

# McGill Programs in Whole Person Care

Department of Oncology

Volume 1, issue 2

## McGill Programs in WPC celebrates

On October 28, 2005, Dr. Tom Hutchinson, Director of the McGill Programs in Whole Person Care and Dr. Balfour Mount, Eric M. Flanders Chair in Palliative Medicine, hosted a reception celebrating new developments in the Programs. Within the past ten months, with the support of Dr. Gerald Batist, Chair of the Department of Oncology, the programs have expanded their offices to the entire third floor of the Gerald Bronfman Centre for Clinical Research in Oncology. This move enabled the accommodation of several new team members. Dr. Patricia Dobkin, Associate Professor in the Fac-

ulty of Medicine, is spearheading a clinical initiative on behalf of the Programs. Dr. Helen McNamara began her 15-month term as Faculty Scholar in October 2005 and will be working with Tom Hutchinson designing a course on "Healing" for Med 3 students. Dawn Allen, PhD, is the Program's post-doctoral fel-

low. Her research for the next 18 months will be focussing on Suffering and Healing in Patients with End Stage Renal Disease.

The gathering of 50 people was addressed by Dr. Hutchinson, Dr. Mount, and Dr. Richard Cruess, former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.



Tom Hutchinson, Richard Cruess &amp; Balfour Mount

### Inside this issue:

*Mindfulness in health-* 2

*"Freddie" award to The Man Who Learned to Fall* 3

*Film series schedule* 3

*Program Info* 4



### McGill Seminars on Healing 2006

Friday January 27	Rolando Del Maestro Montreal Neurological Institute	<i>Leonardo da Vinci: Searching for Humanity in Beauty and the Grotesque</i>	Seminar Room 546 Pine West
Friday February 24	Ann Gamsa MUHC Pain Centre	<i>Listening to Chronic Pain Stories: What are we treating? Who are we treating?</i>	Seminar Room 546 Pine West
Friday March 31	Balfour Mount McGill Programs in WPC	<i>Our Silent Dancing Partner: Attitudes toward death and how they got to be that way</i>	<b>Martin Amphitheatre McIntyre Medical Bldg.</b>
Tuesday April 11	Thomas Moore Author of "Care of the Soul"	<i>The Spirit and the Soul of Medicine</i>	Seminar Room 546 Pine West
Tuesday May 2	Michael Kearney Author of "A Place of Healing"	<i>The Interconnectedness is <u>already</u> There.</i>	Seminar Room 546 Pine West

All seminars take place from 12:30–2 pm. Please RSVP to 398-2298 or Eileen.lavery@mcgill.ca if you plan to attend. Refreshment are served at the seminars held at the Gerald Bronfman Centre on Pine Avenue.

# Mindfulness in Healthcare

Maureen Rappaport, MD

In October, The Centre for Whole Person Care, invited Saki Santorelli, Ed.D, M.A., Director of The Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Healthcare, and Society and The Stress Reduction Clinic at University of Massachusetts Memorial Medical Center, to come to Montreal for two days of exploration of what mindfulness in the form of sitting meditation can add to our practices in healthcare. The highlights of his visit were three experiential meditation workshops, given over three days, culminating in a presentation to a standing room only crowd at a Friday seminar.

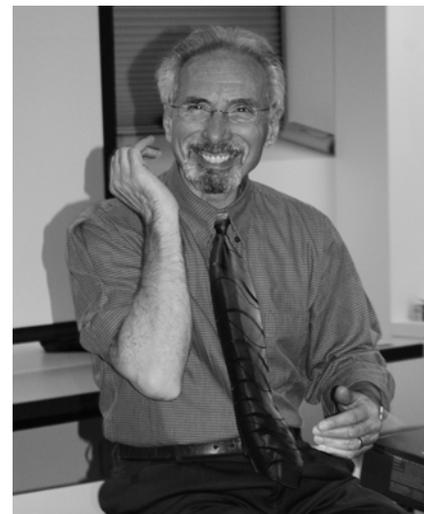
Saki Santorelli has been practicing and leading meditation workshops since 1979, and his program has treated over 16,000 patients suffering from chronic diseases including cardiac, chronic pain, asthma, etc. These workshops teach mindful-awareness to the experience and expression of stress, pain, and anxiety within everyday life. Research has shown that most participants in his program experience long-lasting improvements in both physical and psychological symptoms.

Picture a room on the top floor in the elegant Faculty Club. Thirty high-backed walnut chairs are arranged in a semi-circle. You take your place and sit among the other nurses, social workers, psychologists, therapists, doctors, and students. It is late afternoon and you expect this to be a relaxing and enlightening experience. The speaker, a small, soft-spoken man, gives you permission to remove your shoes and tells you to sit upright in a dignified way. Close your eyes. Don't think. Feel the cold air at the top of your nostrils as you breathe in. Feel the hot air going

out. Feel the sensation of your heels touching the carpet. It's getting harder to relax with the feeling of tension piling up in your shoulders. The sounds coming out of the heating duct are distracting. You feel itchy. You want to get up and stretch. What's for supper? This is not relaxing. Are you doing this thing right? You are told to gently escort your wandering mind back to the breath, back to the present moment. Welcome to Contemplation in Healthcare 1.

Mindfulness meditation doesn't fall into the usual medical model of see one, do one, teach one. Taking copious notes, memorizing guidelines and mnemonics won't help. The only way to learn meditation is to sit down and do it, with the opportunity for discussing our experiences be they relaxing, frustrating, or enlightening. Meditation in healthcare can be prescribed, but cannot be taught to our students or our patients by anyone who doesn't embody mindfulness meditation practice in their own lives. Daily meditation is not an easy thing for a busy healthcare practitioner to commit to; it goes against our drive to fix, do, and help in the face of endless demands. But according to some of the comments of the people present at Saki's workshop in Montreal, and the research showing major positive changes in health attitudes, behaviours, and self-perception, mindfulness meditation is something we must be aware of.

It is hard to embody an experience in words, on paper, and so I invite you to read a poem by Rumi, a thirteenth-century Sufi poet, that Saki shared with us. This poem describes the whirlwind of thoughts and sensations that seem to universally appear during meditation.



Saki Santorelli, October 28, 2005

## The Guest House

This being human is a guest house  
every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness  
comes  
as an unexpected visitor.  
Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they are a crowd of  
sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still treat them honorably.  
He may be clearing you out for  
some new delight.  
The dark thought, the sham, the  
malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.  
Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.

Rumi

## McGill teaching film wins major award

*The Man Who Learned to Fall*, the film directed by Garry Beitel and produced by Beitel Lazar Productions, in collaboration with McGill Programs in Whole Person Care, won two awards at the International Health and Medical Media Awards in New York City on November 4, 2005.

The prestigious awards are also known as FREDDIEs, in honour of Dr. Fred Gottlieb who founded the annual competition. It attracts feature-length films, documentaries, series, shorts, videos, and new media from around the world that are dedicated to exploring the health-related issues that affect people's

lives. World-class filmmakers and producers compete in 35 categories for the FREDDIE, the competition's bronze award statue. The competition's rigorous judging, conducted by medical and production professionals from across the country, has become the industry standard, and the awards are known as "the Oscars" of medical world.

*The Man Who Learned to Fall* won for best film in the category of Coping, as well as the Michael E. DeBakey Award (for Outstanding Educational Entry).

Information about the film can be found on the Beitel Lazar Productions website:

[www.themanwholearnedtofall.com](http://www.themanwholearnedtofall.com)



*The Man Who Learned to Fall* screens on January 10 at 7 pm in the Arts Building, McGill University, as part of the series:

**Films that Transform.**

### Films that Transform: In dialogue with others on the journey 2006 Schedule

*"To promote dialogue on issues of wellness and healing within McGill and in the Montreal community."*

January 10, 2006	'The Man Who Learned to Fall' Guest discussant: Garry Beitel, filmmaker <b><i>Self expression and learning to fall as determinants of healing</i></b>
February 14, 2006	'The Boys of Buchenwald' Guest discussant: Rabbi Reuben Bulka <b><i>The determinants of wounding and healing in the wake of tyranny</i></b>
March 14, 2006	'Zero Degrees of Separation' Guest discussant: Elle Flanders, filmmaker <b><i>Politics, socioeconomic disparity, cultural identity, sexual orientation: issues that polarize; opportunities for healing.</i></b>
April 11, 2006	'Andy Goldsworthy: Rivers and Tides / Working with Time' Guest discussants: Thomas Moore; Joan Hanley <b><i>The flow into union in the natural world: on being grounded in place and present to the moment</i></b>
May 2, 2006	'Ram Dass: Fierce Grace' Guest discussant: Michael Kearney <b><i>A life lived: one man's journey toward an open heart</i></b>
June 6, 2006	'How's Your News?' Guest discussant: Lisa Walsh <b><i>Wounded healers: quality of life and our variety of gifts</i></b>

**All presentations take place on Tuesday evenings in Moyses Hall, Arts Building  
McGill University (853 Sherbrooke Street West).**

**Price: \$10; \$5 for students and seniors    Time: 7 pm**



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Tax deductible donations to McGill  
Programs in Whole Person Care may be  
arranged by contacting Eileen Lavery.

[www.mcgill.ca/wholepersoncare](http://www.mcgill.ca/wholepersoncare)

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programmes de  
**soins  
holistes  
de McGill**

### Programs in Whole Person Care Faculty

#### Director

Tom A. Hutchinson, MB, FRCP(C)

#### Founding Director

Balfour M. Mount, MD, FRCP(S)

#### Faculty

Patricia Dobkin, PhD

Steve Jordan, PhD

Antonia Arnaert, PhD

Helen MacNamara, MD (Faculty Scholar)

Dawn Allen, PhD (Research Fellow)

#### Administrative Staff:

Eileen Lavery; Nancy Gair; Megan Wainwright

*Supported by the Donner Canadian Foundation and  
the Max Bell Foundation.*

## McGill Programs in Whole Person Care

**T**raditionally, the existential and spiritual aspects of illness and their relationship to health care outcomes have received limited attention within the educational and research environment of North America. In recognition of this fact, the McGill Programs in Whole Person Care were instituted in February 1999 on the initiative of Dean Abraham Fuks and Dr. Balfour Mount. The initial proposal to develop and to implement the programs established the need for further research studies and

educational programs that address the subjective experience of illness so as to include the spiritual and/or existential components of personhood, as well as the physical and emotional elements that are currently the focus of attention in the medical profession.

The McGill programs are based on the premise that in situations in which treatment is unable to change the disease outcome, it may be possible to create a space in which healing can occur. Lessons about quality of life and individuation, learned in the arena of ad-

vanced illness, also have relevance earlier in the disease trajectory and for those who are physically well. While the existential/spiritual domain is known to be an important determinant of quality of life, there has been little emphasis on integration of these issues in health care. The Programs seek to integrate the physical aspects of personhood along with the psychosocial and existential/spiritual ones, and to better understand how to respond to suffering experienced by the whole person.

“The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgement, character and will. No one is *compus sui* if he not have it. An education which should improve this faculty would be an education par excellence.”

William James, 1890.