

Hi Everyone

First off I hope everyone had a good summer and all of you had a chance to enjoy the not too unpleasant local effects of global warming.

Its now after Labor Day and as promised the weekly Departmental Acknowledgments will start up again.

I have decided to give this week's acknowledgement to Stephen Liben.

Stephen is a Montreal/McGill/MCH lifer like a few of us around here (myself included). Raised in the city, he did his undergraduate and medical training at McGill as well as a residency in pediatrics, which included a stint as Chief Resident, at the MCH. Joining our staff in the early 1990s Stephen initially focused his clinical efforts for close to a decade in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU).

However he felt another professional vocation calling him that was radically different in its orientation from the PICU. This vocation is of course Pediatric Palliative Care. While still an attending in the PICU, Stephen got actively involved in palliative care and since 1995 has been the Director of this service at the Children's. He leads a remarkable multi-disciplinary team that aims to envelope in a network of comprehensive and individualized support children with significant life-limiting and life-threatening illnesses and their families. Much effort goes into establishing the specific needs of each child and their family to alleviate the challenges and burdens of illness that goes way beyond traditional medical efforts at symptom and pain management.

Aside from being a pioneer in pediatric palliative care, Stephen has to his credit some remarkable contributions to the field. He has extended the scope of palliative care beyond the traditional focus on dying children to children with significant chronic disorders that are life-threatening. He has edited a book on the discipline and for a while he has provided the lead for the pediatric palliative care component of the International Palliative Care Conference that is held every two years in Montreal. If these clinical and leadership efforts were not enough, Stephen is well-recognized as a excellent teacher, serving as an Osler Fellow , valued pediatric ward attending and key member of the McGill Centre for Whole Person care. He also generates a remarkable near weekly offering that is distributed electronically on mindfulness in Medicine that I would suggest to each of us.

On a personal note, I often envy Stephen's Zen-calm and composure amidst the storm at times that can be academic medicine to which I can add this observation; Have you noticed there is no synonym for thesaurus?

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael