

Hope for Dementia; MUHC's Got Talent; IBD Support and more



MIKE COHEN
FYI

Hope for Dementia, an organization whose mission is to safeguard healthy brains, held its second annual gala on Nov. 5 at Le Salon Crystal in St. Laurent. There were 320 guests on hand to raise funds for programs that aim to preserve and promote brain health.

The event was a mix of business networking and entertainment while building awareness of the urgent need to make dementia prevention a healthcare priority. This successful sold-out event raised funds that will be invested in *Hope for Dementia's* programs that aim to decelerate cognitive decline and promote promising research into symptom reversal. There was an impressive lineup of speakers from the public, private and scientific sectors who endorsed *Hope for Dementia's* mission and services, while providing updates on scientific programs, healthcare policy and community support for the organization.

Speakers included Federal Minister of Seniors Kamal Khara, St. Laurent Liberal Member of Parliament Emmanuella Lambropoulos, Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging Scientific Director Dr. Howard Chertkow, Program Director for the Aging in Place Challenge Program at the National Research Council Canada Dr. Patricia Debergue and Pierre-Olivier Brunelle and Kelvin Mo, President and outgoing President for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Mount-Royal and Saint-Laurent.

Filmmaker Albert Nerenberg led the audience through an entertaining, participatory exercise to demonstrate the connection between physical activity and mental responses. Music was provided by DJ Mario, with performances by Louis Demers Productions, which had the guests dancing until the late hours of Saturday night. *Hope for Dementia* continues to expand the growing community of policymakers, scientists, businesspersons, caregivers, and volunteers, in Québec and throughout Canada, who came together to make the second annual gala a resounding success. Save the date of November 4, 2023 for the next event.

MUHC'S GOT TALENT: The first ever *MUHC's Got Talent* event raised an incredible \$677,000, with health care staff and others contributing to lifesaving research and patient care. There were 10 remarkable performances, featuring soulful music, spirited singing, and sizzling jazz at Montreal's Corona Theatre, presented by the MUHC Foundation.

Modeled after the hit TV show, *MUHC's Got Talent* featured a wide range of musical talents, from bands made up of MUHC health care workers to three high school groups, all fundraising for a cause close to their hearts at the MUHC. Each performer took to the stage in the hopes of impressing the judges' panel.

"It's wonderful to see the MUHC's health care workers step up to raise money in this way," said Peter Kruyt, Chair



Hope for Dementia Gala Organizing Committee, Speakers, Ambassadors and Volunteers at the sold out event.



The winners are crowned at MUHC's Got Talent.

of the MUHC Board of Directors. "Their participation in *MUHC's Got Talent* will have a positive impact on the hospital and the patients they care for."

The inaugural host was none other than award-winning singer, songwriter and pianist Florence K. She was joined by an esteemed panel of three celebrity judges — beloved radio and television personality Catherine Verdon-Diamond, four-time Stanley Cup champion Yvon Lambert, and long-time CTV Montreal entertainment personality Mose Persico — for a truly unforgettable night.

Throughout this star-studded event, Quebecers donated to the MUHC Foundation in support of their favourite performer either in person or online.

"The energy in the room tonight was astonishing — there were so many wonderful performances," said Florence K. "It was a real joy to see so many people using the power of music to help make the world a better, healthier place."

The Lower Canada College Jazz Band won the Fan Favourite trophy for the most unique donors and \$15,000 will

be added to their fundraising total for Dr. Simon Tanguay. The John Rennie Glee Club won for most money raised, with \$15,000 added to their incredible \$404,411 in support of Dr. Lucy Gilbert's DOvEE project, a test that detects ovarian and endometrial cancers early.

"I am so humbled by the John Rennie Glee Club's support of the DOvEE project," said Dr. Gilbert. "To see these talented young women and men sing their hearts out in support of women's health is incredibly touching. I am so thrilled that we are among the winners of the inaugural *MUHC's Got Talent*."

The three judges also chose their favourite performers. The first place prize of \$10,000 went to Dr. Pamela Jones, Team Lachine. The second place prize of \$6,000 went to Billie du Page, Team Rare and Genetic Illnesses. The third place prize of \$4,000 went to Dr. Jason Shahin, Team Respiratory.

"I was really impressed by the sheer talent on display this evening," said Verdon-Diamond. "There were so many great performances and I had a lot of fun inter-

acting with the performers. It was a true delight to have been part of this event supporting the great work by the MUHC."

Funds raised support excellence in patient care, research, and teaching at the McGill University Health Centre, one of the top university hospitals in Canada. Every dollar ensures the MUHC's brilliant physician-scientists are ready to confront the next pandemic, champion new treatments for life-threatening diseases such as heart disease and cancer, and much more.

"*MUHC's Got Talent* was a great success, not only because of the incredible funds raised, but because we brought together an enormous philanthropic community dedicated to supporting exceptional patient care," said Julie Quenneville, President and CEO, MUHC Foundation. "Together, our impact on health care at the MUHC is immense. We are very excited for next year's show, which promises to be even bigger and better."

CROHNS COLITIS GALA: As Canada grapples with some of the highest rates of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis in the world (one out of 140 people) individuals, businesses, and researchers from across Montreal came together in a show of support for everyone impacted by these chronic diseases. The 20th annual Gala for Crohn's and Colitis Canada took place on October 20 at Le Salon Richmond in Griffintown. One Canadian is diagnosed with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) every hour.

Joanne Cutler and *the Que Sera* duo provided music during the cocktail dînette featuring food stations from some of Montreal's finest restaurants including *Mon Lapin*, *Burger Bar*, *Gia*, *Mandy's*, *Elena*, *Il Bazzali* and *McKiernan*. There was a live auction, hosted by Cutler, which was followed by a dessert reception.

Proceeds from the Gala will fund vital research as well as local support and education programs offered by Crohn's and Colitis Canada. This marked the first in-person event in three years. The amount raised is over \$240,000 and counting. It's not too late to show your support as donations are still open.

The event co-chairs were Erin Battatt, Adelia Bensoussan, Marian Sniatowsky and Shari Wolch. Committee Members were Nadia Canini, Brooke Levis, Francesca Marzano, Mona Roshke, Ashley Rotchin and Joel Goldenberg.

McGILL IBD EVENT: The McGill IBD (Inflammatory Bowel Disease) Research Group, in collaboration with the Montreal General Hospital Foundation, held its annual fundraising event on Nov. 10 at Club Soda featuring a night of entertainment with comedian Derek Seguin. This event raises funds for patient care at the IBD clinics in the McGill teaching hospitals — the MUHC IBD Centre at the Montreal General Hospital and the IBD clinics at the Montreal Children's Hospital and Jewish General Hospital. Thanks to these donations, these dedicated IBD clinics are

PHOTO: HOPE FOR DEMENTIA PHOTO

PHOTOS: MUHC FOUNDATION

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able to provide dedicated teams of IBD nurses, researchers, and mental health professionals, which help to alleviate the gaps in care for the IBD community.

This year, the Group raised a record \$325,000. This year's honouree and recipient of the *Dr. Ernest Seidman Award in IBD Excellence* was Lorne Mayers, President of the McGill IBD Research Group, for his numerous years of dedicated volunteerism and bettering the IBD community. He was surprised by the patient testimonial who turned out to be his son, Jamie Mayers, with a recorded video from New York talking about his experience living with IBD, how the IBD clinics were pivotal in his management and recovery, and how grateful he is to his father for playing such a role in helping better the IBD community. Champion sponsors were Pharmacie Michael Assarraf and the Abrams Family. As a part of their sponsorship, the IBD support staff were able to attend and enjoy the event free of charge. The Stotland Family served as the show sponsor, with Richter Management doing so for dessert. Edgewater Funds, Richard Pilosof and Stewart Schaefer were also thanked for their vital support.

OPERA TIME: One of the most elegant and magical evenings of the year is always the Opéra de Montréal Gala and this year's Talent 2022 in Symphony Hall at Place des Arts was called the best ever. The highlights were 11 arias performed by aspiring members to the Atelier Lyrique from the Symphony stage and more performances by Atelier members through dinner in the Corbeille. This kind of artistry reminds us that Montreal can still rise to world class refinement and excellence.

REAL ESTATE FOUNDATION: There were packed ballrooms of over 750 people at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel for the Montreal Real Estate Foundation for Kids black-tie "Casablanca" gala that raised over \$500,000 for eight children's charities. The patrons were a who's who of Montreal development including Naji Nader, President of Genatec and his daughter Roseé.

CEDARS GALA: Over \$1.8 million was raised for cancer research, treatment, education, and supportive care thanks to the second biennial gala of the Cedars Cancer Centre. Hosted by the Cedars Cancer Foundation, the gala was held on Nov. 19, in Windsor Station's Salle des pas perdus. More than 550 guests were brought to their feet with powerful performances by Grammy-winning R&B and disco queen Thelma Houston and Canada's very own *American Idol* sensation, Nicolina.

Called "*Le Gala – At the Leading Edge*," the event honoured the talented interdisciplinary teams of healthcare professionals who work at the Cedars Cancer Centre at the MUHC. At the same time, the event shone a spotlight on the exciting new developments that are happening there. The gala's co-chairs were Paola Aprikian and Daphne Tsadilas Shamie, and its honorary co-chairs were Dr. Armen Aprikian,



The organizing committee for the Crohn's and Colitis Canada Gala.

Diana Ferrara Scalia and Adam Turner.

Dr. Armen Aprikian, medical director of the Cancer Care Mission of the MUHC, stressed the role that philanthropy plays in allowing the Cedars Cancer Centre to pursue its goals.

"The women and men who work at the Cedars Cancer Centre – from nurses, doctors and allied health professionals, to researchers, support staff and volunteers – go beyond the call of duty every day. They are models of dedication, determination, and compassion," said Jeff J. Shamie, the president and CEO of the Cedars Cancer Foundation. "We are delighted to host such a tribute in their honour. Le Gala

allows us to support them in their fight against cancer, ensuring that they can continue to work at the leading edge of research, treatment and care."

Event guests included cancer survivor Marc Normandeau, a medical communications specialist at L'Oréal. "I'm sitting here tonight, having survived acute lymphoblastic leukemia three times," he said. "I was diagnosed when I was only four, then again at 13, and then again as an adult. I was first treated at the old Children's Hospital, on Sarah's Floor. The medical personnel there took really good care of me and my family. They made it feel like my second home. My goal is to

ensure that other cancer patients don't have to hear the dreaded words 'it's back.' That's why I'm here and why I'm so grateful to everyone else who came out tonight to support Cedars."

Music, which has a healing effect, was at the heart of the gala, and guests could not help singing and dancing when the stars of the evening, Houston and Nicolina, took to the stage. Houston, who won the Grammy for Best Female R & B Performance in 1978, sang a handful of Motown hits, culminating in her Grammy-winning song "*Don't Leave Me This Way*." Nicolina, the 19-year-old singing sensation from Vaughan, Ontario, who was one of American Idol Season 20's top five contestants, also wowed guests with her powerful vocals as she covered "*Rise Up*" by Andra Day and Leonard Cohen's iconic "Hallelujah."

Other attendees included Peter Kruyt, the chair of the MUHC Board of Directors, and his wife, Claire Mullins; Tony Aksa, the chair of the Cedars' Board, and his wife, Carine Bou Karam; John and Phyllis Rae; George and Simé Armoyan; Arden and Christine Dervishian; the ambassador of Lebanon to Canada, Fadi Ziadeh, and his wife, Tania; the honorary consul of Armenia in Québec, Levon Afeyan, and his wife, Ana; Michael Flinker and Dr. Marcia Gillman; Louis Vachon and Chantal Carrier; Ronald Reuben and Myriam Dahan; Christopher Nacos and Sarah Larmarche; Frank and Mary Rana; Demo and Evelyn Trifonopoulos; Sam Kersheh and Brigitte Lalanda; Nadim Rizk and Audrey Huot; Gwen Nacos; Dr. Roger Tabah; Lisa Chamandy; Sarah and Catherine Cook; Peggy Tabet and Joseph El Khoury; Andrew Carter; and Anthony Calvillo.

Have an item for FYI in the Community? E-mail mcohen@thesuburban.com



Head of McGill's Division of Gastroenterology Dr. Alain Bitton, Lorne Mayers, Derek Seguin, MGH Foundation President and CEO Jean-Guy Gourdeau, event organizer Emily Shore and Dr. Peter Lakatos, director of the IBD Centre.

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