

November 25, 2016

**“Safety is not a gadget but a state of mind”
Eleanor Everet**

Hi Everyone,

We are all entitled to health and safety. This entitlement is perhaps of most importance when one is in a state of vulnerability. Whether we like it or not, power imbalances exist in the academic health care milieu and our learners, whether they be allied health professionals, medical students, graduate students, residents or fellows, are vulnerable. For all too long this vulnerability was a given and the excuse “I went through this, so they should too” was all too frequently given. But it doesn’t have to be so. Indeed, from a moral perspective of the just society we strive for, it must not be so.

I am happy to say that the Faculty has made learner wellness in all sectors a priority and one of our members will play an important role in this effort. That is why **Debbie Friedman** is getting this week’s Departmental Acknowledgement.

A physiotherapist by training, Debbie is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and Pediatric Surgery. Her major impact has been as the lead of our multi-disciplinary Head Trauma program. For close to a quarter of a century, Debbie has led our hospital efforts to coordinate care to children and youth with a concussion or traumatic brain injury. She has been quite frankly relentless in her educational efforts of the public and health professionals, the implementation of consistent care guidelines based on evidence and perhaps, most importantly, prevention efforts to minimize the occurrence and associated morbidity of an acquired head injury.

Perhaps based on her advocacy success with this patient population, Debbie was recently appointed as Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (Schools) in the Faculty of Medicine. Debbie will focus on promoting support services for students in the various schools of the Faculty (P & OT, Nursing , Communication Sciences) that aims to promote learner wellness by advocating and developing and sustaining a nurturing learning environment. As someone who has always done the walk in inter-professional education, I have no doubt that Debbie’s efforts in the Schools will draw from and inform similar wellness efforts now underway in Medicine. Emerging at multiple points in the Faculty’s landscape is a theme of interwoven professions and professionalism that will no doubt improve all.

Please join me in congratulating Debbie on her appointment. As always, the Department gains when one of our members is invited onto a larger stage.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

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