



Notebook EXPRESS

By Wendy Singer



Welcome back to school! Wishing you all a fresh start to the 2016-17 school year. We're gearing up for another year packed with information about our vibrant community. Here are some highlights from the end of the past school year.

On May 9, **Josef Schovanec** spoke at the CHU Sainte-Justine's 4th International Symposium on Autism Spectrum Disorders. A French mathematician and philosopher, Schovanec is a graduate of the Institute of Political Science in Paris.

While speaking about living with autism, Schovanec easily engaged his audience with his unique insight into what it's like to "come from the country of Autistan", making specific reference to the 99 percent of the population who suffer from "non-autism". Schovanec playfully introduced the "Institute for the study of the neurologically typical", where neurotypical syndrome is studied, and shared points on the advantages of having autism. He presented a unique perspective and compelling argument on the pros of autism. He speaks 10 languages and is the author of *One Screw Loose*.



Nick Katalifos, Josef Schovanec, Andre Pereira, and Seuin Thomas Henderson at CHU Sainte-Justine's 4th International Symposium on Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The symposium brought together Canadian and international experts and leaders to discuss the theme From Genes to Interventions, highlighting the latest advances in the field of autism and the evidence-based interventions advocated in the province of Quebec. Schovanec's community lecture, hosted by **Patricia Paquin**, was held at Montreal's City Hall prior to a cocktail dinatoire, and was presented in collaboration with Giant Steps School.

The fifth edition of Agence Ometz' annual fundraising gala A Chance to Shine was a great success, raising \$460,000 to help the community's most vulnerable children and youth. Held on June 8 at Place des Arts, 1,150 guests enjoyed a stunning performance of *Traces* by the internationally acclaimed Les 7 doigts de la main. Two Montreal dance troupes Juste Danse and the Tyler Anne School of Dance provided special performances, delighting the gala's younger audience members.

The generous and dedicated patronage of **Véronique** and **Herbert Black** for the fifth consecutive year allow 100 percent of the proceeds from the gala to assist Ometz in helping families and youth at risk. "My time working for Ometz allowed me to experience first-hand how when individuals and families are given the right support, it creates possibilities and gives them a chance to shine," shared event chair **Randy Brandman Farber**, who has worked for Ometz as a counsellor and case management professional.



Gail Small (CEO of Ometz) and Randy Brandman Farber (Chair of A Chance to Shine Gala). (Photo credit: PBL Photography)

The Miriam Foundation's sixth annual Art Auction for Autism, held on June 7, 2016, at Parisian Laundry, raised over \$100,000. Over 150 people came out to support the Foundation's early intervention services. Some of the evening's highlights included the sale of a painting by **John Little** entitled *Goelettes St-Joseph de la Rive* for \$10,500 and the sale of a painting especially painted for the occasion by **Gilles Labranche** entitled *Pine x. St. Laurent Blvd* for \$2,200. The evening's proceeds will help support early intervention services for children diagnosed with autism.



Jeannette Hoffman-Zaffir (committee chair), Franky Yanofsky (committee chair), Carol Tryansky (committee chair), Deborah Malin (committee member), Judy Wolfe (committee chair). (Photo courtesy of The Miriam Foundation)

The Mackay Centre School's amazing Leaders on Wheels have hit the jackpot with their delectable brownies and sauces. For their third consecutive year, this group of students devoted their energy to raising funds for kids in need. This year they raised \$2,000 which they donated to the Healthy Kids Fund at the Montreal Children's Hospital.

The Leaders were innovative, producing Wheels on Fire, Wheels to Asia, and Sweet Wheels sauces to suit all tastes. They prepared the sauces and brownies at Westmount High School – their satellite school. Sales went extremely well. They raised a total of \$2,000!

The Leaders on Wheels gathered at the P.K. Subban Atrium at the MCH on June 8 to present their cheque to the MCH Foundation. "We are grateful for the help of the

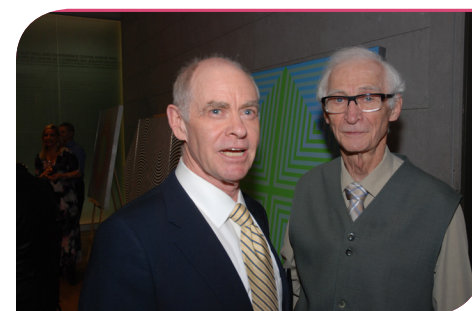


The Leaders on Wheels of The Mackay Centre School present a cheque in the amount of \$2,000 to the MCH Foundation.

Leaders on Wheels in raising funds. The money will go a long way to meeting the needs of the kids in the hospital," said **Tatiana Aparicio**, coordinator of Community Giving at the MCH. These students are true leaders in every sense of the word. Bravo!

The Arthritis Society announced the passing of donor and friend **George Ellis Russell** on May 8, 2016. Russell donated the works of art he produced over his lifetime (over 400 pieces) to the Arthritis Society for the benefit of childhood arthritis programs and services. Art dealer **Alan Klinkhoff** pointed out that Russell "dedicated his artistic career to teaching, to the benefit of decades of students, a very noble contribution, foregoing the potential for public recognition and great financial reward."

The Arthritis Society honoured Russell's artistic legacy as well as his generous gesture by naming their annual Juvenile Arthritis Family Day on September 11, 2016. The George Russell Family Day. This event is one that Russell supported from the beginning. The day brings together families dealing with arthritis, as well as doctors, nurses, volunteers, staff and anyone touched by the disease.



George Russell (right) received great reviews from renowned gallery owner Alan Klinkhoff (left) who said: "... this is the finest artist I have never heard of in my market place!" (Photo credit, TAS)

All proceeds from the day go to one of Russell's favourite causes, The Arthritis Society's Kids on the Move Camp. The camp benefitted from the George Russell Gala that took place on August 18th, 2016, at L'Ambroisie in Montreal.