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November 11, 2011

Hi Everyone

What I am hoping to do at the end of every week is to highlight one individual or act that I found particularly noteworthy. Since I am but one individual and my field of view is limited, please feel free to bring to my attention something which you feel has been done by a colleague that should be highlighted. It could be an astute clinical diagnosis, a teaching moment, a paper published, or more likely given who we are, going beyond what can be expected for a child or family. I really look forward to hearing about such accomplishments and efforts. Its probably the main and most gratifying reason why I took this job on.

This week I would like to single out Therese Perreault (as suggested by Bob Brouillette). As I look back on the past week, we experienced a superb Grand Rounds on Wednesday that was not only educational but perhaps catalytic in demonstrating the power of informatics to transform our clinical practice, research and teaching. Therese was the driving force in bringing Jeffrey Ferranti here and put a lot of effort into organizing his visit to enable interactions with a number of our faculty and resident staff.

I think collectively Therese is owed our thanks.

Have a good weekend everyone

Regards

Michael

Michael Shevell, MD CM, FRCPC, FAAN, FANA
Chairman, Department of Pediatrics
Professor (with Tenure)
Departments of Pediatrics and Neurology/Neurosurgery
McGill University
November 18, 2011

Dear Colleagues

This week's Departmental acknowledgement was suggested to me by Preetha Krishnamoorthy and Wendy MacDonald who so ably head up our Departmental UGME efforts.

During the recent residents’ pressure tactics to effect contract negotiations with the government, there arose an urgent need to find alternative places for medical student learning experiences. From within the community, Drs Diane Munz, Olivia Tse, Carl Cummings, Nana Graves and Agnes Frank stepped in to provide such experiences within the context of their busy community practices. From what I have been told, the experience was a good one for both teachers and learners and from this adversity there may emerge such efforts on a more regular basis in the future.

So please join me in acknowledging the extra efforts of these individuals.

Thanks Diane, Olivia, Carl, Nana and Agnes—your efforts are appreciated.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael

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Pediatrician-in-Chief
Montreal Children's Hospital
McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
November 25, 2011

Hi Everyone

There has been a slight change of name to these weekly announcements. The fact of the matter is that we have a surplus of good things going on, hence having but a single "Departmental Acknowledgement" is penurious, so henceforth I won’t have the stress of singling out but one.

The first acknowledgement has been suggested by too many folks and goes to David McGillivray. Over time there are those whose efforts, dedication, spirit, and dare I say soul, have become incorporated into the fabric of our institution. David is one such individual. As Director of the ER, Residency Program Director, CME organizer, and full-time ER physician, David has served our Department in many ways, but always doing so with dedicated professionalism, modesty and skill. If I may be permitted a bit of Yiddish, he is quite simply a "mensch". David will be retiring with the New Year and his departure will be felt throughout and I for one, amongst many, will miss him.

A second acknowledgement goes to a young man in our PICU by the name of Vincent now entering his third month of being on a Berlin heart (a left ventricular assist device) while awaiting a heart transplant. I met Vincent this week and we shared a nice talk about Les Canadiens and I was impressed by his optimism, strength and good nature. I was also impressed by the incredible skill set and passion of Samara Zavalkoff and the entire PICU and cardiovascular sciences team that make little miracles like Vincent possible. This is cutting edge care that we do so well and should take pride in. Let’s hope and pray that Vincent gets a new heart soon.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael

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McGill University

Pediatrician-in-Chief
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McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
Hi Everyone

There are a few Departmental acknowledgements this week.

The first was suggested by Davinia Withington and goes to Mary Decell. This is a bittersweet one as it coincides with the transfer of the TDR for which Mary and her nursing team has been such a vital support over the years. Mary has been instrumental in providing care to these complex and challenging children who have a technology dependency in a non-ICU setting with the goal of returning these children home. Mary has always been available to these children and their families and has worked diligently with multiple services and personnel to ensure the best care possible (our mantra and our sacred obligation). This relocation is driven by hospital budgetary realities which are rooted in the fact that though we as an institution may be creative and act to fill a pressing need in child health, this need may not be recognized by actual hard governmental budgetary support. Indeed we may be impacted for taking this initiative as it is funded out of a global budget for which we cannot run a deficit. Personally I have conceptual problems accepting this within a health care system that is dedicated to universal access to what is needed for health; which as Canadians we have collectively deemed to be a right and not a privilege.

The second acknowledgement was suggested by Richard Gosselin and goes to Catherine Henin and Mylene Dandevino for their work in the Residents Continuity Clinic in leading the development of innovative educational approaches and tools. The most recent of these being the creation, in collaboration with a group of interested residents, of videos that highlight techniques of physical examination of the various organ systems, which will be used by residents to improve their examination skills. This is yet another example of how our Department has always been in the forefront of educational innovation within the Faculty.

The final weekly acknowledgement goes to our residents, especially Elisa Ruano and Reem Al-Khaliifah. This collective kudo was suggested by Evelyn Constantin, Robert Brouillette and Richard Gosselin. While the resident staff deserve an acknowledgement every week, this is specifically given for RHALY (Residents for Healthy Active Living in Youth). Basically the residents on their own initiative have created an advocacy project to increase awareness of childhood obesity and to promote healthy active living among children and their families. Not only is this a clinically oriented project, in true academic fashion this has been paired with a research project and an educational initiative-in other words a triple play! Clearly they have been taught well by Departmental staff.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael

Michael Shevell, MD CM, FRCPC, FAAN, FANA
Hi Everyone

One thing that makes us different is the research intensity of McGill that is readily apparent throughout the Faculty of Medicine and our own Department of Pediatrics. Not only do we have a mandate to provide evidence-based cutting edge care to newborns, infants, children and youth and train the next generation of health care professionals, but we also have a duty to advance what is known about issues pertaining to child health so that understanding, care and outcomes can be improved.

The first two Departmental Acknowledgments are "Chair picks" suggested by both two impressive achievements that crossed my desk this week and the observation made in academia that the Professor is frequently not know in his/her own house. The first goes to Michael Kramer who very shortly will be ending his term as Scientific Director of the CIHR’s Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health. A member of both the Department of Pediatrics and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Michael is one of the world's foremost perinatal epidemiologists with over 300 publications to his credit and prodigious success at operational grant support. He has over his career contributed enormously to furthering our understanding of preterm births, intrauterine growth restriction and the determinants of infant mortality. His work on the multiple benefits of breast feeding and its optimal duration is in large part the basis for the World Health Organization's (WHO) current recommendations on infant feeding. That Michael has been able to continue his incredible scientific productivity and contributions while being administratively responsible for the major source of funding for child health research nationally is nothing short of astounding. Michael steps down from his CIHR position with the New Year. There is no retirement planned and I look forward to enabling in whatever way I can his future contributions to our Department and University.

The second acknowledgement is a very personal one and goes to Annette Majnemer. An occupational therapist by training, Annette pursued a PhD when this was not something rehabilitation therapists did. She has made her research home here at the MCH as an Associate Member of the Department of Pediatrics. Her research has focused on clinical populations of newborns, infants and children either at-risk for, or having, neurodevelopmental disabilities focusing on such topics as understanding outcomes from a more holistic perspective including issues such as Quality of Life and participation. Currently she is Director of the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy and an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Medicine. Despite this significant administrative load she remains very much engaged and productive in terms of her investigator driven research efforts. The acknowledgement for Annette is given this week for her award of membership in the American Occupational Therapy Foundation Academy of Research which is the highest scholarly honor of this organization. This is another notch in Annette’s belt and is in addition to her Muriel Driver Award from the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy (that organization’s highest professional honor) and her selection to Fellowship in the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.
The final Acknowledgement is tinged with sadness and was suggested by David Rosenblatt amongst many others and goes to a former Chair of our department Mary Ellen Avery, who passed away this week at the age of 84. It is fitting in light of the above two acknowledgments as the past is always a prologue to the present and future. Dr Avery was probably the key individual responsible for the research driven transformation of our Department when she was Chair from 1969-1974, I will reproduce what David sent me about Dr Avery as he was a witness as a young resident to the local culture change she brought:

The Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Pediatrics of McGill University has learned with great sadness of the death of Mary Ellen Avery, MD at the age of 84. A true internationally recognized giant and pioneer in academic medicine and neonatology, Dr. Avery served as Chair of Pediatrics at McGill and Physician-in-Chief of the Montreal Children Hospital from 1969-1974. Her tenure was a time of substantial academic growth at McGill in areas relating to the health of children. She was a superb model and mentor for all, and particularly to women interested in academic medicine at the highest level. Subsequent to her term at McGill, she went on to be the first woman to Chair of a major clinical department at Harvard Medical School and the first pediatrician to serve as president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She had an immense influence on a generation of pediatricians and will be deeply missed. McGill and the Montreal Children’s Hospital are proud to have her as a piece of our history.

Dr Avery's seminal contribution was the elucidation of the relationship of pulmonary surfactant to respiratory distress syndrome. I am sure that not a minute goes by on this planet when a prematurely born infant is not benefitting from this scientific advance. It is also a powerful example of how research makes a difference. From a personal perspective it is very humbling to occupy her office currently.

Have a nice weekend everyone.

Michael

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Pediatrician-in-Chief
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McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
December 16, 2011

Dear colleagues,

This week's Departmental Acknowledgment was suggested by Catherine Henin and goes to Hema Patel.

Hema Patel has recently chaired a multidisciplinary task force entitled Hospital @ Home. This task force jointly mandated by the MCH and HSJ has addressed the issue of mobilizing resources for complex care needs children to enable them to remain in the best environment possible; their family home. This task force recently presented its efforts to the MSSS's Table Mere-Enfant. The presentation was extremely well received and it appears that governmental action will be taken shortly to put in place the task force's major recommendations.

Hema's efforts in this regard is but a natural extension of her long standing commitment to children with complex care needs through her involvement and leadership of our Intensive Ambulatory Care Service. Hema builds on her previous success in advocacy as through her efforts a province wide newborn hearing screening protocol now exists. This protocol has enabled children with hearing loss to be detected early, so that effective remediation can be implemented as soon as possible, thus preserving potential language skills.

It is extremely gratifying for the Department to witness an individual's clinical expertise be translated through effective advocacy into policy changes that make a difference in health care for children well beyond our direct service sector. Hema's efforts and success in child health advocacy should be an example and inspiration to us all.

Have a great weekend everyone.

Michael

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McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
December 21, 2016

Hi Everyone

This week’s Departmental Acknowledgments, the last for 2011, are motivated by the season.

The first goes to too many to name individually. Specifically I am referring to those among us who give up time with family and friends this season to do a shift in the ER, attend on the wards/NICU/PICU or cover on call a subspecialty. It’s a potent reminder that we are there for the community we serve 24/7. While this may be the time for holiday cheer, it may also be the time that RSV make a child’s breathing difficult, a mutation in the SCN1A gene may cause seizures to occur, or a baby expected in March next year is born over the holiday season. We need to be there for these children and their families and the simple truth is we are.

The second Departmental Acknowledgement goes to my predecessor Harvey Guyda. It’s not for Harvey's tireless dedication to the hospital as a long serving pediatric Chair and now current AED, but rather for what I know he will be doing on December 25th. Once again, for yet another XMAS Day, Harvey will don his Santa outfit (I think he really likes the wig) and spend a good part of the day delivering toys to kids who find themselves in hospital. Needless to say it brings a smile to the kids and their families and is an important part of the healing process.

Let me close by wishing everyone on behalf of myself. My family and the Office of the Chair all the best for the holidays and the New Year.

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PS: These Acknowledgements will resume the week of January 9th.
January 13, 2012

Hi Everyone

First a Happy New Year to all.

This week’s Departmental Acknowledgements goes to Karen Watanabe (Duffy) and Giuseppina (Giosi) Di Meglio and is motivated by the Faculty of Medicine’s Promotions Committee recent endorsement of their promotion to Associate Professor, which is now before the University for final approval.

From Ontario, Karen received a university degree in nursing before medical school. She did a residency in internal medicine followed by a fellowship in rheumatology and she has been a member of our Division of Rheumatology since 1993. An Osler Fellow, Karen has been a dedicated teacher at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and indeed was the residency program Director from 2007-2011 for pediatric rheumatology. She has also served on a number of national committees related to rheumatology. A dedicated clinician, she has also managed to involve herself in research activities primarily directed at quality of life, measurement, and natural history studies related to rheumatological disorders. Unfortunately, Karen will be leaving our Department and hospital shortly as she will be joining her husband Ciaran Duffy who is now Chair of Pediatrics at the University of Ottawa and Pediatrician-in-Chief at CHEO. We congratulate Karen on her accomplishment and wish her the best on her future journey upriver.

Like Karen, Giosi is recognized as a superb physician educator. A specialist in adolescent medicine, with a particular interest in gynecology, Giosi frequently gives talks to teens and health professionals regarding health issues affecting this population that are frequently difficult to talk about publicly. She is a trusted clinician and valued mentor to many young physicians on our staff. Fortunately, I am not aware of any plans on Giosi’s part to leave Montreal any time soon.

The above promotions are indicative that excellence in all the domains of the academic mission is recognized at the University level. I encourage all of you to take a look at your CV and discuss with your Division Director the possibility of being considered for promotion in the future.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael

Michael Shevell, MD CM, FRCPC, FAAN, FANA
Chairman, Department of Pediatrics
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Departments of Pediatrics and Neurology/Neurosurgery
McGill University
January 20, 2012

Hi Everyone

This week’s Departmental Acknowledgements go to Gaelle Chedeville, Ron Gottesman, and Mitch Shiller. You are probably wondering what these 3 individuals have in common?

They are the initial recipients of awards from the MSSA's Career Enhancement Fund (CEF). Implemented last year, this fund is supported by a 0.5% contribution from MSSA members. This generates roughly $150,000 annually which is then made available for MSSA members who wish to undertake a further learning experience that would benefit their career, their Division, the hospital, and most importantly our patients.

Gaelle, a rheumatologist, will utilize her CEF Award to attend a detailed musculoskeletal ultrasound course being offered in Madrid. This technology will enable the non-invasive evaluation in difficult situations of children with rheumatologic disorders. Ron, a specialist in critical care medicine, longtime director of our PICU, and a maven in medical education scholarship, will utilize his CEF Award to facilitate his participation in the International Medical Educators exchange program. This unique program brings together senior medical educators from McGill, the Karolinska Institute (Stockholm), Dalhousie University, Utrecht Medical Centre (Netherlands), and St George's University (London, UK). Ron will use his Award to enable his participation in the overseas segments of this exchange program.

Mitch, a community pediatrician who is now Associate Chair (Financial) has emerged as one of our key champions in medical informatics. Mitch will use his CEF Award to pursue additional medical informatics specific training that will enable the establishment of a Departmental Medical Intelligence Unit that will allow us to enhance our capability to capture data that should lead to improved care, organizational efficiencies, teaching and research opportunities.

Gaelle, Ron and Mitch should be congratulated for their willingness to improve their personal skill set for the betterment of the Department as a whole. Given their success and the opportunity that the CEF offers, I would encourage all Departmental members to think creatively about utilizing this opportunity. This Departmental Acknowledgement would not be complete without noting that the creation of the CEF is largely the work of Bob Brouillette and Celia Rodd.

Lastly, on behalf of the entire Department of Pediatrics, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to Drs. Robert Platt, Louis Beaumier, Saleem Razack, Hema Patel for their fifteen years of service and Drs. Wendy MacDonald and Richard Haber for their thirty-five years.

Have a great weekend everyone.

Michael Shevell, MD CM, FRCPC, FAAN, FANA
January 27, 2012

Hi Everyone

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement is an obvious pick for me and goes to Brenda Moroz of our Division of Pediatric Dermatology.

The timing of this pick is motivated by the fact that Brenda is switching from Attending to Honorary Staff as of February 1st, 2012. In addition, Brenda will be relinquishing her longstanding role (1975) as Division Director. In effect she is "retiring", though she will continue to attend two clinics here on a weekly basis.

One of the "factoids" that we all seem to learn in medical school is that the skin is our largest organ. For a remarkable 41 years Brenda has been "Mistress" of this large, and at times bewildering (for the visually and Latin challenged amongst us including myself), domain at the MCH. Her beginning at the MCH coincides with the introduction of medicare and my taking bar mitzvah lessons. Over 41 years here, Brenda's passion for both clinical service and teaching has never diminished. A forceful advocate for prevention and sunscreens, it was always my good fortune to run into Brenda whenever I returned from a sun-filled holiday. Over time I think we both realized we were two determined souls. She was also surprisingly someone who had a terrific knowledge of Canadian football.

On the serious side, Brenda was a female pioneer in medicine. She sought entry into, and success, in what was a hostile profession that didn’t see or comprehend a woman's role as a physician. She, together with others, blazed a trail for all those that come after her to the point that the default gender today for a student physician or resident is female.

On behalf of the entire Department I wish Brenda all the best as she enters this new phase in her life. May she enjoy many years of good health, active living, personal satisfaction, and a wide-brimmed hat when the sun comes out, as it will, on her.

Have a great weekend

Michael

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McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
February 3, 2012

Hi Everyone

This week’s Departmental Acknowledgements come from very different parts of the spectrum that is our community.

The first as suggested by Jacquetta Trasler, Bruce Mazer and many others goes to Nada Jabado who is the Senior Author on a seminal paper published this week in Nature. With its extra-ordinary impact factor, limited papers published, and tight media inter-connections, Nature publishes over the very best and most important work in the basic sciences. Nada's publication is such a paper. Together with an international team, she has identified a mutation in a high percentage of cases of childhood brain cancer, specifically pediatric glioblastoma and brainstem glioma. Not only does her team’s finding provide insight into pathogenesis, it also may provide insight into why our standard therapeutic approaches of chemotherapy and radiotherapy have done little over the decades to improve survival in these cases (most children die within two years of a diagnosis of a glioblastoma or brainstem glioma) as the gene involved is implicated in the interaction of histone binding with DNA. The findings got a lot of well-deserved local media attention with articles to my knowledge in The Gazette and Le Devoir. While this is a product of bench research at the MCH-RI, it takes place within the context of an emerging local centre of excellence in pediatric neuro-oncology fostered by the indominatable Blair Whittemore on the medical side (with recent recruit Adam Flemming) and on the surgical side by JP Farmer.

The second Acknowledgement is my call and goes to Holly Agostino and Brett Burstein for a superb Skit Night last Friday. Holly (a fellow in Adolescent Medicine) and Brett (a pediatric resident) put an enormous amount of work, including blood, sweat and tears into the event. Based on the framework of the weekly show Saturday Night Live (SNL), it featured a large number of MCH peds residents and staff (Amanda Lord, Helena Evangeliou, Jeanette Comeau, Juan Iraheta, Connall Francoeur, Hugo Paquin, Kaitlin Penney, Maya Leitner, Shadi Tamur, Rob Sternszus, Phil Hedrei, Chris [aka Christine] Karatzios, Caroline Quach, Preetha Krishnamoorthy, Reza Alizadehfar, Sasha Dubrovsky, Lisa Anne Rasmussen, Maryam Oskoui, Harvey Guyda, Stephen Liben, Therese Perreault, Ricardo Faingold, with musical guests Olivia Tse, Mike Zappatelli, Adam Flemming [The Wannabes] and short appearances by Harold Rich, Gary Pekeles, Geoff Dougherty, Franziska Baltzer, Claudette Bardin, and Richard Gosselin). I was privileged to host the evening fulfilling a longstanding fantasy of mine to be an SNL host one week. I was impressed by the high level of professionalism, creativity, energy, and humor—not a single skit fell flat or dragged on. Laughing together and laughing at ourselves is an essential part of any healthy community of persons. Events like Skit Night builds an 'esprit de corps'. We work hard and its helps the work-life balance to have events like Skit Night to lighten the load along the way. Not only did Holly and Brett create a fun evening, the after party was a blast (or "awesome" as the kids say) and they even managed to raise (after costs for an open bar and food) $500 for the MCH Foundation.

Have a great weekend everyone
Hi Everyone

In addition to the weekly Departmental Acknowledgement, at the suggestion of Dubrovka Diksic and Patti Fontaine, I would like to thank all members of the department who participated in the recent year end (2011) merit exercise. It’s no fun to fill out or process forms but individual participation and Divisional review is essential for the process to occur and your ongoing participation is greatly appreciated.

Regards

Michael

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McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
February 10, 2012

Hi Everyone

My Inbox started to become flooded with suggestions for this week's first set of Departmental Acknowledgements around 1 AM on Sunday morning (Sasha Dubrovsky was first). It’s hard to resist a tsunami of support, so the obvious nod will go to the Department's "Dancing Docs" Preetha Krishnamoorthy and Nadine Korah.

Preetha performed a Bollywood themed cha-cha and Nadine a Brazilian samba at last week’s MUHC Dancing with the Docs fundraiser. They excelled at their dances and finished one-two in a field of ten bringing glory both to themselves and pediatrics. They also helped to raise over $200,000 for the MUHC Best Care for Life Campaign that is helping to fund the construction at the Glen Site at which the new MCH will be located. Preetha's day job is Director of our highly rated UGME program (she is also a pediatric endocrinologist and mother of two), while Nadine is currently one of our Chief Pediatric residents. Nadine will be off for fellowship training next year at the HSC in both quality assurance and complex pediatric care. They are both passionate about everything they do and they obviously brought this passion to their dancing. To quote Martha Graham; "every dance is a kind of fever chart, a graph of the heart". Nice to see an apt medical metaphor that captures the allure and primal essence of this art form. Not only am I delighted by Preetha's and Nadine's success, I am equally delighted by the outpouring of communal pride in their accomplishment that reinforces the vitality that is our community of professionals.

I would also like to give a Departmental Acknowledgement to the Department's Associate Chair for Education and the Faculty's Assistant Dean for Admissions, Saleem Razack.

This Acknowledgement is for Saleem being chosen the recipient of this year's May Cohen Award from the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada. This national award is given to an individual for efforts and contributions within medical education to issues related to equity, diversity, and gender. This award is so well deserved as evident by even a cursory consideration of Saleem’s considerable track record. He has taught a fourth year student selective course in "Race, ethnicity, culture, and health"; he was one of the founders of a curriculum and rotation that exposes pediatric residents to the social determinants of health; he has a SSHRC operating grant that evaluates the admissions process with respect to concepts that include "equity" and "diversity"; and he has 'walked the walk' as Assistant Dean of Admissions to expand the medical school's pool of applicants and eventual diversity. It is important for all of us to realize that medicine has not always been a welcoming profession to those who are "different" and indeed battles for access have been fought with respect to matters of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Of course these battles have been won only through the efforts of individuals like Saleem and needless to say they have made the profession more responsive to the challenges of the population it purports to serve. Saleem will receive his award in April at the 2012
Canadian Conference on Medical Education. Please join me in congratulating Saleem on this terrific accomplishment.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael

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Pediatrician-in-Chief
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McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
February 17, 2012

Hi Everyone

The first Departmental Acknowledgement this week stems from a personal experience I had last week and goes to my colleague in pediatric neurology Genevieve Bernard.

Genevieve is a new full-time member of our Departmental Staff. She is both a superb clinician and teacher who is embarking on a clinical research career that will focus on the challenges of pediatric movement disorders and leukodystrophies.

The acknowledgement is given for her being the driving force behind a wonderful learning experience that I hope can be emulated by other Divisions within the Department. Genevieve put forward the notion that the staff members of the Division of Pediatric Neurology should get together for a dinner after work every two months. After socializing over dinner and catching up on our busy lives, we went around the table and each staff member brought up 5 new facts from their respective sub-specialty areas. These facts included clinical pearls, diagnostic aids, further understandings regarding pathogenesis, and novel therapeutic efforts. It was an environment so conducive to sharing that it made learning both fun and easy. I was so impressed that I am willing to offer a $100 dinner subsidy ($200 for MER and General Peds since they have so many members) to any Division that engages in a similar effort in the next 3 months. I am hoping that all 16 Divisions that I am responsible for take up this offer and that such learning events become a regular feature of their Divisional life.

The second acknowledgement was suggested by Gus O'Gorman, Rick Haber, and Gerald Ahronheim amongst many others and goes to John "Chico" Kiteala who passed away on January 16th.

Chico (BTW the origins of the nickname appears to be shrouded in the mists of history) was a McGill/MCH physician and pediatrician through and through. He was among the last of the solo community-based practitioners with a longstanding practice in the Cote des Neiges area. He was a loquacious, engaging man with a broad and hearty sense of humor. He was a devoted pediatrician, able to ignore a crowded waiting room and spend the time necessary with a child and family. He was particularly fond of music in many different styles (including opera, bluegrass, and folk) and was also an accomplished musician himself on the banjo, piano, and harmonica. I have also been told that he was also somewhat of a pool (billiards) shark regularly engaging in a weekly pool game which included another one of our community pediatricians Sam Quansah. Chico also much enjoyed his time spent at his country place in the Lachute region. Chico leaves behind his wife Ellen, to whom he was married for 51 years and his children Lori, Janet and Brian as well as 6 grandchildren. Our sympathies go to his family and friends on their loss.

Let's hope next week brings some better news to share.
Have a great weekend

Michael

Michael Shevell, MD CM, FRCPC, FAAN, FANA
Chairman, Department of Pediatrics
Professor (with Tenure)
Departments of Pediatrics and Neurology/Neurosurgery
McGill University

Pediatrician-in-Chief
Montreal Children's Hospital
McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
February 24, 2012

Hi Everyone,

The first Departmental Acknowledgement this week was suggested by Sam Shemie and reflects the vital fact that in 21st century tertiary and quarternary care pediatric medicine no one can do what they do alone.

Over the past three to four weeks our PICU based ECMO (extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation) team has provided continuous care to two infants; one a newborn with an AV canal cardiac defect complicated by septic shock and the other with severe pulmonary hypertension and right ventricular failure.

In ECMO, blood is continuously diverted to a machine that then oxygenates it before returning the blood to the body for re-circulation to vital organs. It is a lifesaving measure that enables survival until such time that the individual's lungs do recover. It is an amazing piece of technology to witness in action and without it the child dies. With it, there is a hope for survival, though as a neurologist I can’t ignore the possible risk of later neurological sequelae. In one case, the ECMO was initiated remarkably when the child suffered an unexpected asystolic cardiac arrest while in the PICU. Typically, there is a period of deterioration that enables ECMO's use to be anticipated. Listed below are the members of our MCH ECMO team who participate in this program and includes PICU attendings, fellows, nurses and cannulating surgeons. That we can do two at one time and one on an emergent basis is a testimony to the skills and dedication of the ECMO team. I have said it before, and no doubt I will say it many times in my term as Chair, somewhere in this Department every day we really do miracles.

Dr. Farhan Bhanji  
Dr. Ronald Gottesman  
Dr. Pramod Puligandla  
Dr. Sam Shemie  
Dr. Samara Zavalkoff  

Dr. Salman Al-Shammari  
Dr. Allon Beck  
Dr. Tanya Di Genova  
Dr. Yasser Kazzaz  
Dr. Karen Trudel  

Dr. Christo Tchervenkov  
Dr. Sherif Emil  
Dr. Jean-Martin Laberge  

Stacey Broome
The second Departmental Acknowledgement goes to one of our unsung heroes. **George Mandich** is a community based pediatrician who has been doing social pediatrics with his practices in Ville Ste Pierre and Pointe St Charles long before the term was invented. If that wasn’t enough for recognition, George has for many years carried the torch as the Departmental representative on the MUHC wide efforts to move toward an electronic medical record. He has vigorously served as the bridge between the end users of medical information (that's us) and the folks managing the informatics side. There have been numerous meetings and communications and it appears that there is indeed a light at the end of the tunnel (hopefully it’s not an oncoming train). That any progress has been made and that there will be an end result that can make a difference in health care (the only metric that really matters) is a tribute to the hard work of George.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael

Michael Shevell, MD CM, FRCPC, FAAN, FANA  
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McGill University

Pediatrician-in-Chief  
Montreal Children's Hospital  
McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
Hi Everyone,

Beginning about 6 weeks ago, I began to notice a large number of smartly dressed young people gathering over a week's time each day in the corridor outside my office on C-4. The girls in skirtsuits or pantsuits with heels and a smattering of boys looking somewhat uncomfortable in suits and ties. It was evident that the annual mid-winter ritual of Canadian academic medicine known as the CaRMS interviews had begun.

It is for this reason and the CaRMS results that were revealed on Tuesday this week, that the week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to Richard Gosselin our dedicated PGME Director. Beginning with 158 applications from across Canada, through systematic review of each file Richard selected 63 fourth year students for interviews. From this group, 9 individuals were selected and will form our entering cohort of pediatric R1s for the 2012-2013 year. This group is in addition to 3 FMGs and a pediatric neurology trainee who will spend his first year in pediatrics. Richard puts his heart and soul into the selection process on behalf of the entire Department and we know how valuable and integral these residents are to our mission. It should also be noted that it's a credit to Richard that our program consistently attracts a high volume of applications and that those eventually matched are indeed among the best and brightest in their graduating classes.

Richard will no doubt want me to also acknowledge the hard work of the Pediatric PGME administrator Alessandra Tedeschi who spends an inordinate amount of time attending to the details of the CaRMS process and the members of the Selection Committee that represents a cross-section of the Department; Tiscar Cavalle-Garrido, Louise Auger, Patricia Li, Catherine Henin, Ilana Bank, Shuvo Ghosh, Evelyn Constantin, Nadine Korah and Robert Sternszus. I would also like to personally add Chantal Poulin who heads up the pediatric neurology CaRMS selection process.

Finally, we need to recognize our incoming R1s and on behalf of everyone, I look forward to welcoming them to our Department this forthcoming July. They also deserve hearty congratulations on this important personal and career milestone. Their names are listed below.

Asim Al Bushi, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman.
Mohammed Al Ghounaim, Kuwait University, Kuwait.
Mohammed Al Mazyad, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
Mher Barbarian, McGill
Estelle Chétrit, McGill
Virginie Clavel, Université de Montreal
Rachel Deschamps, McGill
Raven Dumont-Maurice, McGill
Alicia Lambrinakos-Raymond, McGill
Fiona Muttalib, McGill
Gillian Seidman, McGill
Zofia Zysman-Colman, McGill
Jarred Garfinkle, McGill (pediatric neurology)

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael
March 16, 2012

Hi Everyone!

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement is prompted by a visit I took earlier this week and is given to the attending staff based at the RVH NICU—Daniel Faucher, Nabeel Ali, Romain Mandel, Brahim Bensouda and Alexandre Barbier.

In Daniel's absence, Nabeel took the time to give me both a tour and more importantly an overview of the activities of this group. I was impressed by both the quantity and dedication to UGME teaching together with high work demands when on service. This is a 22-23 bed unit that often features between 10-12 ventilated infants at any one time. During the work day (which is a 24-hour one), there are frequent calls on an urgent basis (average of about 8) to the case room to attend to an infant in distress. Plus there is a large volume of antenatal cases. Housestaff coverage often necessitates in-house call by the neonatologists especially in the first half of the academic year to provide adequate supervision. In response to the high volumes, the unit has developed excellent mechanisms to transfer children to Level II NICUs outside the university hospital network once they no longer need Level III care. No doubt Daniel and his team would want me to acknowledge the contribution of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners to providing first call coverage multiple times in any one month, which is supported by necessity in part by the PMG partnership and the coverage provided during the year by 9C based neonatologists, including Louis Beaumier, Richard Gosselin, Pia Wintermark, Guilherme Sant'Anna and Thérèse Perreault.

While at the RVH, I also met with Denis Querleu, the new Chair of Ob/Gyn at McGill and Robert Gagnon who heads up Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM). Together we agreed to work closely together in the move to the Glen. At the Glen, there will be a 52 bed NICU and 3000 annual deliveries of which the expectation is that 60% may be high risk. These facts together with an expanding MFM effort at the MUHC suggests that all our services will be challenged in the future by an increasing emphasis on attending to neonatal disorders in their domain as well as a shift in pediatric diagnosis to an antenatal focus. We need to be aware of this and collectively plan for this exciting opportunity.

Have a great weekend!

Michael
March 23, 2012

Hi Everyone

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to **F Clarke Fraser**, Professor Emeritus of our Department and is based on his induction earlier this week into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

The Canadian Medical Hall of Fame is physically located in London, Ontario and was established in 1994. With his induction, Clarke joins in the Hall's distinguished ranks another McGill Department of Pediatrics and Montreal Children's Hospital luminary, Charles Scriver. Indeed, two other "pediatric" superstars from McGill, Sir William Osler (who wrote a monumental work on cerebral palsy) and Maud Abbott (who defined the concept and pathogenesis of congenital heart disease) are charter members of the Hall.

After a childhood mostly spent in Jamaica, Clarke was educated at Acadia University before coming to McGill to undertake a PhD with Arthur Steinberg followed by medical studies in which he failed anatomy and two other courses. Perhaps he can be excused for this by the observation that he was simultaneously teaching undergraduate courses in biometry and developmental genetics (!). Upon graduation, he remained at McGill and the MCH and under the tutelage of Alton Goldbloom and later Alan Ross embarked on a truly legendary career at the MCH from 1950-1999 (with the exception of 3 years spent in Newfoundland in the early '80s). Clarke was responsible for the establishment of the MCH's Medical Genetics Division, where he was an active participant in the truly revolutionary advances that swept the field. Clarke was a pioneering figure in dysmorphology, teratology, and genetic counseling. He formulated the multifactorial threshold model and coined the terms 'anomalad' and 'natural insemination donor' (he always had a great dry sense of humor) and predicted the advent of genetic engineering. Clarke was even present at the seminar at McGill where Lejeune first revealed that Down Syndrome was the result of a trisomy of chromosome 21. Clarke was an international leader in genetics serving as the youngest President of both the American Society of Human Genetics and the Teratology Society. Together with Charles Scriver, he formed a remarkable partnership on the 7th floor of the A-wing that made us the envy of world of clinical genetics.

If I may be permitted a personal observation, it's only with age that we truly appreciate the teachers we had. I can look back at my residency in pediatrics here and sitting in a room on A-7 during a genetics elective with Clarke, Charles, David Rosenblatt, Paige Kaplan and Golder Wilson discussing cases and science. It was a seminal elective that convinced a budding pediatric neurologist to go outside the fold and do a post-doctoral fellowship in molecular genetics. Similarly when I look now at the roster of members of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame I am struck by how fortunate I was to be educated at McGill. The roster of members in addition to Clarke who were my teachers in undergrad, medical school and residency include; Albert Aguayo (neurology), William Feindel (neurosurgery), Phil Gold (internal medicine & physiology), CP Leblond (histology), Heinz Lehmann (psychiatry), Ronald Melzack
(psychology), Brenda Milner (neuropsychology), and Charles Scriver (biochemical genetics). Legends all, a place among whom Clarke is most deserving.

Have a great weekend

Michael

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McGill University

Pediatrician-in-Chief
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McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
March 30, 2012

Hi Everyone,

This week's Departmental Acknowledgment goes to a virtual all-star lineup of Departmental members and is in recognition of the recent milestone for each in terms of years of service to the McGill Community.

The individuals to be noted include; Saleem Razack (15 years), Hema Patel (15 years), Louis Beaumier (15 years), Robert Platt (15 years), Brian Greenfield (25 years), Marie Josee Beland (25 years), Lorraine Bell (25 years), Rick Haber (30 years) and Wendy MacDonald (30 years). Sorry ladies for the numbers.

Saleem, an intensivist, as Assistant Dean for Admissions at the School of Medicine has radically altered the means and mechanisms by which medical students are selected for entry.

Hema, Director of our Intensive Ambulatory Care Service, has been a forceful advocate for children with complex care needs who has altered provincial and national policy.

Louis, a neonatologist is a fellowship program Director and has done monumental work in neonatal transport and outreach education.

Robert, an epidemiologist and biostatistician, has continued our Department's tradition of world leadership in epidemiology.

Brian has taken on the difficult issue of teenage suicide from both service and research components.

Marie Josee has served as a Director of our Division of Pediatric Cardiology and has played a leadership role in altering the internationally accepted nomenclature for congenital heart lesions.

Lorraine, a nephrologist, has managed our End Stage Renal Disease Program and has now taken on the challenging dossier of transition of complex care needs children from the pediatric to adult sectors of health services delivery.

Rick has played a model role at the community-hospital interface and leads educational programs in ambulatory care directed at family medicine and pediatric trainees.

Wendy, well let's just say four Osler Awards from McGill's School of Medicine Graduating Classes recognizing her enormous impact and appreciation as a medical educator over the decades speaks volumes.
While the years of service are long for each of these individuals, what I observe of each in what they do is that they are still young—full of dedication, commitment and passion for the diverse and challenging tasks they take on. They really are an example to all of us. We can learn from each of them.

Have a great weekend

Michael
April 5, 2012

Hi Everyone,

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to Holly Agostino and Brett Burstein, yet really is in recognition of a wonderful collective effort that came to fruition earlier this week that I was able to partially attend.

Holly and Brett are repeat offenders in this weekly acknowledgement and last received one for their contribution to the Department's social life and joie de vivre for their organization of the annual Skit Night in late January. On this occasion, they are being acknowledged for their "win" at the past week's Pediatric Residents' Research Day. Holly, a fellow in Adolescent Medicine who will be joining our staff shortly, presented her work on a paradigm shift in the management of youth with anorexia nervosa. Brett, already a PhD in cardiac physiology (and a proud graduate of my MedIV small group elective on Medicine in the Third Reich-ask him about it sometime), presented a 20-year population study on SIDS in Quebec. Needless to say, kudos must also go to their project supervisors Drs Di Meglio, Côté and Rohlicek. As a result of this accomplishment, Holly and Brett have an opportunity to have yet another honeymoon in......Winnipeg (doesn't have the cache of Hawaii or Paris does it?), where they can present their work with the Department's sponsorship at a national event featuring fellows' residents' research efforts from across the country. Runner up in the fellows category was Ziad Al Sani (Ron Gottesman and Michael Zappitelli) and in the residents' group Jade Seguin (Ron Gottesman and Michael Zappitelli again)

Residents' Research Day is an annual event held together with our colleagues at CHU Sainte-Justine that alternates its venue from site to site. It only happens because of the tireless efforts of our PGME Director Richard Gosselin, ably assisted by Alessandra Tedeschi and staff members implicated in the research component of the residents' training, specifically Evelyn Constantin and Shuvo Ghosh who coordinate the overall effort. Judging of the residents' presentation this year was provided by Robert Brouillette, Patricia Li and Pia Wintermark.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention the other Departmental residents and fellows who presented their work together with their Departmental Supervisors;

Helena Evangelou (Suzanne MacDonald, Veronique Morinville)
Osama Safdar (Martin Bitzan)
David Martens (Di Meglio)
Turki Al Ahmadi (Larry Lands)
Virginie Beauséjour Ladouceur, Chatchay Prempunpong (Guilherme Sant'Anna)
Geneviève Tourigny-Ruel (Dubravka Diksic, Elise Mok, David McGillivray)
Claudia Renaud (Franco Carnevale, Sam Shemie)
Reem Al Khalifah (Evelyn Constantin, Laurent Legault, Elise Mok, Claire Leblanc)
Brigite Moreau (Ernie Seidman, Sylviane Forget)
Tanya Di Genova (Farhan Bhanji)
Nadine Korah (Evelyn Constantin)
All are winners in my eyes for making the effort to ask questions, design studies that provide answers and present their work in a public forum subject to peer scrutiny.

Happy Easter and Chag Shameach!

Have a happy extended weekend everyone.

Michael
April 13, 2012

Hi Everyone

When I started these Departmental Acknowledgements back in November 2011 I did not give any thought to putting a limit on how many a certain individual can get in a defined time interval. Perhaps I should have as the line up for the 5 weeks consists of several "repeat offenders". I have every reason though to single out these individuals again as they are each the recipient of a distinguished award at either the University or National level. I also could have lumped them together in a single Acknowledgement but the scope of each deserves a singular mention.

This is so with this week's Acknowledgement which goes to Hema Patel for her being awarded the Canadian Pediatric Society's (CPS) Victor Marchessault Advocacy Award. This Award, given every two years, is named after the late Victor Marchessault who served as Executive Vice-President of the CPS from 1964-1997. An infectious disease scholar, Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Ottawa, and Chair of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, Victor’s remarkable tenure at the CPS included its emergence as a political force with multiple advocacy successes that contributed substantially to improved child health in our nation. These successes, which we take for granted as part of the current landscape of preventative medicine, included the fluoridation of water, the addition of Vitamin D to milk (with help from our own Charles Scriver & Arnold Steinberg), safety caps on prescription bottles, and seatbelts in automobiles. And this is only a partial list.

Hema follows in the noble tradition of Dr Marchessault. Hema is a passionate, effective, and dare I say, forceful advocate for children with complex care needs who represent one of our most challenging patient populations. She contributed significantly to the effort to effect a province-wide hearing screening protocol for children that will no doubt improve outcomes through early detection, diagnosis and intervention for children born with profound hearing loss. Her advocacy work is always driven by the simple question; “What is the best that we can do for these children and their families?” She strives to provide policies that go beyond simply taking care of the immediate problem in a hospital setting to one that is holistic embracing multiple complimentary health care disciplines that makes the family a true partner in care. And this care frequently takes place in the child's home. Her latest collaborative effort, the "Hospital@Home" has been presented to the provincial government, favorably received and will hopefully result in action shortly that will make a difference.

As I said before about Hema, it is a delight to see a professional's clinical expertise translate into advocacy that makes a difference for children beyond the reach of those that the clinician actually comes in contact with. Hema's success in this area should give each of us food for thought in our respective clinical domains.

Hema will receive this Award during the CPS Child and Youth Health Lecture, on June 7th at the CPS Annual meeting in London. I encourage all members of the Department who are attending the CPS meeting to be sure to be in the audience when Hema gets this Award.
I would like to close by acknowledging the efforts of Denis Leduc, a former CPS President and member of our Department, who nominated and advocated for Hema for this Award.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael Shevell
April 20, 2012

Hi Everyone,

Like last week, this week's Departmental Acknowledgment goes to an individual recently featured, however the occasion is too important to ignore.

**Nada Jabado** is this year's recipient of the Faculty of Medicine's Maude Abbott Prize. This Prize, established in 2010 is given annually to women faculty members who excel in education, research or administration with a focus on those at the early stages of their careers.

The Prize is named in honor of Maude Abbott who was among the "Donaldas" as the first women graduates of McGill University were known. Born and raised in the Eastern Townships, she was a cousin of Canada's third Prime Minister John Abbott. She received her Bachelor's degree in Arts in 1890, but was refused admission to McGill's Faculty of Medicine. She thus went to Bishop's College in Lennoxville, where she completed her medical degree in 1894. She followed this with extensive postgraduate work in a number of leading European centers. She returned to Montreal and undertook leadership of McGill's Pathological Museum. She re-configured the Museum's activity to become an important educational resource and site of research activity. She also spent some time with Osler while he was at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. Abbott's career focused on congenital heart disease and she contributed the chapter on this topic to Osler's 1905 masterpiece System of Medicine. In 1935 she completed her own classic entitled "The Atlas of Congenital Cardiac Disease". Abbott was among the first inductees into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

Like Maude Abbott, Nada is a pioneer. Like Maude Abbott, she has devoted her career efforts both at the bedside and the bench to improving the survival of a group of children with a predominantly fatal disorder. While Maude Abbott chose congenital heart disease, Nada works on pediatric astrocytomas. Nada has revolutionized our basic understanding of this disorder making seminal discoveries of its underlying basic biology and genetics. Her discoveries (published in Nature) have recently helped clinicians to potentially understand the basis for tumor resistance suggesting new pathways in treatment. She has assumed a leadership role in national and international organizations that bring together interested clinicians and researchers to improve care. She has an enviable track record of success in all aspects of academia and is a well-recognized teacher whose students have already won their own prestigious awards. She also serves as a role model for young women embarking on a career in academic medicine. Please join me in congratulating Nada on this remarkable personal accomplishment.

Have a great weekend everyone.

Michael Shevell
April 27, 2012

Hi Everyone

At the Montreal Children's Hospital and within the Department of Pediatrics we are fortunate to have several "living legends" whose careers and personalities have had a remarkable and lasting impact on child health. This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to one such individual; Alice Chan-Yip.

Alice will be retiring from clinical practice at the beginning of May and will no longer be seeing patients in the Multiculturalism Clinic, the Residents' Continuity Clinic or the Emergency Room. A longstanding community-based physician, Alice's association with the MCH and McGill began with her residency training in 1963. Following a research fellowship in pediatric metabolism, she formally joined the Department of Pediatrics in 1971. She also established a vibrant pediatrics practice within Montreal’s Chinese community that was a vital link for children and families in this community to access quality and comprehensible health care. Alice was an advocate for ‘culturally sensitive’ and ‘family-centred’ care long before these became buzzwords. Not only did she do the "talk", she also did the "walk" and she was instrumental in the hospital's development of a truly pioneering Multicultural Program in 1986 with other progressive forward thinkers who dared to dream and ask the question; "why not?". This has evolved to become our Sociocultural and Interpretation Multicultural Service and the Multiculturalism Clinic. The fruits of this labour can be seen by sitting in the OPD, ER or wards' waiting areas on any given day and listening to the diversity of languages spoken and seeing the ethnic and national diversity of the children and families that come by choice to seek care at our institution.

For this, Alice was recognized at a national level receiving the Order of Canada in 2010. The Governor-General's citation says it best; "For her contributions to the provision of health care in Montreal as a pediatrician, medical educator, and volunteer, and notably for her innovations in treating immigrants".

Alice is also a remarkably generous individual. At the Faculty of Medicine, she has established; 1) an International and Multicultural Prize for a selected medical student, 2) a Psychosocial and Integrative Medicine Scholarship, and 3) a Multiculturalism Endowment at the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy. At the MCH, she has recently endowed an annual lectureship on Psychosocial Medicine. Her philanthropic generosity is a model for each of us to consider.

Alice will continue to give occasional lectures on the topics that she knows best and are dear to her heart to future medical students and residents who will so greatly benefit from her practical wisdom. And for this we are grateful.

Please join me in wishing Alice a retirement that is healthy, joyous and fulfilling for her.

Have a great weekend

Michael
May 4, 2012

Hi Everyone

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement also goes to a familiar name and indeed some readers may feel like they have heard this tune before.

Saleem Razack gets the nod for his being selected as one of the Faculty of Medicine's inaugural laureates for the Haile T. Debas Prize. This prize seeks to promote diversity at all levels in the Faculty and is given to a faculty member who promotes diversity by acting as a role model, mentoring, or implementing new policies that seek to increase the participation of under-represented minorities in undergraduate or postgraduate training, faculty recruitment, retention or promotion. Clearly Saleem has done all of these good things in his career.

The Prize is named in honour of a remarkable graduate of McGill. Haile Debas was originally from Eritrea in the horn of Africa and received his MDCM from McGill in 1963. He went on to become a surgeon and after faculty stints at UBC, UCLA and the University of Washington, he became Chair of Surgery at UCSF. He then became Dean of UCSF's Faculty of Medicine in 1993 and eventually served as the university’s seventh Chancellor. Amidst all this, he was the founding Director of UCSF Global Health Services and a member of UN Commissions on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa. A truly substantial record of accomplishment for any individual.

Saleem is a former PGME (residency) training director for the Department of Pediatrics. He is also the Department’s Associate Chair for Education and an Assistant Dean in the Faculty for Admissions. He has been instrumental with others in creating a curriculum and opportunities for pediatric residents to learn and be exposed to social determinants that relate to child health. He teaches fourth year medical students on race, ethnicity and culture and its relationship to health and health care. He has also worked hard to formulate the medical school's admissions process and policies to expand its potential pool of applicants so that the accepted class better reflect the diversity of the population at large. If all of this wasn’t enough, Saleem holds a SSHRC operating grant that critically and systematically evaluates aspects of the admissions process that relate to equity and diversity.

Please join me in congratulating Saleem on this personal accomplishment. I know Saleem well enough that he would immediately give credit to the nurturing and support he has received from our Departmental and hospital communities.

Have a great weekend.

Michael

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McGill University

Pediatrician-in-Chief
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McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)
May 11, 2012

This week’s Departmental Acknowledgement goes to the dynamic duo of Evelyn Constantin and Preetha Krishnamoorthy. They have been chosen because of their selection to the Faculty of Medicine's Honour List for Educational Excellence. This selection is based on recognition of their enormous contributions to teaching within the Faculty.

Evelyn can be considered a "triple threat" excelling in the domains of clinical service, research and teaching. A member of the Division of General Pediatrics, she is a chercheur-boursier clinicien of the FRSQ having an externally supported research program that is focused on sleep and its disorders in children. Her research efforts have been recognized by her selection for membership in the Society for Pediatric Research. Plus she just had her FRSQ salary support award extended for four years at the Junior 2 level. Evelyn's teaching contributions cover an extensive breadth of involvements. Particularly noteworthy is her development of the PHRESCA Course (Pediatric Health Research Epidemiology Statistics Curriculum) directed at health professionals to foster academic skills and an improved knowledge of research methods. She also serves as the site co-Director for the CCHCSP (Canadian Child Health Clinician Scientist Program), a national multi-disciplinary program funded by CIHR to train child health clinicians in clinical research. She is also actively sought out as a mentor and supervisor by pediatric trainees and played a key role in advising the residents in the RHALY project that promotes healthy living in children. She is presently supervising several graduate and post-graduate students addressing various aspects of sleep disorders in children and indeed her postdoctoral fellow has a CIHR-Banting Award. Evelyn receives consistently excellent teaching evaluations on the wards and in the clinics from medical students and residents alike. Finally, as if this all was not enough, she has undertaken the organization of the Department’s weekly Grand Rounds bringing to the task her ever present enthusiasm.

Preetha has distinguished herself from the start as an educational superstar (and Bollywood dancing legend). Only two years into her Faculty appointment she received the Paige and Bernard Kaplan Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching as selected by the pediatric residents. She has been the co-ordinator for the consistently highly rated Introduction to Pediatrics Course assuming overall responsibility for the course's organization. Her passionate commitment and excellence in undergraduate medical education was recognized by her selection to replace THE Wendy MacDonald as Director of our Pediatric Clerkship program. Preetha has done this without a hitch, maintaining the Department’s consistently high ratings in UGME within the Faculty. Her local excellence and enthusiasm for the art and science of medical education has translated itself into a key role in national curriculum development. The students' one45 evaluations of her and the rotation itself are nothing short of glowing.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that Evelyn's nomination was put forward by Geoff Dougherty and Bob Brouillette and that of Preetha by Richard Gosselin and Wendy MacDonald.

Have a great weekend everyone
Michael
May 18, 2012

This week’s departmental acknowledgement goes to a relatively new member of the Department of Pediatrics, Dr. Claire LeBlanc.

Claire joined the division of Pediatric Rheumatology in September 2011. She trained at Dalhousie for both medical school and Pediatrics, and completed her Pediatric training at CHEO in Ottawa. After several years in practice, Claire went back to train in Pediatric rheumatology at Sick Kids, in Toronto. Since then she has been on the staff of CHEO and the Stollery Alberta Children’s Hospital before joining us at MCH. Besides her work as a rheumatologist, Claire is board certified in Sports Medicine and plays an extremely important role in the North America community in her advocacy for safety in sports, and in the area of Healthy Active Living. She is chair of the Canadian Paediatric Society’s Healthy Active Living and Sports Medicine Committees, and represents the CPS at the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. LeBlanc was also involved in the development of Canada’s Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth. Anyone who was at either of her Ground Rounds presentations this year could sense her tremendous passion and enthusiasm for these issues. In recognition of these activities, Claire has been chosen to receive The CPS Member Recognition Award for 2012. This extremely prestigious honor is awarded to members who have gone above and beyond what is expected from a volunteer in the past year. She was nominated as the outgoing chair of the Healthy Active Living Committee and for her tireless promotion of healthy active living and obesity prevention.

On behalf of the Department of Pediatrics, we congratulate Claire and look forward to many more tremendous achievements in the future.

Michael
May 25, 2012

This week’s departmental acknowledgement goes to a tireless and enthusiastic clinician, mentor, and senior physician at the Montreal Children’s Hospital – Dr. Blair Whittemore.

My first exposure to Dr. Whittemore was perhaps ten or twelve years ago when I was rounding in the PICU and I was interrupted by an unfamiliar face, who asked, “Does baby so-and-so have either high immunoglobulins or perhaps hyperfibrinogenemia? There are rouleaux on his peripheral blood smear.” I was impressed. Since then, I have been similarly privileged to discuss the presence of Dohle bodies (sepsis) and even Howell-Jolly bodies (hyposplenism) on various patient blood smears with him. I won’t even go into the coagulation cascade—mostly because I am not capable of doing so—but suffice it to say that Dr. Whittemore and I have had many discussions on Factors V, VIII, and von Willebrand’s factor over the years. When there are important findings to discuss on a hematology lab test, Dr. Whittemore is there, in person, the embodiment of seamless bench to bedside knowledge translation. His ability to demystify laboratory medicine and to role model the correlation between laboratory tests and clinical medicine in clinical decision making has greatly enriched the learning of students, residents, fellows, and staff alike.

It turns out that when blood leaves the body and goes through an ECMO or VAD circuit, REALLY, REALLY strange and complex things happen to platelets and clotting factors, so much so that a bona fide subspecialty area of expertise, that of extracorporeal hematology has emerged. I am constantly amazed by the complexity and plethora (pardon the pun!) of tests required to get a handle on this important aspect of the care of the patient with an extracorporeal circuit. Dr. Whittemore’s willingness to impart his considerable wisdom in this domain has been greatly appreciated and has enhanced the care of our ECMO and VAD patients alike.

Finally, many of us don’t know this, but Dr. Whittemore has had a whole past life as the Director of Professional Services at the Montreal General Hospital, and carries with him all of the experience that comes with that job. I have served with him on review committees and have accessed his sage advice on many matters administrative over the years. At the risk of flooding his office with colleagues, I would recommend him highly to any member of the department seeking discreet and skilful advice on how to negotiate our complex organization and the human beings who work within it.

For all these reasons, I am sure that all of you will join me in celebrating Dr. Whittemore’s 45 years at this institution through this departmental acknowledgment!

Sincerely,

Saleem Razack
June 1, 2012

This week’s Departmental Acknowledgment goes under the rubric of “When the cat’s away, the mice will play”. Michael Shevell has appropriately noted the great contributions of many of our members over the past months. However I did not wish to miss the opportunity to acknowledge his own major accomplishments since taking on the mantle of Chair of Pediatrics, which largely revolve around the theme of capacity-building and shared governance.

He has created the Department of Pediatrics Executive Committee with members being accountable for strategic activities such as Research and Teaching, he has instituted this very Departmental Acknowledgment activity which underlines the excellence which exists in our membership, and he has changed the style and goals of the Division Directors’ meetings to one of interaction and shared problem-solving. Probably most importantly he has set a new tone for the Department by meeting with all the Divisions personally and with various teams which incorporate non-medical essential personnel.

The message is inclusion and openness and this is evident in his clear commitment to working with Community Services to see how our expertise can best inform and be informed by the vast out-of-hospital activities in health care. There is a renewed dedication to working with Senior Management in the MCH and the MUHC, since that is how we accomplish major innovations. The element of fun runs through all these activities but was most evident in his contribution to the Residents’ Skit Night where a new engagement was felt.

Therefore Michael Shevell should be congratulated and supported for this great beginning to his mandate and is an effort which should not be overlooked.
June 8, 2012

Hi Everyone

While I was away there was Nurses' Week in late May.

Probably the first realization during medical training once one starts to have any involvement in medical care is just how much team work and inter-disciplinary care and collaboration is involved in addressing the needs of patients and their families. No single health care profession has either all the answers and or the skills to ensure optimal health and well-being.

**Nurses** are so vital to what we can do as physicians and they are our partners (as are the occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, respiratory therapists, social workers, dieticians, administrative support staff etc.) in quality health care delivery.

Nurses' Week is a reminder of this. There are too many nurses' to mention but I can do my part by singling out the enormous contribution I witness and experience first-hand in pediatric neurology as a neurologist by **Heather Davies and Rosalie Suarez**. Both are masters of what they do and are integral in our management of children with complex challenges related to such chronic disorders as epilepsy and neurodevelopmental disabilities. They are vital resources to these children and their families as information resources, counsellors, advocates and care co-ordinators as well as care providers. They do what they do with skill and grace, always willing to go the extra mile. I simply can’t imagine doing what I do as a physician without their vital help.

I strongly suspect that each and every Division, programme and functional unit within the Department of Pediatrics has a Heather or Rosalie. Take the time now to personally acknowledge to them the good things that they do on a daily basis.

Have a great weekend everyone.

Michael
June 15, 2012

Hi Everyone

Money is not something that is supposed to be discussed in polite company or publicly. While it should not be the driver or modifier of what health professionals do, it is a reality that must be managed responsibly.

Within the Department of Pediatrics there are two physician managed practice plans that include members of the Department; the PMG and the MSSA. Not only do these plans provide the compensation base for physicians in the Department, they also provide substantial contributions to the academic activities that enable us to pursue a mission that goes beyond clinical care to embrace teaching, research and administrative activities. This week's Departmental Acknowledgement is to the physician managers of these plans; Mitch Shiller and George Mandich.

As Associate Chair of Finance and Informatics for the Department, Mitch is the CFO for the PMG. However this underestimates his role and involvement in this organization. Though officially "part-time" on staff, Mitch is "full-time" involved in the PMG. He has extensively reviewed existing policies and procedures, updated the website, vigorously pursued automation in billing, led the Compensation Task Force and steered the PMG Advisory Committee through some difficult decisions. He is driven by the mantra of increasing organizational transparency, fairness and objectivity while simultaneously seeking ways to enhance membership value. He is always willing to answer member questions and seeks to steer a fiscally responsible path that best captures the desires of the partnership. This is especially challenging given the diversity of partners and their perspectives. Consensus in such a setting can be elusive and unfortunately there is simply no way that all decisions taken will be satisfactory to all members. Mitch's skill set was clearly in evidence at the PMG Annual meeting this past week where he patiently responded to members' questions in a way that is a model for leadership.

I have already singled out George previously in a Departmental Acknowledgement for his tireless role in the transition to electronic charting. In that Acknowledgement I may have overlooked that he has also been a dedicated leader of the MSSA for many years. Despite a busy community practice and a myriad of other commitments, George has consistently brought his low key pragmatism and attention to detail to this effort providing leadership that reflects high standards of financial probity and clarity.

I think we are all fortunate to have financially astute individuals such as Mitch and George looking after that which we all seek to not address directly.

Have a great weekend.

Michael Shevell
June 22, 2012

Hi Everyone

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement is overdue and I apologize for the delay in so doing.

This week's acknowledgement goes to Claudette Bardin in recognition of her being selected the recipient of this year's Paige and Bernard Kaplan Teaching Award at the annual Spring Fling in early May.

This award honours and recalls the enormous contributions of two former attendings and teachers in our Department. Upon their departure from Montreal in the late 80’s, the resident cohort of the time (of which I am proud to say I was one) established this annual teaching award to be bestowed by the pediatric residents to the individual in the Department who they sought to identify as the teacher of the year. Beginning with my own mentor Gordon Watters, the roster of recipients is an impressive one and it is indeed fitting that Claudette's name is added to this local Hall of Fame for the second time!

All who know Claudette are well aware of the passion she brings to clinical care and teaching. Claudette has a PhD in Biochemistry and fellowship and subspecialty training in neonatology. She moved to the Division of General Pediatrics in 2006 re-inventing herself as an academic hospitalist. A dedicated ward attending, she also assumed responsibility at various times for the management of the medical wards, short stay unit, in-patient consultation service and medical day hospital. She undertook each of these challenging management tasks with dedication investing considerable personal energy in ensuring optimal patient care and the realization of potential teaching opportunities wherever they may arise.

Claudette's teaching is also imbued with the passion she brings to all her work efforts. She brings out the best in the learners that come under her supervision. She conveys a holistic approach to patient care and provides to our trainees a model that they can emulate to achieve the goal of true family centered care. Indeed her excellence in family centered care has been recognized by the hospital's Family Advisory Forum's Award of Excellence.

It is because of the many individuals like Claudette who share her commitment to teaching excellence that we as a Department are renowned in portion of the academic mission.

Have a great holiday weekend everyone

Michael
June 28, 2012

Hi Everyone

I like say that "medicine is a team sport" and this is remarkably exemplified in this week's Departmental Acknowledgement which goes to all those who provided care for Vincent L over the past year.

Weakened by a progressive cardiomyopathy, Vincent required the placement of a ventricular assist device last September to buy time while waiting for a heart transplant. In hospital he became a very human face, together with his steadfast family, for determination and courage and indeed Vincent went public with his illness to make the case for more widespread organ donation. Vincent finally did get a heart that pumps effectively and was successfully transplanted and left hospital after a protracted stay earlier this week.

A success story like Vincent relies on the work of people too numerous to mention coming together from a variety of disciplines to achieve a common goal. Indeed I am wary of listing services involved for fear of omitting one. Needless to say, primacy on the list would go to the PICU's medical and nursing staff where Vincent was living while in hospital. Kudos also has to be given explicitly to cardiology and CVT surgery.

Vincent's case is yet another example of what we as an institution do so well.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael
July 6, 2012

Hi Everyone

This week’s Departmental Acknowledgement was suggested by Thérèse Perreault and goes to Guillerme Sant’Anna.

Originally from Brazil, Guillerme is a staff neonatologist who returned to Montreal a few short years ago, where he had completed a PhD in physiology at McGill. His teaching prowess has already been recognized by the residents who awarded him the Paige and Bernard Kaplan Award last year.

Thérèse wanted me to single out Guillerme for his re-invigoration of neonatal conferences. Knowledge is power and Guillerme has worked very hard in the past year to organize two successful neonatal conferences as well as the visit of a variety of renowned scholars and speakers. The conferences focused on Therapeutic Hypothermia last year and Neonatal Resuscitation this year. These conferences are widely attended from those within and outside our institution and attendees include neonatologists, pediatricians, subspecialists, trainees at various levels (fellows, residents and students), neonatal nurse practitioners, and NICU nurses amongst others. Such conferences are an important aspect of knowledge exchange and translation that fosters a pervasive learning culture and no doubt leads to improved health care for some of our most vulnerable patients.

In addition, Guillerme has also fostered the adoption of various clinical protocols within our neonatal intensive care units that provide a consistent evidence-based standard of practice and has an additional value of plugging our local endeavours into a broader collaborative international framework. All of this is done with Guillerme’s trademark Latin enthusiasm, charm and smile.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael
July 13, 2012

Hi Everyone

When I started these Departmental Acknowledgements one of my intents was to highlight the steadfast contributions of members who continually do good through their daily activities. However I was not prepared by the tsunami of awards that can’t be ignored and delightfully these have been the focus of these acknowledgements. But this week in response to what is a magnificent email from a Departmental member, it’s my pleasure to acknowledge Sharon Abish.

The author of this email wishes to remain anonymous. This is too bad given how wonderfully expressive the nomination email was. I am reprinting it in its entirety below as it really says it all and I can’t say it any better.

"I’d like to nominate Sharon Abish. Unlike many of those previously acknowledged Sharon has not won any awards recently for exactly the reason I would like to nominate her. I know of no other person in this hospital who has the combined clinical and administrative workload that she has and given that she is unlikely to win any awards for this I think her contributions should be recognized in some forum. From a clinical perspective she is responsible for the sickle cell population, about 125-150 patients, which are complex both medically and often socially as many are relatively recent immigrants to Quebec coming from difficult backgrounds. (Just keeping track of their names is an accomplishment but this is off the record). She also is responsible for the long-term follow-up of oncology patients who are off therapy for more than five years. In addition to the clinic she runs at the MCH for those who have not turned 18 years this includes those patients who are 18 years and older whom she follows in a clinic at the MGH with Dr. Carolyn Freeman of radiation oncology. This is an ever growing population with their unique long-term issues resulting from chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and possibly mutilating surgery. A not insignificant proportion of Sharon's time is ensuring proper transitioning to adult care for these chronic patients (sickle cell and long-term oncology patients) and summarizing many years of complex care into a neat summary letter is time-consuming. Of course on top of all this she is the primary physician for many oncology patients currently undergoing therapy and I don't have to explain the complex nature of those patients. Administratively, she is the local principal investigator for the Children's Oncology Group (COG), and currently we have about 40 protocols open locally. Along with our lead CRA she has to ensure that we adhere to the myriad of regulations in place necessary to run these studies. We are audited by several agencies including Health Canada, MUHC RI, COG, and C-17 (group representing the 17 pediatric centres in Canada that treat oncology patients) to ensure we are conducting these studies in a proper fashion. In overseeing this aspect of our program we have improved enormously in the disciplined way we conduct studies. Sharon also participates in hospital based activities including sitting on the REB for the last several years. She is an exemplary teacher, often cited by residents and students for the time she takes to explain the ins and outs of hematology/oncology in a very clear and understandable manner. She is also a group leader in the mentorship program run through the medical school and those in her group are fortunate to have her as she has much to offer as an example of a busy clinically-based physician. She balances her clinical life
with her family of two young sons and her husband Allan Ptack who is in charge of allied health at the MCH, tennis, and climbing Mt Kilimanjaro as she did last year to raise funds for the MCH foundation.

It would be a shame to overlook the contributions of Sharon because what she does doesn't make headlines or wins awards. But the breadth and complexity of her practice, administrative duties, and quality of her teaching is rivalled by few in this hospital and should be recognized.

I would encourage all of us to think about someone along the lines of Sharon to put forward. I look forward to receiving the suggestions and reading the reasons there-of.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael
July 20, 2012

Hi Everyone

This week’s Departmental Acknowledgement goes to Kent Saylor and was suggested to me by Stephen Liben who wrote the following email message to me last month:

"Friday afternoon at 4 o'clock I get a call from an MD in Sialuit about a (complicated past medical history) 3 yo who is having a strange constellation of symptoms (will not let her touch his shoulders, & appears defensive and afraid). It is really busy on the medical wards and I am taking this call as I am also the "pediatric consultant". I tell the Md that I am really not sure what is going on with her patient and I advise her to call back and see if the Northern doctors will take the call, even as I am aware that it almost 5 pm (the pediatric consultant, i.e.. me, takes these calls after hours). I decide to walk down to the Northern MD offices to see if I can find someone and I run into Kent closing his door on his way out (I presumed). I describe the issue and he offers to call her back. 45 minutes later I check in with him and he is still on the phone with her. He later tells me that he thinks the child may have a myositis and that the Md will not need to transfer the child down to Montreal but will do some more tests and observe Up North for now. The whole time Kent is interacting with me he is patient kind courteous and professional. Never once does he even bat an eye about the fact that it is a Friday afternoon at the end of the day. He just calmly and professionally helps out without making any kind of fuss at all. You may think "that's his job" but we both know that many others in his place would have at least grimaced at being given a "turf" on a late Friday afternoon. I think that such simple acts of professionalism and basic human goodness should be noted, in addition to noting those who win awards for research and so on."

Indeed such "goodness" as Kent demonstrated in this exchange with Stephen is notable for acknowledgement - however I would need to note that Kent has also been chosen recently as the inaugural recipient of the Peter Henderson Bryce Award. This Award, created by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society honours an individual for public health advocacy that enables systematic changes to improve the lives of Inuit, Metis, and First Nations children and youth who are among our most vulnerable of populations. The citation letter highlights Kent's work in sustainable advocacy through the development of national Aboriginal health curricula for health professionals. In this way Kent extends the reach of his professionalism well beyond the children he directly affects as exemplified by the Friday afternoon tale above to countless others across Canada whom he will never directly meet.

Clearly Kent is but one among us who not only does the talk but also does the walk in his quiet no fuss way. He is one of the reasons we are a national centre of child health excellence and leadership.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael
July 27, 2012

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement was suggested and written by Sherif Emil and is given to Jade Seguin one of our Chief Residents.

The acknowledgment is particularly enjoyable from my perspective for several reasons; i) it’s not given for an award but rather for the everyday work we do, ii) it’s given to a young member of our community, iii) it’s interdisciplinary from one physician to another.

I can’t improve on what Sherif wrote and I will reproduce it in its entirety below.

"I wanted to mention a special person who, in my mind, deserves recognition -- Jade Seguin.

In the summer of 2010, I saw a 3 week old boy with an extremely rare condition -- cricopharyngeal achalasia -- a condition reported only a few times in the literature without consensus on treatment or outcome. I made a bold move to operate on the baby with a cricopharyngeal myotomy. He had quite a rocky course for several weeks due to GERD and other issues, but eventually made a full recovery and is now a healthy 2 year old boy.

Jade had just started her internship and was the resident on the pediatric team taking care of him. She really stood out, and the parents, who are extremely sophisticated, came to see her as their advocate and physician.

Last night, I attended a small ceremony at the car dealership owned by the family where they presented me with a $45,000 check for my research efforts in GERD. They created a Foundation that will raise money for the hospital annually. The Chairman of the MCH Foundation as well as some other members of the St-laurent community were there. More importantly, Jade was invited and thanked publicly for her efforts on behalf of the child and family. I think this is absolutely remarkable for a resident. I was very proud of her."

Well done Jade—we are all proud of you! She is but one example of our superb PGME Program under the Direction of Richard Gosselin. Pick them and train them well and our present and our future is in good hands.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael
August 3, 2012

Hi Everyone

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to two newer members of the faculty, Maryam Oskoui and Pia Wintermark, on their achieving significant personal milestones.

A critical step in the pathway for an independent investigator in research is receiving that first external peer-reviewed operating grant. In this era of 15% overall granting success in an individual competition, with a rate probably half of that for new investigators within 3 years of their initial faculty appointment, that first grant is a daunting challenge that is a source of much personal stress and anxiety. It’s also far from a sure thing. However, once achieved this is often a harbinger of future success and academic progression.

Both Maryam and Pia were successful in the recent Hospital for Sick Children Foundation/ CIHR-IHDCYH New Investigator Award Competition.

Maryam is a graduate of McGill and completed her residency in pediatric neurology here before heading off to New York City and Columbia University for a fellowship in pediatric neuromuscular disorders. She returned to Montreal and undertook both an MSc in epidemiology (becoming Canada's first pediatric neuro-epidemiologist) and a second fellowship in ALS. She officially joined our Faculty in January 2011 and has developed research interests in various aspects of the epidemiology of cerebral palsy and in matters pertaining to the transition of care between pediatric and adult milieus. Her HSCF operating grant is for 3 years and is entitled: Prevalence and Healthcare Utilization Pattern of Children with Cerebral Palsy

Pia is originally from Switzerland where she received her training in both pediatrics and neonatology. She then went to Boston where she undertook a three year clinical and research fellowship at Harvard in Neonatal-Perinatal medicine. In 2010 she joined our Faculty and has developed an independent research program that utilizes advanced MR imaging techniques to further our understanding of the pathogenetic mechanisms of the newborn's response to asphyxial brain injury, which is the most common cause of long-term neurologic morbidity arising in the newborn. Her HSF operating grant for 3 years is entitled: Prediction of Brain Injury in Asphyxiated Newborns by Early Brain Perfusion Measurements.

In addition, Pia has had a particularly good month as in late July she was informed that she will now be receiving her first external salary support award as a Chercheur-boursier clinicien of the FRSQ at the Junior 1 level.

Please join me in congratulating both Maryam and Pia on their accomplishments. They join an emerging cadre of bright young research stars at our institution.
I will be away for the next few weeks and given the dog days of August, the Departmental Acknowledgements will take a brief hiatus and resume the Friday after Labour Day.

Please feel free to suggest anyone for an Acknowledgement. I am particularly grateful for your suggestions.

Have a great weekend and enjoy the rest of summer.

Michael