

April 21, 2017

**“I have no idols. I admire work, dedication and competence”
Ayrton Senna**

Hi Everyone,

This is another long overdue Departmental Acknowledgement, and I am actually glad that I waited, as I now have not one but three reasons to highlight the contributions of **Johanne Morel**.

A graduate of Université de Montréal, Johanne has made her mark in health care in the remote Northern regions of Quebec amongst our Inuit and Cree First Nations peoples. Before entering pediatrics training split between CHEO and the MCH, Johanne practiced for two years amongst the Cree communities centered around Chisasibi. Johanne has spent her entire practice and academic career at the MCH and McGill in our Northern Program Whapmagoostui- Kuujuaaraapik combining time spent on the ground in the Cree and Nunavik region together with providing medical support to these remote communities, first by satellite phone and then by telehealth, as well as by seeing children sent south for more advanced tertiary level care. This practice extends over three decades and has involved roughly twelve weeks a year of extended travel in harsh geographic and climatic conditions away from family and comfort. Johanne has made an enormous impact on child health in this vast under-served region and during that time has developed a deep appreciation of health and disease and how care must be adapted to suit culture and context. A tangible demonstration of Johanne's commitment is her acquisition of considerable language skills, both written and verbal, in Inuktitut. Many a time, Johanne has been accompanied in her travels by one of our PGME trainees, exposing our learners in a direct way to providing health care in challenging situations.

Johanne's extended dedication has led to her leading the process that resulted in the PH Bryce Award from the Canadian Pediatric Society being given to the children of a northern community. This award "recognizes and honors leadership in promoting safety, health and well being of First Nations, Metis and Inuit children and youth". Specifically, Johanne first undertook a project that provided the evidence that the children of Nunavik suffered a disproportionate burden of traumatic brain injuries as a result of motor vehicle accidents, typically from riding all-terrain vehicles or ski-doo's. This then led to innovative community-based and child focused preventative efforts (think videos and coloring books) to encourage and facilitate helmet usage. The end result is that in the joint Cree/Inuit community of Whapmagoostui-Kuujuaaraapik, both the Cree and Inuit bands have provided all children with helmets. Given the award to the local children provides both empowerment and positive reinforcement that will hopefully make this an enduring change in practice and ultimately a lot less children suffering TBIs.

Johanne's long work in the North and her creativity and ingenuity makes her more than prepared to now undertake the leadership of our Northern Program. A Departmental innovation, it is indeed one of our 'highlight reel' clinical and academic efforts. Effective May 1st, Johanne will become the Program Director and I have no doubt that she will rise to the challenge.

Please join me in congratulating Johanne on her well-deserved appointment.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

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