



LE CHILDREN NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2017



Your donations helped me to “Hang in there!”

— Hunter’s mom, Kristen

I remember watching the snowflakes glitter outside the window, with mixed feelings of being at once in the right place and in the wrong one.

The right place on New Year’s Eve should have been at home with my family. But our 15-month-old Hunter’s eyes were behaving strangely and it was getting worse. We decided to drive an hour down to the Montreal Children’s Hospital, not expecting what happened next.

It was a quiet evening in the ER. So much so that we first thought all the attention we were getting was because the staff was bored! But a resident in neurology, who kept asking questions, finally said “Hunter has concerning symptoms,” and asked us to stay the night.

From the window of our hospital room, we watched those snowflakes fall all night long. How could we sleep? While everyone was wishing family and friends health and happiness, we were wracked with fear for our little boy’s health.

The next morning, Dr. Rosenblatt, neurologist, ran some tests on Hunter. We started the New Year with some terrible news: Hunter

has Opsoclonus Myoclonus Syndrome, a rare autoimmune response to a cancerous tumour. He would have to be operated on in the upcoming days.

Hunter received chemotherapy and, every three weeks since, he gets IVIG, a blood product to help boost his immune system.

I will forever be grateful for the kindness and compassion the staff showed us, and for all the donations from people we don’t even know, who do it from sheer compassion and out of hope.

The disease Hunter has only affects one in 10 million. He’s not cured. But he is in the best of hands thanks to your support.

This Holiday season, please join me in telling families who will be in the Hospital: “We’re here with you. Hang in there!” If you can, please support them with a gift to the Tiny Tim Fund. Your donation gives them hope. Thank you!

- Kristen
Hunter’s mom

What You Helped Accomplish

Below are two examples of amazing accomplishments your support made possible.

A SIMULATOR THAT DOES THE WORK

Try and make a young child stay still for a minute. Now try for 10!

Sick children often have to undergo an MRI scan, a large machine with loud sounds that can cause feelings of anxiety and fear, and often times requires a child to be sedated if he or she cannot stay motionless during the exam.

At the Children's, donors like you have provided the Hospital with an innovative Playful MRI Simulator, which has reduced the number of children aged 4 to 6 who have to be sedated for an MRI by 70%.

The original rocket ship design attracts the child, who approaches the exercise as a game rather than a scary medical imaging exam. The idea is that through storytelling, the child boards a rocket and becomes an

astronaut. Lying in the simulator (A) on the sliding table, he or she watches a cartoon and becomes accustomed to the noise of the MRI and the stationary position it imposes. Thank you for helping to offer the best care possible and dramatically reduce the need to sedate sick children.

SECOND-TO-NONE CARE FOR YOUNG CARDIOLOGY PATIENTS

With its strong reputation in cardiac surgery, the Children's cares for young kids – sometimes just a few days old – who require complex surgeries which can be made more complex due to the small size of our patients.

Thanks to donors like you, the Children's was able to acquire a second heart-lung machine, which keeps young patients alive during open-heart surgery. This state-of-the-art machine uses the least amount of blood possible, which speeds up the patient's recovery. This equipment also allows our experts to perform surgeries simultaneously, saving twice as many lives.

Thank you for being there for children like 6-year-old Rachel (B) who has already undergone three major surgeries as she waits for her heart-lung transplant.



The Gift of Gratitude



Visit childrenfoundation.com/champions

"We hope that on a daily basis you never doubt how special you are."

Joy, a grateful mother, and Talia her 8-year-old daughter who's battling cancer, did something truly amazing for the whole hematology-oncology team: they presented each of the 36 staff members a Champions Pin to thank them for their outstanding work. "It was through your caring, compassion, dedication and guidance that we were able to clear the fog and make it through the past 10 months. Thank you!"

If a staff member has marked your stay at the Children's, you too can offer a Champions Pin, and what better time than the holiday season to make this gift of gratitude! All proceeds go to fund the Hospital's most urgent needs.

How well do you know the Children's?

1. The Children's Emergency department is the size of how many football fields?

A. 1 B. 2 C. 3

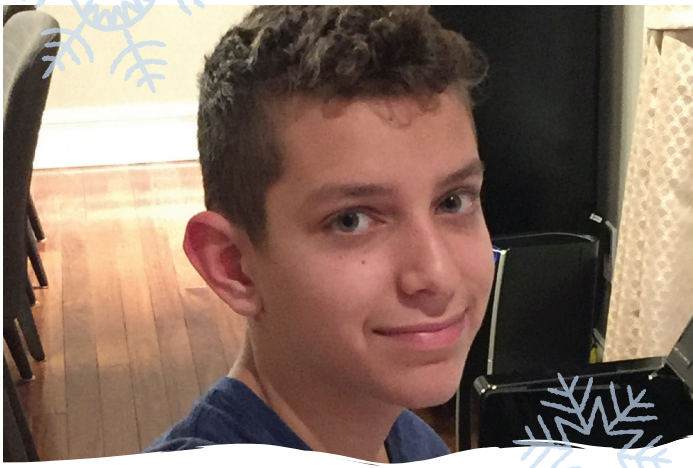
2. How many children undergo surgery on average each day?

A. 5-10 B. 11-19 C. 20-39

3. How many kids were admitted to the Children's last year?

A. 4,600 B. 5,200 C. 5,800

Find out how well you scored at childrenfoundation.com/quiz/



• RESEARCH •

Cracking The Code Into Diabetes

When Aleks was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age 9, he was automatically put on insulin treatment. “We have never slept a night since,” says his father, Nikolas. “Both my wife and I need to get up at night to check his blood sugar levels.” Levels too low could send Aleks into a coma, and those too high will have dramatic long-term impacts on his heart, kidneys, even his extremities.

Aleks, 13, tries to lead a normal life, but he must inject insulin into his body 4 to 6 times a day, at school, or before an activity, or after eating. “He’s become a human calculator of blood sugar levels to understand what affects his body.”

It doesn’t always have to be that way.

Dr. Constantin Polychronakos, Pediatric Endocrinologist at the Children’s and Senior Scientist at the Research Institute of the MUHC is doing research that has the potential of allowing thousands of children and teenagers to benefit from less invasive treatments, like taking a pill, for their particular condition.

“Through genetic testing, we have seen that a very small proportion of type 1 patients have other forms of diabetes that can be treated with alternatives to insulin,” says Dr. Polychronakos, who firmly believes this proportion could be much higher.

With help from donors, he wants to lead a Canada-wide study to test a list of candidate genes as well as the known genes, on 6,000 type 1 diabetic children from 19 participating clinics. The goal? Pinpoint those who can be switched to pills. The ultimate goal? Find new ways of predicting and preventing type 1 diabetes.

Aleks’s father supports this research. “If I can help Dr. Polychronakos open up the Pandora’s box to find out what triggers type 1 diabetes, I will be able to help families, and just knowing that is enough to support his work.”

• CARE •

A one-of-a-kind machine

ECMO — four little letters that are a big mouthful: “Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation.” The Children’s ECMO program benefits from a unique technology bundled into a machine known simply as the “Cardio Help” – the only one of its kind in a pediatric hospital in Quebec. And it comes straight from the hearts of generous donors.

“It’s actually a machine that does the job of the heart and of the lungs, very similar to the bypass machines used in open-heart surgery,” says Dr. Samara Zavalkoff, the pediatric intensive care physician who leads the ECMO team at the Children’s.

Dr. Zavalkoff has seen patients use this life-saving machine for days, sometimes weeks on end. Patients like Mylo who, as an infant, had to fight for his life after developing a dangerous respiratory infection known as Human Metapneumovirus, or hMPV. As with many parents, Sandy and Guido didn’t know very much about ECMO until their little Mylo needed the Cardio Help.

“We’re so grateful it exists because people have donated,” says Sandy. “We have started donating ourselves.”

Doctor Zavalkoff says the ECMO program at the Children’s was, quite literally, a “big deal” when it started in 1991. Back then, an ECMO unit would fill an elevator. Now, it’s the size of a small briefcase that can be picked up by a handle. It may be small but it makes a huge difference to the dozens of patients at the Children’s who have needed the machine and the staff who care for them.

For Dr. Zavalkoff, it is clear: “As a specialized pediatric hospital, we can’t do what we do if we don’t have the support of the Foundation and the donors who make these dreams of having the best technology a reality. We’re not just ‘doing ECMO’, we are doing the best ECMO.”

From Dr. Zavalkoff and from Mylo and his mom and dad: thank you, dear Children’s donors!





BANANA MUFFINS

Try this delicious recipe used in our cooking groups for teens hospitalized in the Children's pediatric psychology department.

By taking part in a fun and familiar activity, the teens test their capacity to follow instructions, take initiative, solve problems, cooperate and, most importantly, socialize with one another. Just like the muffins, it's something everyone enjoys. So treat yourself!

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F) and line muffin-pan cups with paper liners.

2. Using a fork, blend these dry ingredients in a large bowl:

- 375 ml (1 ½ cups) flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda and ½ tsp. salt
- 1 pinch of cinnamon
- ¼ cup brown sugar (packed)

3. In a large bowl, whisk together:

- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup melted margarine
- 5 large overripe bananas, mashed
- Chocolate chips, to taste

4. Add the mixture to dry ingredients and blend.

5. Spoon into the muffin pan, filling each cup about three-quarters full. Bake 18-20 minutes. Makes 12.

Enjoy!

Cooking with kids!

They're on vacation and (hopefully) so are you. So why not ask them to chip in to help you prepare for those Holiday get-togethers? Cooking is an important life skill and a great way to instill healthy habits that will last a lifetime. Your kids or your grandchildren can lend a hand in the kitchen, at all ages!

Children should start by learning basic cooking skills and build their way up. Use these age-specific guidelines to help your little chef succeed in the kitchen. Don't forget to go over safety rules and explain what they can and cannot touch. It's also important to show them how to safely use kitchen tools.

Children ages 2-3 years can:

- wash fruit and vegetables
- count ingredients and add them to a bowl
- put paper liners into muffin tins

Children ages 3-4 years can:

- pour from measuring cups
- mix ingredients in a bowl
- help make a simple sandwich or pizza
- help gather ingredients
- mash sweet potatoes or bananas

Children ages 4-6 years can:

- stir ingredients together (muffins, pancakes, sauces)
- slice cooked vegetables, soft fruit, cheese, or tofu with a plastic knife
- set the table
- crack and beat an egg

Children ages 6-8 years can:

- use basic kitchen equipment such as a blender or can opener
- toss salad ingredients together with salad dressing
- create a smoothie
- make a simple breakfast like whole grain cereal, frozen berries, and milk

Children ages 8-11 years can:

- use a knife to chop cooked meat, easy-to-grip vegetables and fruit, cheese, tofu, and bread
- make and pack their school lunch
- make a fresh veggie or fruit platter to go with dinner
- use the microwave and stove, with your help

Source: Health Canada



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