

"There is a form of laughter that springs from the heart, heard every day in the merry voice of childhood, the expression of a laughter — loving spirit that defies analysis by the philosopher, which has nothing rigid or mechanical in it, and totally without social significance. Bubbling spontaneously from the heart of child or man."

Sir William Osler

Hi Everyone

This week's acknowledgment goes to **Nathalie Major** and is provided by one of our ER physicians Adam Bretholz who took the time to write me regarding the invaluable support his entire group receives from our hospital's Child Life specialists and Ms. Major in particular. These individuals are dispersed throughout multiple clinical locations and for the most part their work flies under the proverbial radar. However if we pause to think about the entire medical experience from the child's point of view, we would see them as an indispensable part of what is a comprehensive care package. For a child, receiving medical or surgical care often is a frightening and disruptive experience that can only be made tolerable by recognizing the special needs of that child. Indeed when a child recalls their time in our hospital, I suspect that their memories are suffused with the actions of a child life worker. Please read Adam's precis below and take the time to thank a child life worker in your clinical sector. They most certainly deserve it.

I am writing this letter in recognition of Nathalie Major, who is a child life specialist in the Montreal Children's Hospital's Pediatric Emergency Department (MCH PED). As a full-time attending physician at the MCH PED, I work frequently and closely with Ms. Major. She is professional, personable and dedicated. Her mere presence in the department is a reminder to the staff that we as a whole need to be more mindful of our young patients and their particular needs. Ms. Major saves the department valuable time and helps to avoid unnecessary investigations, the side effects of medications and patient return visits. She is thoughtful, caring and dedicated and often stays beyond the end of her shift to help the young patients in need of her assistance.

When I need to do a laceration repair on a young toddler and Ms. Major is available to assist, I know that I can make that medical experience infinitely more tolerable, and that I can do it without exposing that child to the risks of sedation. When there is an adolescent who is refusing medications for their debilitating migraines because he/she is petrified of needles, I know that Ms. Major will take the time to walk him/her through the process and gain that patient's confidence and trust in order to treat that adolescent properly. As such, Ms. Major's care avoids the teen's predictable and unnecessary return visit due to lack of initial treatment. When a child arrives to our department strapped to a spine board screaming uncontrollably after a car crash, I know that I can trust Ms. Major to help me calm the child turning him/her from "irritable" to "consolable", thus avoiding the need for an unnecessary head CT and the associated radiation exposure. When I have a young scared child presenting with stridor, I know that Natalie can help me calm that child for a proper assessment of the severity of his/her obstruction. The anxiety would otherwise escalate if the child is not calmed, leading to potential unneeded treatment and investigations.

I know that on a global scale, the efforts and contributions of our child life team can be minimized or even overlooked. However, I know from my front line experience that

these members of our health care team are integral in providing our patients with the most appropriate health care experience possible.

Adam has highlighted yet another example how medicine is a team sport and there is no "i" in team.

Also please let me know if there is someone in your sector that you would like to put forward for an Acknowledgement.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael