

**"Why buy good luggage? You only use it when you travel"**  
Yogi Berra

Hi Everyone,

If you have hung around me long enough in the last 5 years, you almost certainly would have heard me say, more than once (I repeat it like a 'Dad joke'), that "philanthropy is the future of academic medicine". That's why this week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to **Marie-Josée Gariépy and the MCH Foundation staff**.

The reason why philanthropy is the future of academic medicine is the simple reality that we find ourselves in a protracted era of austerity. High accumulated public debt and oil that is less than \$40 per barrel (it is a major driver of the pan-Canadian economy whether we like it or not) means that we can expect little increase in either health or university budgets in the foreseeable future. Thus, we as an academic institution must seek other sources of funds to strive for growth and more importantly excellence. The plaques honouring donors popping up all over our new MCH is a visible testimony that voluntary donors were a key factor (over \$100 million) in achieving our dream of a new Children's Hospital. Much of our technology platform (which includes Canada's first paediatric intra-operative MRI) could only have been obtained by the grace of our donor support.

Marie-Josée is the Executive Director of the MCH Foundation. My role as Chair causes me to come in contact frequently with her and to watch her in action. She is tireless in her devotion to the MCH community. She knows the stories of our patients and their families which she and her team puts to good effect to reach out to the greater community to engage them. It takes time, patience and energy to convey to those that can give the urgent need to give. While there are a dedicated group of most generous long-term supporters (individual and corporate), this pool must constantly be enlarged. This requires carefully crafted outreach and communication efforts that, from my perspective, are a marvel to observe. Donors today are much different than those a generation ago. They are no longer satisfied to simply 'write a cheque', but are keen to be pitched specific projects and be involved in their crafting and implementation and insist, as they should, on accountability for their donated funds. This calls for the skill of engaging with respect and knowledge, but still gently guiding towards what is most needed at a particular point in time.

Marie-Josée is a lawyer by professional training. This comes in handy as often times legal and tax implications must be taken into consideration in philanthropy. She needs to manage a staff of over 30 who share her personal drive and commitment to our cause. At all times, careful attention must be taken to the costs of fundraising so that the MCHF can maximize what it is given to the hospital and its academic community. Annual funds now raised by the MCHF total between \$20-25 million dollars a year. The MCHF throughout is a valuable partner that is essential to our academic activities. Think endowed Chairs, fellowships, recruitments, retentions, capital purchases and programmatic support. We would be a much lesser Department without their presence.

They say charity begins at home. The MCH is our home. I would strongly urge all readers of this Acknowledgement to consider an annual contribution to the MCHF. Consider attending some of their fundraising events. A particular favourite of mine is the annual Ball for the Children's which will be held this year on May 19. It's a chance for me to put on a tux (proving the adage that 'every man looks good in a tux'), have a date with a glammed up Annette, and have a really fun night out dining, dancing and hob-nobbing. I look forward to seeing more of you there.

Please join me in thanking Marie Josée and her staff for all their dedicated work.

I will be away in India the next two weeks. I look forward to reading the forthcoming two Acknowledgements by guest writers.

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