

Departmental Acknowledgement

"I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom"
Bob Dylan

Hi Everyone,

There are many people at 2300 Tupper who work hard, but one amongst us has especially impressed me in the last few months by her work ethic and dedication to the mission in difficult times. That is why this week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to **Martine Alfonso**, the AED of the MCH.

Martine is a recent addition to the F-wing arriving in early 2013 to take over from a former Departmental Chair, Harvey Guyda. A health professional herself (physiotherapy), she is a graduate of the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy at McGill. Prior to her arrival here, Martine was dealing with the challenges of the Montreal Neurological Hospital as their AED. The reality is that we are somewhat of an insular place populated by MCH lifers with a unique institutional culture and a well-deserved reputation amongst others for our strident advocacy of child health efforts within the overall scope of the MUHC mission and the Faculty of Medicine. Thus Martine's arrival as an outsider was initially viewed with skepticism and a "prove yourself to me" reception. This was especially challenging given the contemporary context that we all know too well of significant change and transition coupled with that ever-present buzzword of austerity.

Martine has indeed proved herself in spades. She "got it" very quickly and it wasn't long before I heard her at multiple tables saying what lifers like me say repeatedly. However she always does so in a tactful, diplomatic and strategic way (mea culpa - I occasionally do a rabid dog imitation) that puts the points forward in a way that is not off-putting and retains the ability to formulate key alliances and collaborations that achieves desired end results. Martine has the capacity to listen to different points of view, move the discussion forward, arrive at a working consensus and then make a decision that sticks. She has been particularly effective in dealing with our masters, first in the Agence and now more directly in the MSSS. Let's not kid ourselves, these alliances and lines of communication are critical to our long-term success and vibrancy. External relations are a key component of Martine's efforts on our behalf and she does it ably and smoothly in both official language with our partners in the MUHC and with the Board, Foundation and the media.

Martine works incredibly hard. A huge amount of material crosses her desk demanding her attention. The daily operational challenges on the cusp of a once-in-a-century hospital move are enormous. The weekend and early morning/late evening emails I get from her are an objective testimony to her considerable work ethic. She is really thinking about this place and its people all the time. Not only does she have the concerns of the MCH on her plate, she also has to deal with the Pandora box that is IT across the MUHC (don't envy her on that responsibility folks).

Please join me in thanking Martine for her efforts on our behalf. We may not always agree (a necessary but essential tension for progress) but I have no doubts about her heart and her motivation on our behalf.

Have a great weekend everyone !

Michael

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