a true puzzle, but with tens of thousands of pieces that come in similar colours and only two or three shapes!"

To add to the task's complexity, the team had to work under an extremely tight deadline, within binding requirements, and in the very complex environment of a hospital centre, he adds.

Once the move starts, the team will continue implementing clinical services and overseeing equipment maintenance as per usual.

Throughout this adventure, Hudon believes that the greatest challenge

has been creating a design that integrates future—and unknown—developments in medical technology throughout the project's ten-year duration.

"Over the past decade, the concept of an emergency room has changed a lot. We had to redefine our initial plan, but we accomplished the majority of our mission, and the essential is there," he concludes.

Cedars CanSupport marks 25 years of being there for cancer patients

Twenty-five years goes by quickly when you're busy giving comfort and encouragement to cancer patients and their families. Just ask the staff and volunteers at Cedars CanSupport, which will be celebrating a remarkable quarter century devoted to cancer patients at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC).

It was in 1988 that cancer survivor Gwen Nacos had a brief 10-minute meeting with a cancer patient, a deceptively simple encounter that would change her life and positively impact the lives of countless others.

Nacos didn't think it was such a big deal to reveal her wounds and share her personal experience but the patient's nurse later thanked her profusely for what she had done. While Nacos insisted she had done nothing, really, the nurse replied, "You cared enough to be there for my patient and you shared something that was important to her at a critical time."

Today, CanSupport is an important part of the patients' multi-disciplinary healthcare team, with its dedicated staff of professionals and trained volunteers, together helping cancer patients and their families with practical, educational, emotional and humanitarian support.

This important milestone will be marked over three days in September. It all begins on Thursday, September 18 with the **Tribute Evening**, which includes a cocktail hour and a fabulous dinner prepared by some of Montreal's most renowned chefs.



The Cedars CanSupport team: bottom row - Jennifer Finestone, Gwen Nacos, Andréanne Robitaille; top row - Caitlin Beukema, Miguel Burnier, Andrea Connors, Véronique Lagrange and Cynthia Stephan-Rayes.

It will be a who's who of Montreal's business community, luminaries and philanthropic leaders, all coming together to celebrate the vision that CanSupport founder Nacos had 25 years ago, and kick off the next 25 years of 'Helping cancer patients and their families... one person at a time.'

Then on Friday, September 19 Cedars CanSupport invites the community to an **Open House and Lunch & Learn** at the Royal Victoria and the Montreal General hospitals. Finally on Saturday, September 20, the 9th Annual **Fuller Landau "Rain or Shine" Dragon Boat Race & Festival** (cedarsdragons.ca) takes place at Promenade Père-Marquette on Lachine's scenic waterfront. It will bring together cancer patients, friends, families and supporters from throughout the community in the spirit of fun and fundraising.

For information about these events please visit cansupport.ca.

Cloud services at the Glen will make printing a breeze

Cloud computing will allow staff at the Glen to print documents from anywhere, anytime, in a fast and secure manner.

At the Glen Campus, printing documents will be a hassle-free affair. Gone will be the days where staff had to have a printer driver installed and properly configured in their computers. Also gone will be the minutes lost waiting for “the guy from IS” to come and fix the printer. Thanks to cloud computing, every time an employee clicks on “print” from any PC or from a mobile device, the request is sent to the McGill University Health Centre’s (MUHC) private cloud, making it easy to quickly and safely print documents anywhere, anytime.

“Cloud printing uses a universal printer driver. Every request to print stays in the

cloud, which is a secure virtual server installed in the MUHC’s infrastructure,” says Hichem Motemem, associate director of Technology Infrastructure Services (TIS) at the MUHC. “When users decide to print out something, they will go to one of the printers and use their hospital card or personal identification number (PIN) to collect the documents they requested. Nothing will be printed without the intervention of the user, so it’s very secure,” he explains.

About 800 eco-friendly, multifunctional machines, with print, scan and fax features, will be installed at the Glen. By the time all hospitals of the MUHC are equipped, 1,500 printers will be available. The new system will be especially useful for clinicians who work in different sites.

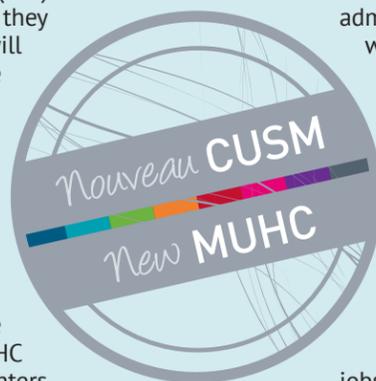
“A doctor who printed a file at the Glen in the morning and forgot to take it with

him to the Glen will simply go to any printer and get the document,” says Motemem.

Besides improving mobility and security, cloud printing will also be more economical. Access to extra features, such as colour, big format or high-volume printing jobs will be restricted, helping save paper and ink. For business reasons, a few administrators and clinical staff who schedule appointments will keep personal printers near their desks.

During the test phase, which will start in October, Motemem would greatly appreciate the cooperation of the team of Early Activators who will help start up the Glen site.

“Testers should print small jobs, big jobs and try every option!,” he explains. “I’m convinced that staff at the Glen will be satisfied with the new service, but we need to confirm that the system works well.”



straight talk

WILL THE GLEN BE AIR CONDITIONED?

With the exception of parking spaces, all areas in the MUHC Glen site are air conditioned. This means that air supplied to clinical and non-clinical areas are served by central systems, supplying air that is filtered, cooled, or heated and humidified in order to meet specific indoor environmental conditions.

What differentiates the new Glen site from other contemporary health centres is the high efficiency particulate air filtration (HEPA) found inside almost all the central air conditioning systems. This filtration system, which eliminates 99 per cent of particles, is a key tool used for infection control and exceeds current North American standards.

For more Q&As, consult our Straight Talk and Transfer Intranet pages.

Got a question, send it to: dialogue@muhc.mcgill.ca

MUHC Corporate Training Program

The MUHC understands that it is important to provide you with the resources you need to help you deal with the present and upcoming challenges in your work and personal life.

As the MUHC evolves during this transition period, the HR Training and Organizational Development Sector is offering four corporate workshops on the topic of “Change” and one on the topic of “Non-Violence in the Workplace” for the Fall 2014 session.

Workshops are offered in both languages and go from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

TRAINING COURSE	ENGLISH	FRENCH
Finding Your Way Through Change	October 8, 2014	October 22, 2014 November 4, 2014 – Lachine Hospital
Mindfulness	September 25, 2014 October 2, 2014 October 28, 2014	October 15, 2014 October 23, 2014 – Lachine Hospital November 6, 2014
Stress Relief	September 18, 2014 October 30, 2014	September 16, 2014
Violence in the Workplace	September 30, 2014 (Bilingual)	October 16, 2014 (Bilingual)
Emotional Intelligence	October 21, 2014	October 9, 2014

If you would like to have a complete description of the course, please visit the Human Resources Training for Employees Intranet page. To register, please discuss with your manager and complete the application on the Intranet site.

For descriptions and registrations, go to the Intranet and click on Departments and Services > Human Resources > Training and Organizational Development > Training for Employees > Program and Registration (right of Corporate Courses).

LEGACY YEAR EVENTS: CELEBRATING OUR PAST AND FUTURE

TOUR YOUR NEW HOSPITAL!

**GLEN SITE
OPEN HOUSE
DECEMBER 6
EXCLUSIVE TO MUHC
10 AM - 4 PM**

1001 DECARIE BLVD

VENDOME

**Free parking
Guided tours
Once-in-a-lifetime
opportunity**

**RESERVE
YOUR
SPOT
TOURGLEN.CA**



Continued from page 1 — CLAUDE DUCHESNEAU

“Music is a thread in my life that helps me deal with the sad patient stories I hear day in and day out,” she says. Many of them are refugees from African countries, where they have lost relatives and experienced atrocities. Over time, they have become a source of inspiration to her. “Many of these patients are very vulnerable,” she says, “but they are also models of resilience for me.”

Offering the gift of music to her patients, she helped a group of women at her clinic record an album of their own. “My African women make me taller. These women can find their voices. We hear their voices, their courage,” she says in the documentary.

Duchesneau spent 17 years supporting these patients, listening to their stories and learning about the wars that have marked their lives. Nonetheless, “their stories are so far from our reality that sometimes it is impossible to imagine what they are going through or have gone through,” she says.

To develop a clearer understanding of her patients’ realities and to educate the community about Rwanda history, Duchesneau travelled there in April 2014 to participate in the national commemoration of the 1994 genocide. “Genocide is an attack not just on the actual victims but on all of humanity,” she recalls.

In the Key of Claire is a blend of emotion, humour, music and healing. It is an open door on the inspired world of Duchesneau.

Putting the odds in their favour: Reducing diabetes risk in women with gestational diabetes



Women with gestational diabetes are highly likely to develop type 2 diabetes later in life. A new MUHC intervention program in collaboration with Concordia University's PERFORM Centre suggests that by adopting simple lifestyle changes, they improve their tolerance to glucose and may lower their risk of developing the illness.

Anne Corriveau was already a mother of four when she took part in a program for women with a history of gestational diabetes at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC). In three of her pregnancies, she had had the disease, a type of diabetes that only happens when a woman is expecting.

"The feeling I got was that sugar was running through my veins. After the birth of my third child, a girl who was born weighing 10lbs 6.5oz and had hypoglycemia, I was told I had a high risk of becoming diabetic at some point in my life," Corriveau says.

"Women with a history of gestational diabetes are seven times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives," says Dr. Kaberi Dasgupta, associate professor of Medicine at McGill University and physician scientist at the Research Institute of the MUHC (RI-MUHC).

"If these women engage in diabetes prevention programs, they can cut their diabetes risk by half," she adds.

A TAILORED GROUP INTERVENTION

The program focused on women within 5 years of their gestational diabetes, the stage when most of the transitions to the new disease occur.

"Our challenge was to convince these women to participate, in spite of their busy schedules. Before we designed the program, we held focus group discussions to determine what their main needs

were," she says.

Thirty-six mothers took part in the 13-week intervention. Once per month, they met at Concordia University's PERFORM Centre, a state-of-the-art clinical-research facility dedicated to understanding how our daily habits affect our long-term health. Sessions began with a meeting with an exercise physiologist and a workout. Next, a registered dietician discussed eating behaviour and nutrition and supervised participants in the preparation of a balanced meal.

The hands-on approach was essential to the program's success. Most women came to at least three of the four sessions, and 90 per cent of them used the childcare service provided by PERFORM.

For Anne Corriveau, the experience was "fun, enlightening and definitely worth it."

"We felt like we were taken care of. The cooking sessions gave us new ideas, and the kids got to taste whatever we prepared," she says.

Although the women did not lose a lot of weight, Dr. Dasgupta is enthusiastic about the results of the study.

"This wasn't a calorie-restricted diet. What's important is that they did increase their fruit and vegetable intake and physical activity. Most importantly, they lowered their sugar levels, blood pressure and insulin resistance and improved their insulin sensitivity. We deliberately took an approach where small changes could be sustained. These simple lifestyle changes can help prevent diabetes and also reduce the risk of hypertension, depression and cancer."

In her next study, Dr. Dasgupta would like to engage the women's partners and children.

"The sooner lifestyle changes are made, the better," she says. "not only for the mothers themselves, but for their babies and possibly their spouses."

Join us on line!

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twitter.com/cusm_muhc