

## Departmental Acknowledgement

**"Acquire the art of detachment, the virtue of method, and the quality of thoroughness, but above all the grace of humility"**  
**William Osler**

Hi Everyone,

An excellent and insightful Grand Rounds was given earlier this week by Sanjay Mahant from the Hospital for Sick Children on the topic of 'clinical excellence'. Through qualitative and observational work, Sanjay has tried to tease out what are the factors that yield clinical excellence in a subset of physicians. It appears that what these individuals share is both a powerful intrinsic motivation to be excellent and an innate humility that compels them to continually strive to be excellent by an awareness that they can do better through a process of continual self-refinement. Needless to say these individuals also possess enormous knowledge about their respective fields of endeavour and they also find themselves gripped by overwhelming curiosity. After the rounds, many Departmental members suggested to me our own examples of clinical excellence and I have chosen for this week's Departmental Acknowledgement one of the names put forward: **Franziska Baltzer**.

Originally from Switzerland, Franziska did her medical studies and residency in pediatrics there. She developed an interest in adolescent medicine and gynecology which she formally pursued in fellowship training here at McGill. She joined our staff in 1991 as the Director of Adolescent Medicine first as interim then with a permanent appointment in 1993. She retained the Division Directorship until earlier this year. Throughout her leadership of adolescent medicine, there was never any doubt regarding her commitment and dedication to her patients and her professional staff. Franziska made it a point of her clinical career to provide care to the most vulnerable of adolescent populations including teen mothers with substance abuse issues (Centre Portage), incarcerated youths (Shawbridge), and those with mental health issues (Douglas Hospital). Her excellence was noted by her peers with long service on the CPS Adolescent Health Committee and the Board of Directors for the Canadian Association for Adolescent Health.

I have reprinted below what the current Division Director for Adolescent Medicine, Julius Erdstein, wrote to me about Franziska. Wonderful words to read from someone who also embodies many of the attributes of clinical excellence.

"It was quite remarkable as to how many elements of excellence presented today describe the way Dr. Franziska Baltzer has practiced Adolescent Medicine here for the past 25 years. She never toots her own horn and only gets excited, and sometimes goes overboard, when advocating for her patients. She has been instrumental in establishing province-wide protocols for the most vulnerable of patients who have been sexually abused and is recognized widely for her expertise in this matter. Weekly she goes to the prison at Shawbridge where she provides care to these most difficult of patients and where on a regular basis she invokes innovative procedures for diagnostic clarification and intervention. What is most remarkable though is the way her patients and families routinely sing her praises and provide testament to the effectiveness of her holistic interventions. I am struck by the frequent occurrence of former patients coming back to the clinic to flaunt their success. I have seen Franziska evaluate patients in their parent's car when they are unable to come into the building, she has done home visits when required and dedicated herself to her patients and their care with a sense of humility and with interpersonal connections that is quite remarkable. She does battle with the systems windmills when the patients wellbeing is

at stake and I have personally seen occasions where disasters have been averted solely due to her persistence."

Dedication is also a feature of clinical excellence. Please send me such tributes of clinical excellence so I can feature these often unsung heroes in future Departmental Acknowledgements.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

Michael Shevell, MDCM, FRCPC, FCAHS  
Chairman, Department of Pediatrics  
Professor (with Tenure)  
Departments of Pediatrics and Neurology/Neurosurgery  
McGill University

Guyda Chair in Pediatrics

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

Follow Me on Twitter: @McGillPeds