

October 2, 2020

Hi everyone,

This week's DA goes to **Franziska Baltzer** who retired from her PEM on July 1st.

A pioneer in the field of Adolescent Medicine, Franziska most impressed me by her dedicated compassionate service over many years to two pediatric populations that are all too often ignored; 1) youths who have been victims of sexual abuse and 2) youths who are incarcerated. Arriving from her native Switzerland in the 1990s to the MCH and McGill, Franziska served for many years as Division Director for Adolescent Medicine.



I asked the current Division Director, Julius Erdstein, to provide some personal notes on Franziska's contributions and I am delighted to reproduce what he wrote below:

"The legacy and impact of Franziska's influence and contributions will remain with us for a long time. It is quite ironic that this retirement comes at the time of the pandemic where we all are supposed to be practicing social distancing. This distancing comes with a sense of some isolation which is the antithesis of the teachings and practices of Franziska throughout her career. Her departure from being a reliable fixture within our premises is somewhat analogous to the void that is being created by the profound diminishment of human interaction that we are now experiencing. It is exactly that human connection in clinical care that Franziska had mastered and exemplified as a model for us all to follow. Her dedication to the care of her patients was not confined by rules and regulations. She is and has been a straight shooter who in her straight forward way highlights the essential elements in any discussion. Although those who were not so familiar with her ways could find this shocking, those of us who have had the privilege of working closely with her realize that not only does this come from a sincere and compassionate place within her, but that it is often the most effective method of achieving transformation.

It is through her dedication, hard work and longstanding advocacy for adolescent patients that the current Division of Adolescent Medicine has evolved into a busy, multifaceted, and strong unit. The strength and confidence to challenge accepted dogma, the true sense of compassion to reach beyond established boundaries of clinical care and the pure chutzpah to call out injustices has been inspiring to watch.

I wish health, happiness and relaxation for the many years to come. I am also pleased that Franziska will be able to continue working with us on a part-time basis which should keep us all in line. Congratulations on your retirement and thank-you for your leadership, mentorship and friendship."

Wonderful words indeed. Please join me in wishing Franziska a retirement of health and only good things.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

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