



ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



**foundation
of stars**
the magic of research



Pediatric research : the key to a healthier future





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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



"I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped us achieve our goals during a year marked by great uncertainty. Your unflagging energy and dedicated efforts allowed us to focus on the Foundation's main priorities and mission. We are truly grateful to our donors, our Board and committee members, the entire Foundation team and our partners. Your confidence and support allowed us to continue funding a number of research teams during these tumultuous times. Again, thank you !"

M. ALAIN AUCLAIR
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



"Together, we are stronger ! This saying proved its mettle over the last few months, as it inspired and motivated the entire team at Foundation of Stars. The past year forced us to rely on our solidarity and creativity to reimagine the world of philanthropy to continue supporting the important work being carried out by researchers determined to bring hope to sick children. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. And may everyone stay safe !"

JOSÉE SAINT-PIERRE
PRESIDENT AND CEO



A YEAR WHERE GENEROSITY KNEW NO BOUNDS !

For 44 years now, the Foundation of Stars has been focusing its efforts on improving the health of children and breaking down barriers and obstacles to research excellence and innovation. This year, we truly went above and beyond. The COVID-19 pandemic instilled a strong sense of innovation, creativity, community and support in the members of the Foundation of Stars team, our Board and various committees, and our ever-generous donors and partners, all of whom showed up in support of our cause. Thanks to this heartwarming solidarity, we were able to maintain our support for pediatric research.

Despite being faced with an unprecedented degree of uncertainty, we were nonetheless able to fund a total of 15 research projects. Our scientific committee, comprised of 5 renowned researchers, was able to judiciously choose innovative projects from Québec's four major pediatric research centres, centres in outlying areas and university research facilities. In addition to being avant-gardist, fueled by a multicentric and multidisciplinary sense of cooperation and determined to generate measurable impacts, the research projects selected focus on important areas and exceptionally, on urgent needs ensuing from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March 2020, the Foundation rolled out an emergency fundraising campaign called *Help Advance Pediatric Research on COVID-19 to rally supporters around important pediatric research projects*. This campaign helped finance one of the first research projects on pregnant women, newborns and COVID-19. This was followed by 4 other projects on the virus' collateral effects on children, adolescents and their families. The efforts made during this campaign were mainly centred on infectious diseases, perinatal health and eating disorders. A very special thanks to all of the researchers who dedicated time to this important initiative. Despite having to cancel our Great Evening of Stars one week before Québec came to a generalized standstill in March 2020, our benevolent partners and donors still stepped up, shifting their support and donations to our emergency campaign in association with COVID-19.

In addition to works specifically targeting COVID-19, we were able to provide funding for 10 other research projects in 2020-2021. These works concerned : immune diseases, cancer, neuroscience, reproduction and mother and child health concerns, human development, neurodevelopment, youth mental health and perinatal health. Last October, moreover, scientists and the next generation of researchers virtually came together during the 4th edition of the provincial Mother-child research conference, where they discussed the latest advances and listened to student presentations.



"Fondation of Stars fulfil his mission thanks to the support of all those around him."

Blessed be the virtual ! We were able to move forward with most of the events planned for 2020, thanks to the virtual possibilities that emerged at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift required everyone at the Foundation to quickly and efficiently pivot in order to create and adopt new platforms, prepare various content of all sorts, record video clips with Zoom or Teams, and more ! Despite needing to master and adapt to these new technologies, our planned events, from the annual wine auction to the Tough Mountie Challenge, were a resounding success.

As for the wine auction, the 15th Encan des vins de Montréal and the 8th Encan des vins de Sherbrooke were completely revamped. Instead of meeting in person, wine lovers sat around virtual tables and enjoyed a scrumptious meal (delivered ahead of time) while discovering new wines. Our vintage wines were quickly scooped up during the silent and voice-over virtual auctions. Despite the physical separation, guests were in high spirits and their generosity allowed us to meet our objectives.

The same physical distancing imperatives also forced us to tweak the 3rd edition of the Tough Mountie Challenge so that it could be held virtually. This year, nearly 100 participants and 10 or so police teams from the RCMP and other organizations came together (safely !) to pit themselves against a typical police training circuit ! For a first time, the funds raised were earmarked for pediatric research in line with COVID-19 and distributed to the major pediatric research centres in each represented region.

The Foundation of Stars could not achieve its mission without the vital support of everyone who is there for us, including the directors who sit on various committees. We would also like to take this opportunity to underscore Karen Hamelin's nomination to our Board of Directors; we welcome her dedication and the expertise she will undoubtedly be happy to share across our organization. We would also like to extend a very special thank you to Dr. Guillaume Sébire, who left his position as a member of our Board of Directors this year. His tenure was worthy of note, not only because of his research perspective but also given his ability to vet various research projects that sought out funding.

We would like to again thank all of our donors, volunteers, collaborators and partners. Thank you for believing in the magic of pediatric research and for being willing to help us bring hope to sick children. Without your staunch support, especially this past year, we could never have achieved the results that we are now so proud of.

We are excited about the upcoming year, and about seeing all of you... in person !

**"We were
nonetheless
able to fund
a total of
15 research
projects."**





MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

AN ESSENTIAL ROLE

The Foundation of Stars' core reason for being is to support pediatric research. **We are there for children at every stage of their life**, from conception to adulthood. **Every day, the Foundation of Stars does everything in its power** to ensure that all children and adolescents have access to the latest research findings so that they can flourish throughout their life. The Foundation strives to impact major fields of excellence in pediatric health by supporting relevant scientific research in areas where the needs are most pressing.

To date, over \$72 million has been remitted to various researchers, both established and members of the next generation, to help support innovative and promising research projects.

Medical advances with regard to children's diseases are encouraging and nurture our hope that one day all children will grow up healthy.



OUR MISSION

The Foundation of Stars has a singular mission : funding pediatric research as a means of protecting, promoting and improving the health and well-being of children and adolescents.



OUR VISION

The Foundation of Stars' efforts focus on improving the overall health and well-being of children by supporting pediatric research into various diseases.





OUR VALUES

INTEGRITY

Everything we do, we do openly and with integrity.

LEADERSHIP

Our every action ultimately seeks to bring hope for our children's health and education.

COMMITMENT

We channel our passion for the good of our children, the work of researchers and society as a whole.

RESPECT

We respect everyone we cross and all environments in which we act.





DID YOU KNOW THAT...

PROGRESS MADE BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT

A few numbers

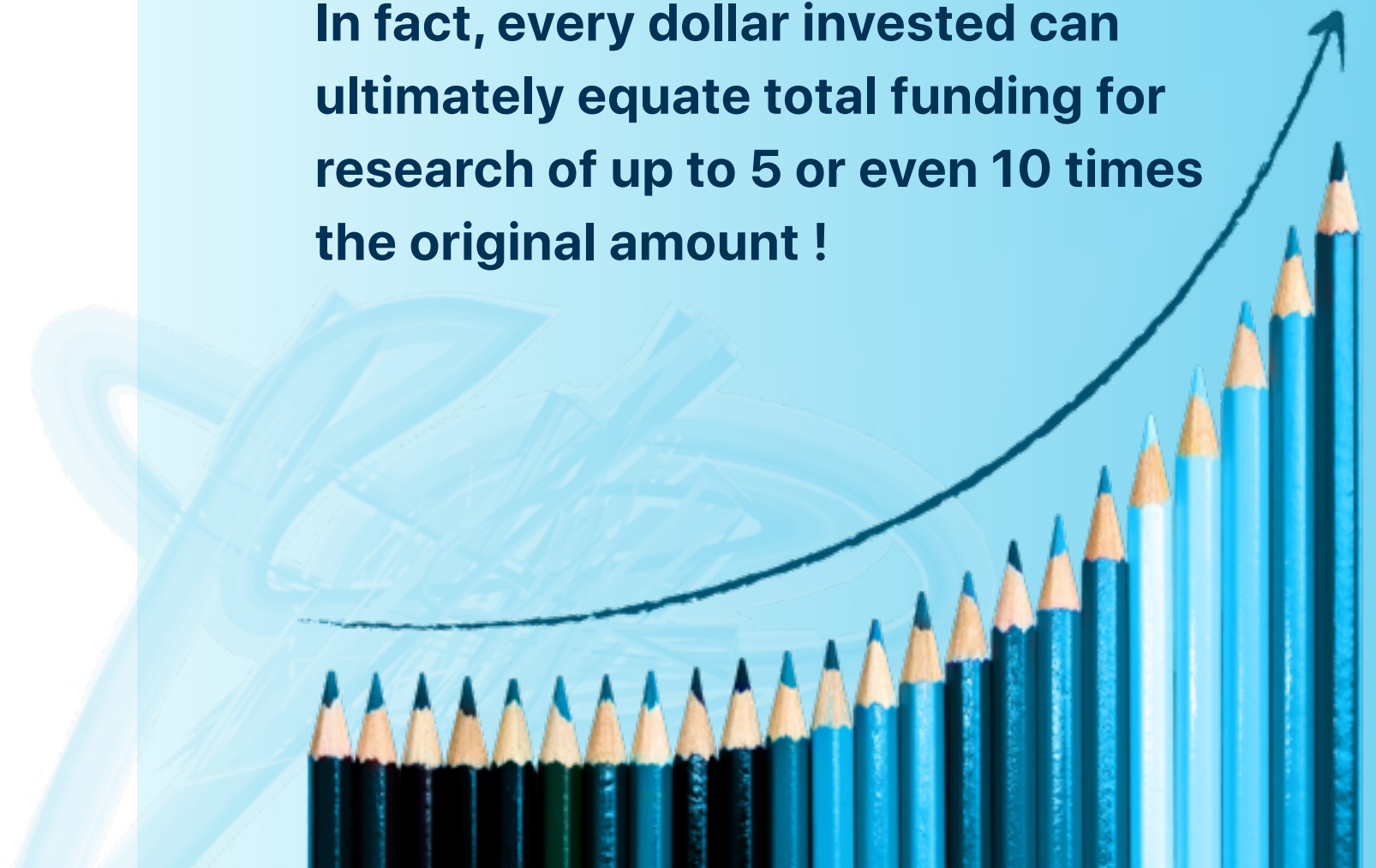
In 2019, the Foundation funded a project by Dr. Frédéric Dallaire on the **first Canada-wide pediatric cardiology research network**. Since then, 40 cardiologists and researchers from 13 pediatric hospitals across the country have joined forces and pooled their knowledge. This type of collaboration is extremely beneficial to scientific advancement. **These research teams are now working side by side**, and the network created has allowed studies to be completed at a much faster pace. The network is currently responsible for 7 collaborative research projects. This exciting program's viability was ensured this year thanks to additional funding.

How the Foundation attracts additional funding

This same year, the Foundation of Stars funded a research project led by Dr. Étienne Fortin-Pellerin which considered **fluid ventilation** as a means of **limiting lung damage in very premature infants**. The hope was that he would be able to kick off his study and begin gathering preliminary data. This major and critical step led to a grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) 20 times larger than expected, spread out over a 3-year period. An excellent example of attracting additional funding !

The financial support that you extend to the Foundation, to researchers and to their innovative projects attests to your faith in their ability to attract additional investments from other funders. In fact, every dollar invested can ultimately equate total funding for research of up to 5 or even 10 times the original amount. In other words, when a promising research project is funded by the Foundation of Stars, there are often other public institutions that show their confidence and support by making a significant contribution to the Foundation of Stars' start-up fund.

In fact, every dollar invested can ultimately equate total funding for research of up to 5 or even 10 times the original amount !





MORE NUMBERS...



PEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGY

One out of every 100 children in Québec is born with a congenital cardiac defect that requires medical care.

Scientific progress has given the majority of these young children the possibility of enjoying a better quality of life, not to mention a survival rate of over 95 %.

There are currently **over 200 known cardiac malformations.**



PERINATAL HEALTH

99 % of the infants born at 30 weeks or more will survive the neonatal period.

Others, however, will continue to require significant care before being able to return home.



MENTAL HEALTH

In a non-COVID context, 25 % of children in primary school suffer from mental health issues.

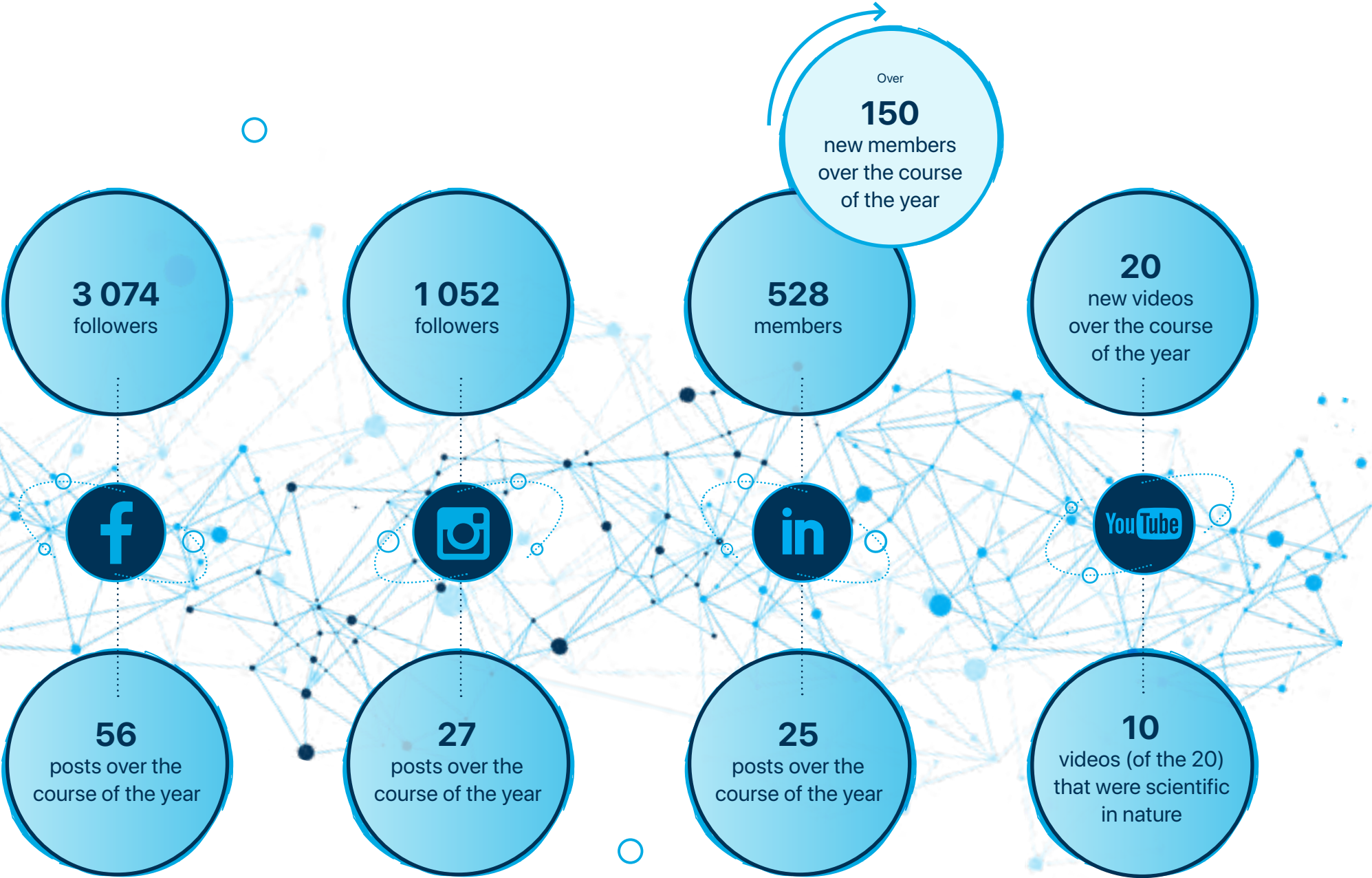
Following the emergence of COVID-19, the INESS (*Institut national d'excellence en santé et services sociaux*) observed :

A significant increase **60 % in ER visits** due to mental health issues, including anxiety and depression.

122 % hike in visits following the hospitalization of youth between the ages of 12 and 17 in association with an eating disorder.



SOCIAL MEDIA



TESTIMONIALS | CHILD STARS



OUR STAR LÉONIE



// I am the mother of a lovely young girl who suffered from anorexia. Many may think that anorexia nervosa is strikingly obvious to detect, but it's more of a stealthy disease. I never saw it slowly take its toll on Léonie; she was always just my growing daughter, my beanstalk ! I only began worrying when she became increasingly withdrawn and anxious. And one morning, it became clear, as I watched her refuse to eat her breakfast. I never gave up from that point, yet anorexia's hold on her seemed to increase, to the point where we had to bring her to the ER. The entire family was shocked to learn that Léonie's vital signs had dropped to a dangerous level. Her heart rate was 38, and her kidneys were functioning poorly. Léonie was quickly transferred to the intensive care unit at the CHU de Sherbrooke, where she was looked after by a team of doctors and other healthcare professionals dedicated to caring for youngsters with severe eating disorders. As I watched the team work, I began to understand the miracles that doctors and researchers can make happen when their mission is supported by loyal and generous individuals and organizations.

Our family is very close-knit, and having Léonie at the hospital for a total of 5 weeks was extremely hard on all of us. I was driving a total of 3 hours every day to see her, and her younger sister, not yet old enough to visit, was devastated. Léonie's road to recovery was extremely difficult and long (close to 20 months). Not only did she need to put on some weight, but she had to learn how to eat and to move around for the sheer pleasure. And just as she was making great strides and finding joy in thinking of her friends and favourite activities, COVID-19 came knocking. Léonie relapsed. This pandemic is extremely disruptive - psychologically - for our adolescents. I was terrified that my daughter would not make it through these successive hardships.

She came very close to requiring another hospitalization but luckily, rallied and called upon every last vestige of her courage to stay the course. But she is still fragile. She understands that maintaining her new life habits are critical to remaining strong and independent. She's not fully recovered yet, but her hard work is paying off. The medical team who cared for her throughout this journey was exceptional, and I would be so very grateful if the Foundation of Stars could award funds to the CHUS researchers, among them Professor Isabelle Thibault, who are striving to better understand what propels young people to develop eating disorders such as anorexia, and how they can be helped to better cope. Our youth need support, even more so since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to personally thank all of the donors who give to the Foundation of Stars. Thank you for helping families like me see a shining light at the end of what is sometimes a dark tunnel seemingly devoid of hope.

Marie-Pierre Paquette





ÉTOILE LAURENT



// I am the mother of 2 boys. My first son was born at 42 weeks and weighed a whopping 9 lbs 11 oz ! When we learned that we were having a second child, I expected this pregnancy to be much like my first one. Not so. Laurent made his way into the world at only 30 weeks and 5 days, at 7:58 a.m. on April 23, 2020. I have very few memories of the day he was born, as I gave birth under general anesthesia (which leaves its mark). The next days were a blur, what with the initial shock, the attempts to fully grasp what his premature birth entailed. This was followed by questions and doubts : would he survive, how would he fare, would he have lasting side effects ? And then our emotions got the best of us - the fear, the stress, the guilt. No wonder my memories of his birth are so vague. All of the memories except for one.

That day, I was finally able to see my son. This proved another shock, to see him intubated, so tiny... and to not be able to hold him. Dr. Fortin-Pellerin spoke with my spouse and I to explain what was happening with Laurent, but I only understood some of what he said. But there was one sentence that I never forgot : "Ms. Grégoire, at 30 weeks of pregnancy, that's when science can start working its magic." This sentence is what kept me afloat during the two months Laurent spent at the hospital.

Everything became clear : without donors like you, who help researchers carry out their work, my son would not be alive and healthy today.

Thank you !

Mélanie Grégoire

// **"Everything became clear : without donors like you, who help researchers carry out their work, my son would not be alive and healthy today.."**



OUR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

In a year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of donors were stalwart in their ongoing support of the Foundation of Stars. They opened their hearts and proved extremely generous in a period marked by uncertainty and fear. For this, thank you !

Many of you continued giving to the Foundation of Stars' various fundraising campaigns. Each donation, regardless of its size, is a precious gift with the possibility of changing the lives of sick children.

On behalf of all of the researchers whose projects are funded because of your donations, thank you for your ongoing support and for bringing hope to the families of sick children and allowing them to believe that a cure may be on the horizon.



EMERGENCY CAMPAIGN TO HELP ADVANCE RESEARCH ON COVID-19



When the pandemic began in March 2020, we were forced to cancel one of our major fundraising activities : TERCES. The Foundation of Stars had to quickly pivot and call upon all of its dedication and creativity ! The first phase of the Help Advance Pediatric Research on COVID-19 and Infectious Diseases campaign was characterized by remote team members (working from home) and meetings via Google Teams, all to support this first project on the virus' impacts on mothers and their newborns. Once the pandemic began its second wave, people wanted and needed to better understand COVID-19. This is when we rolled out our second fundraising campaign, an initiative designed to help researchers kick off 3 more urgent projects, in collaboration, on the collateral effects of COVID-19 on children and their families.

We have come to understand that the Foundation's agility and ability to innovate and adapt are what allowed us to successfully launch these novel fundraising campaigns in support of activities linked to COVID-19. We want to extend a special thank you to the scientific committee and the researchers who rallied in response to our cry for help. Thanks to the donors and partners who proved exceedingly generous, last spring alone, the campaign raised an amount of \$110,000. An extra \$214,000 was added to this, from transfers and donations from our TERCES partners, event that unfortunately had to be cancelled.

The campaign raised :
\$110 000

Transfers and donations from our TERCES partners :
\$214 000

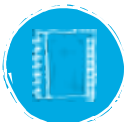


RELATIONSHIP MARKETING CAMPAIGNS ARE AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF OUR ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS.



NEWSLETTER :

Every year, nearly 12,000 donors receive the Foundation of Stars' annual **newsletter**, which offers them a recap of the projects financed by their donations, updates regarding child stars from prior years, and details of the progress made by researchers we support.



CALENDAR :

Our **calendar**, always anxiously awaited by our donors, was sent to 11,000 people in the fall. This campaign is one of the most successful, with over 2,000 donations !



CHRISTMAS STORIES :

The holiday season is perhaps the time to be jolly, but it is also the time of year where people are most attuned to the need for generosity, sensitivity and sharing. In December 2020, we published the touching **story of Léonie and her family** (included earlier in this report), which incited nearly 2,000 donors to give generously.



END-OF-YEAR CAMPAIGN :

The last campaign of the year was dedicated to mental health research and notably underscored the extraordinary work of two researchers devoted to the health and well-being of children and adolescents. The 13,000 letters sent to donors concerned the impacts and repercussions of the pandemic on the mental health of adolescents. You heard us, without a doubt, and for that we are grateful.

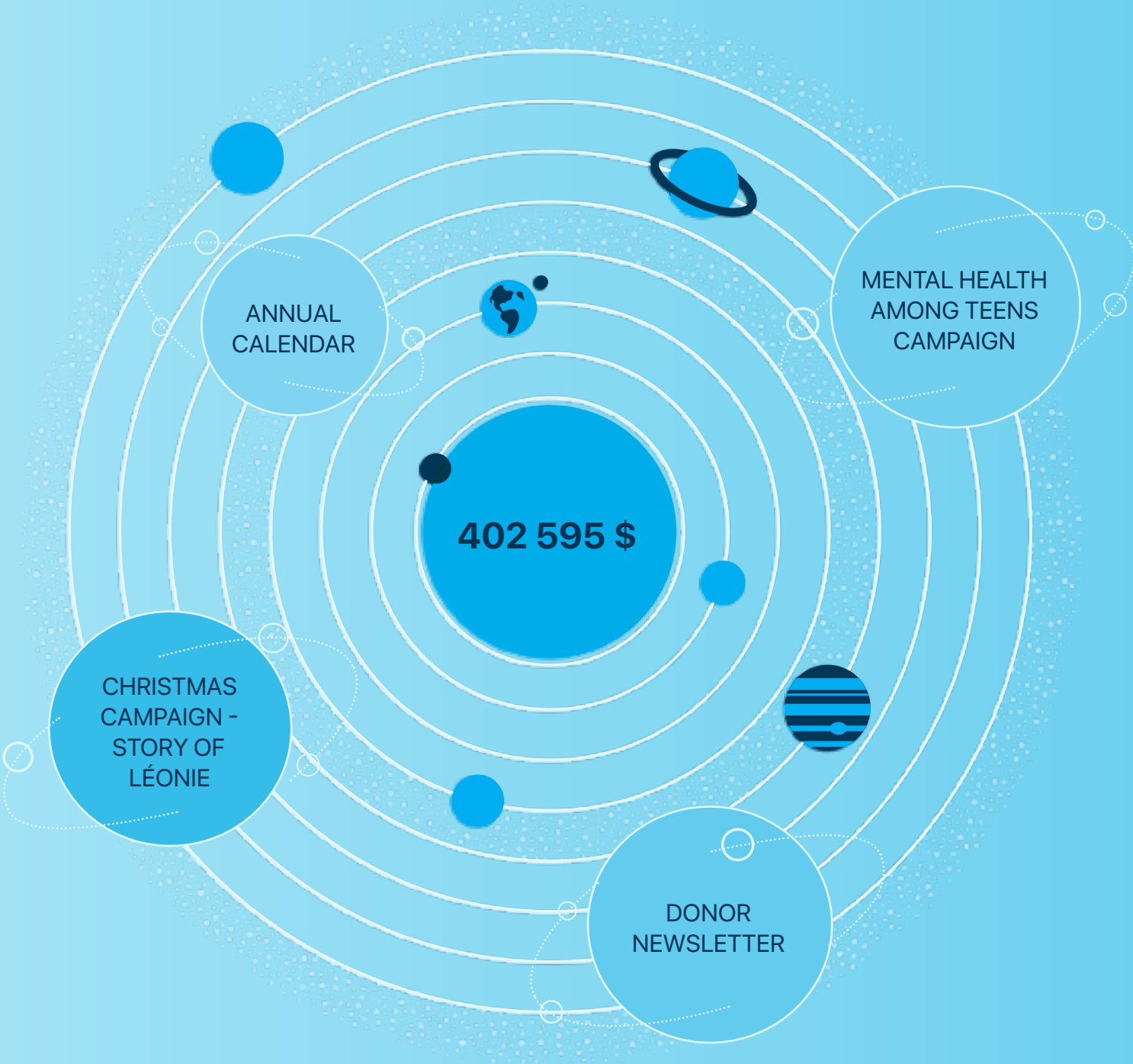


THE NUMBERS ...



Nearly 2,618 monthly donors support us to the tune of **\$402,595** per year.

\$338,874 in donations gathered through 4 different fundraising campaigns over the course of the year.



OUR EVENTS

8TH ENCAN DES VINS DE SHERBROOKE

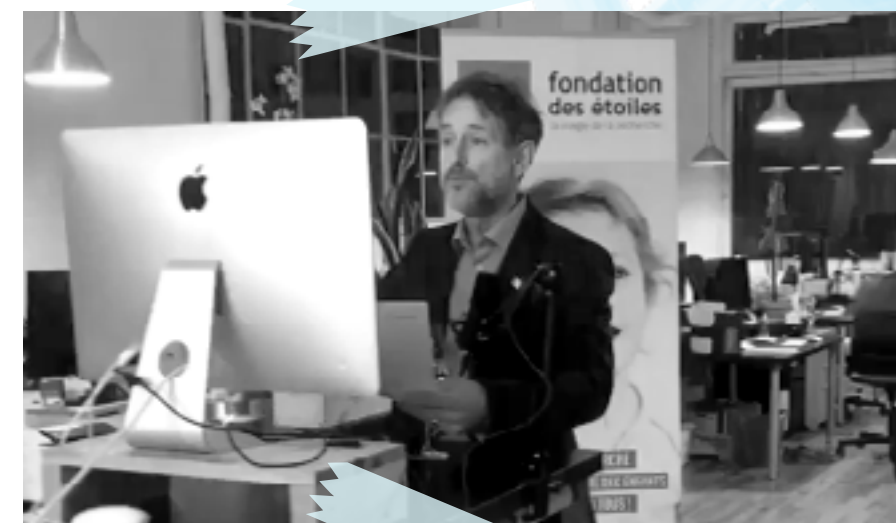
The 8th edition of the Encan des vins de Sherbrooke in support of the mother-child research being conducted at Université de Sherbrooke was held last November 26th.

The virtual evening offered guests an opportunity to network and taste a selection of outstanding wines from Québec. They also received - delivered straight to their door - a gourmet meal or pre-dinner drink kit from the *La Suite* restaurant. The evening closed on an exciting note, as attendees participated in our voice-over auction hosted by none other than IEGOR auctioneer Laurent Berniard. Renowned actor Marc-André Coallier was kind enough to once again host this year's virtual evening. Dr. Étienne Fortin-Pellerin, who works in the field of neonatology, and Ms. Grégoire, Laurent's mother, spoke to the guests about the importance of pediatric research (their declaration is included earlier in this report).

Given the circumstances, we chose to support local producers by having guests discover the excellent products made by local Québec wineries, and are extremely proud to have featured a selection of wines from the Mas des Patriotes winery.

2020-2021 :
\$72 205

Since its creation :
\$852 002





8th Encan des vins de Sherbrooke

**THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS AND RESEARCHERS
WERE FUNDED THIS YEAR :**

Negative and invisible impacts of prenatal screening for cardiac malformations with a fetal ultrasound

D^r Frédéric Dallaire

Neurophysiological and clinical lipid profiling of children with ASD

D^{re} Artuela Caku

Validation of proteomic biomarkers in the peripheral blood cells and neurons of patients suffering from Fragile X Syndrome

D^r François Corbin

Evaluation and comparison of art-therapy interventions and measures revolving around a meaningful presence on the mental health of primary children during the COVID-19 pandemic

Prof. Catherine Malboeuf-Hurtubise

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR CAMPAIGN TEAM

- ★ **Prof. Christiane Auray-Blais**, Biochemist and Professor, Genetics department, Université de Sherbrooke and honorary chair of this 8th edition.
- ★ **D^r Jean-Paul Praud** - Professor, Doctor and Researcher, Pediatrics department, Université de Sherbrooke
- ★ **D^r Frédéric Dallaire** – Pediatric cardiologist and Research director, Pediatrics department, Université de Sherbrooke
- ★ **Jennifer Saint-Laurent** - Coordinator, Mother-child research centre, CRCHUS
- ★ **Louis Roy** - Financial advisor, Roy, Lévesque et Associés inc.
- ★ **Danielle Rousseau**, General Manager, Sherbrooke Toyota
- ★ **Ronald Thibault**, Owner, THIBAULT Chevrolet, Cadillac, Buick and GMC
- ★ **Janick Dallaire**, Owner, Audi Sherbrooke and Volkswagen de l’Estrie
- ★ **Dominic Duhamel**, Managing Director, Centres Honda de l’Estrie
- ★ **Renaud Fortier**, Owner and President, Hyundai Sherbrooke
- ★ **Louis Martineau**, Co-owner, N.V. Cloutier Sherbrooke
- ★ **Sébastien Beaudoin**, Vice-president and General manager, BMW Sherbrooke

15TH ENCAN DES VINS DE MONTRÉAL

During this virtual evening, held on December 10th, guests had the opportunity of tasting a selection of Canadian wines, superbly described by highly reputed sommelier Véronique Rivest. Guests were also treated to a gift box overflowing with local products from l'Échoppe fromagerie !

We were proud this year of featuring a selection of wines from the reputed Osoyoos-Larose winery. The winery's sommelier, Caroline Schaller, was present and generously spoke with guests about the highly acclaimed Okanagan Valley winery.

In addition to the exceptional lots auctioned off during the silent and voice-over bidding, participants also had the opportunity of participating in a stellar draw on a theme dear to all : *Discovering the Okanagan Valley*. The prize, coveted by everyone who attended, consisted of a trip for 4, valued at over \$42,000.

A special thank you to our campaign team.



HONORARY CO-PRESIDENTS

★ **Alain B. Auclair** - UBS Securities Canada Inc.

★ **Alain Giasson** - Alfa Capital Inc.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

★ **Marc Bérubé** - Coaching Financier Trek

★ **Denis Boucher** - Theratechnologies Inc.

★ **Benoît Crowe** - Novexco Inc.

★ **Daniel Desjardins** - Chairman of the Board, Bombardier Transport

★ **Jean-François Fortin** - Sidlee

★ **Stephen J. Kelly** - Norton Rose Fulbright

★ **Marie-Josée Lamy** - Consultant, MJL Inc.

★ **Anne Saint-Pierre** - Certified translator

★ **Yves Sanscartier** - Société immobilière Galion Inc.

★ **Alain Vermette** - CDA Précision Inc.

2020-2021 :
\$110 885

Since its creation :
\$2 441 192



2020 TOUGH MOUNTIE CHALLENGE

In the fall of 2020, given the surge in COVID-19 cases, we had no choice but to advise the participants in the upcoming Tough Mountie Challenge that the event, which was scheduled to take place - simultaneously and in person - in Montréal, Québec City and Sherbrook, was being transformed into a virtual challenge. The objective, however, stayed the same : to raise funds in support of pediatric research on COVID-19 while taking some time to have fun and pushing ourselves to the maximum.

We want to say thank you 88,000 times to everyone who supported us and helped us make this virtual edition of the Tough Mountie Challenge a resounding success ! And of course, a special salute to our founding partner, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Thanks also to our primary partners : the Sherbrooke and Québec City police departments, Collège Laval and the various organizing committees who made this exciting event come together despite incredible odds !

2020-2021 :
88 000 \$

Depuis ses débuts :
240 000 \$

3rd edition
in fully virtual mode

\$88 000
raised for pediatric research

16
teams

150
individual participants

3 cities and 3 police departments :
Montreal | Québec | Sherbrooke





PUBLIC ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

Each year, people choose to help raise funds for the Foundation of Stars. These decisions can lead to various types of support :

- ★ Some entrepreneurs or companies donate a percentage of their sales.
- ★ Others reach out to their social and business networks, and if conditions permit, raise funds or request support. Others organize charity events.

These efforts go a long way towards helping us further finance important pediatric research projects.

Initiatives of the sort, moreover, are inspiring and attest to a devoted support network that is there for the Foundation of Stars team and those researchers who need funds to continue their pediatric studies.



2020-2021 | **\$10 000**

Since its creation | **\$25 000**

KIEHL'S

In December 2020 and for the second year in a row, l'Oréal generously offered to support research into pediatric heart disease by donating \$5 for every tube of hand cream from its Kiehl's line of products sold in Canada. Dr. Frédéric Dallaire created the *Réseau canadien de recherche cardiologique pédiatrique*, a research network designed to support the study of new approaches to treating cardiac defects in children. An astoundingly successful fundraising campaign !



2020-2021 | **\$18 960**

Since its creation | **\$1 350 998**

TOUR BY GHISLAIN LEBLANC

Ambassador, donator, fundraiser and volunteer, Ghislain Leblanc is a true magician for the Foundation of Stars. We wish to raise our hats to everyone who donated to his funding of pediatric research on the occasion of his 75th anniversary.

This year, Ghislain's efforts raised \$18,960 in support of pediatric research. Over the past 33 years, with his countless fundraising campaigns, country music evenings and anniversary events, Ghislain has raised a staggering amount of \$1,350,998 ! He is a shining example of dedication and devotion. Ghislain, thank you for all that you do !



2020-2021 | \$10 000

Since its creation | \$414 900

RECYCLAGE DE TEXTILES CANADA SOMODIF INC.

It has been 20 years since the Foundation first partnered with Recyclage de textiles Canada Somodif Inc. The initiative, which revolves around the recycling of used clothing by depositing them in specific boxes, provides the residents of Greater Montréal with an opportunity to come together and help pediatric research.



2020-2021 | \$2 500

Since its creation | \$344 702

ST- VIATEUR BAGEL

A proud Foundation of Stars partner for the past 36 years, St-Viateur Bagel raised a total of **\$2,500 for the Foundation** this year. We want to express our gratitude to the Morena family for their involvement and their support. They have, over the past four decades, helped us foster and improve the health and well-being of children and adolescents. Their overall contribution of \$344,700, moreover, allowed us to fund even more projects in the area of pediatric research.



RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED

The Foundation of Stars provides funding for major research projects and renowned researchers as part of its efforts to support research into children’s diseases. This year, funds were awarded to Québec’s major pediatric research centres in support of projects and studies in specific areas, notably : immune diseases and cancer, neuroscience, populational health and optimal health practices, reproduction, health of mothers and newborns, emergency medicine, pediatric surgery and human development.

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS :





RESEARCH PROJECTS ON COVID-19 AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES

For collaborative projects as part of the *Help Advance Pediatric Research on COVID-19* campaign.

 **SEE PAGE 15**

PERINATAL CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 : IMPACT ON THE HEALTH OF MOTHERS AND NEWBORNS

CO-DIRECTORS :

- ★ Dr Arnaud Gagneur, Centre universitaire mère-enfant de Sherbrooke.
- ★ D^{re} Isabelle Boucoiran, CHU Sainte-Justine.

COLLABORATORS :

Dr Jean-Claude Pasquier, Centre universitaire mère-enfant de Sherbrooke, D^{re} Fatima Kakkar, CHU Sainte-Justine et Dr Marc Beltempo, McGill Pediatric Research Institute; and collaborators from Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont and the Jewish General Hospital.

A significant number of pregnant women will be infected with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID +) in the coming weeks. The scientific data currently available do not allow for determining the severity in pregnant women, the existence of vertical transmission and the longer-term consequences of the infection in newborns and children. This information is essential for the coordination

and organization of peri- and neonatal care. It is in this clinical context of glaring need that the project proposes to develop a permanent pan-Québec research network comprised of a multidisciplinary and multicentric research group bringing together the 4 mother-child research centres and 2 hospitals in Québec. The action plan includes the creation of a population database including all COVID+ pregnant women and the use of the clinical sample biobank of the Fond de recherche du Québec-Santé (FRQ-S) research fund : maternal and neonatal blood, cord blood, urine, vaginal secretions, amniotic fluid, placenta, conception debris, milk and endotracheal/nasogastric suction fluid.

This project aims to establish a Québec registry of COVID+ pregnant women and use the biobank of samples set up by the FRQ-S to answer the following essential research questions : How serious is the infection in pregnant women ? Is there vertical transmission of the infection from mother to child (in-utero and postpartum) or post-natal transmission in children ? What are the consequences of this infection on the fate of children ? This research project will be coordinated with the Québec COVID biobank and data will be shared with the Canadian Surveillance of COVID-19 in Pregnancy registry. In addition, a collaboration approach will be initiated with the international COVI-PREG network, an organization that already gathers data from over 40 countries.



Dr^e Fatima Kakkar

THE COVID-19 FAMILY COHORT : UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO THE VIRUS

DIRECTOR :

D^r Fatima Kakkar, CHU Sainte-Justine.

COLLABORATORS :

D^r Hugo Soudeyns, D^r Elie Haddad, D^r Hélène Decaluwe et D^r Fabien Touzot, CHU Sainte-Justine, D^r Jesse Papenburg, McGill University; and Prof. Christiane Auray Blais, CHU de Sherbrooke.

SUMMARY :

The objective of this study is to compare the specific clinical presentation of COVID-19 and immunological responses to infection in children with that in adults, and to determine the duration of immunity over time (kinetics of humoral and cellular immune responses). In order to investigate key questions for the development of herd immunity to COVID-19, this study will use the database of families at CHU Sainte-Justine with a child with a positive result to a clinical screening test. It will compare the immune response of young patients to that of adults and measure how immunity persists over time for both groups. This study will help understand the phenomena by comparing the immune response to infection. Researchers will also assess how long individuals will remain protected against future infection after having contracted the virus once.



IMPACTS OF COVID-19 MEASURES ON PERINATAL HEALTH AND SERVICES

DIRECTOR :

Prof. Geneviève Roch, Université Laval.

COLLABORATORS :

Marie-Pierre Gagnon, Gina Muckle, Maude Laberge, Annie Leblanc, Mathieu Ouimet, Thamara Pierce and George Tarabulsy, Université Laval à Québec, Suzanne King, Tina Montreuil and Sonia Semenic, McGill University; Roxane Borges da Silva and Andrée-Anne Parent, Université de Montréal, Nicolas Berthelot, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Julie Poissant, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM); and several representatives of partners and other organizations committed to this project's execution and contribution to knowledge mobilization.

SUMMARY :

The project was begun as a way of evaluating the impact of political and public health measures associated with COVID-19 on perinatal health and services and by extension, their repercussions on the overall development of infants born during the pandemic.

The pandemic exposed the world's most vulnerable groups to a sanitary crisis of unimaginable proportions. In the absence of a vaccine, the political and public health measures instituted in an attempt to limit the virus' propagation were draconian. Perinatal services were transformed, as were the associated support services critical to the ability to rapidly intervene to ensure the safety of the child and family before, during and after childbirth.

The researchers gathered data, both before and after the implementation of emergency public health measures, from 1,208 pregnant women and their partners. This data distribution (pre- and post-pandemic) constitutes a singular opportunity to consider and attempt to explain some of the impacts of COVID-19.

The study's findings will allow for making sounder clinical, management and treatment decisions concerning infants, children and families. They will also support the adjustment of services based on measured health issues, as well as the development of initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of families and the healthy development of children.



Prof. Christiane Auray-Blais

RESEARCH FOR URINARY BIOMARKERS OF CONGENITAL CYTOMEGALOVIRUS IN NEWBORNS

DIRECTORS :

Prof. Christiane Auray-Blais and Prof. Michel Boutin, Université de Sherbrooke.

COLLABORATORS :

D^r Fatima Kakkar and D^r Christian Renaud, CHU Sainte-Justine.

SUMMARY :

Biomarkers are indicators of change that measure transformations in a person's metabolism. They are used to monitor and predict the health status of an individual or population so that an appropriate therapeutic intervention can be planned.

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is the most common cause of congenital infections worldwide. This infection has an estimated annual incidence of between 500,000 and 1,300,000 new cases each year, surpassing other better known congenital infections such as the Zika virus or the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The incidence of CMV among newborns in Québec is estimated at 800 cases per 80,000 births. A proportion of 10 % of affected babies are symptomatic and the majority of these babies can be diagnosed based on their symptoms. However, 90 % of them are completely asymptomatic. In the latter group, it is estimated that 10-15 % will be affected by a sensorineural hearing loss that may be present at birth or may develop gradually during infancy.

The main objectives of the proposed study are as follows : Discover new biomarkers of CMV. Develop and validate a method for the quantitative analysis of these biomarkers by tandem mass spectrometry allowing the possible analysis of a large number of samples. Evaluate the performance of the CMV PCR on urine filter papers.



Prof. Michel Boutin



Prof. Isabelle Thibault

PROBLEMATIC EATING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS IN CHILDREN : HOW AND WHY DO THEY DEVELOP ?

DIRECTOR :

Prof. Isabelle Thibault, CHUS research centre.

COLLABORATORS :

D^r Caroline Pesant and D^{re} Marie-Claude Roy, Université de Sherbrooke; Prof. Dominique Meilleur, Université de Montréal; Prof. Anne-Marie Tougas and Prof. Catherine Laurier, Université de Sherbrooke; Prof. Catherine Bégin, Université de Laval; and Prof. Marie-Pierre Gagnon-Girouard, Université de Trois-Rivières and collaborators from IMAJ.

SUMMARY :

The objective of this project is to better understand the factors related to problematic eating attitudes and behaviours (PABA) and to guide programs that promote healthy lifestyles and the prevention of eating disorders. Doing so requires determining the percentage of Québec children with problematic eating attitudes and behaviour and studying the factors associated with the latter's development. There are presently no large research studies with enough participants to enable monitoring children over long periods of time in the hopes of identifying and understanding the psychosocial factors associated with the development of problematic eating attitudes and behaviour.

CHU SAINTE-JUSTINE RESEARCH CENTRE



A PHASE 2 STUDY OF TRAMETINIB FOR PATIENTS WITH PEDIATRIC GLIOMA OR PLEXIFORM WITH REFACTORY TUMOR AND ACTIVATION OF THE MARK/ERK PATHWAY : TRAM-01

DIRECTOR :

D^r Sébastien Perreault.

COLLABORATORS :

D^r Nada Jabado du CUSM; Prof. Sarah Lippé, Prof. Leandra Desjardins, Prof. Serge Sultan, Prof. Mathieu Deheas, Dr. Benjamin Ellezam and Prof. Yves Théoret, CHU Sainte-Justine; D^r Valérie Larouche, Prof. Marie-Ève Routhier and Prof. Édith Cantin, CHU de Québec, D^r Nada, D^r Cynthia Hawkin and D^r Uri Tabori, SickKids.



D^r Sébastien Perreault

SUMMARY :

Nearly 30 % of pediatric patients with brain tumours do not respond to treatment and most of those who survive have lasting neurological problems. A better understanding of the mechanisms responsible for brain tumours now makes it possible to intervene using personalized approaches, i.e., targeted therapies. One of these molecules, trametinib, shows great promise for treating pediatric glioma and neurofibroma.

Thanks to a strong research team, we were able to initiate an ambitious phase 2 multicentric study to explore the effectiveness of trametinib to treat low-grade glioma and plexiform neurofibroma in young patients. This is the first international project to study the specific response rate of nervous system tumours to trametinib. The study will involve a total of 150 patients from 7 Canadian research centres, 3 of them in Québec (CHU Sainte-Justine, Montréal Children's Hospital and the CHUL). Not only will the project team examine the effectiveness of trametinib, but it will also seek to establish the neuropsychological impact of the treatment as well as its effect on patient quality of life. We will notably develop new computerized tools and resources to better determine tumour response to treatments. Lastly, we will attempt to identify associated genetic anomalies that could enable us to more accurately predict this response.

PROJECT SEEKING TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITY OF TREATING A CHILD WITH APPENDICITIS, EVEN PRIOR TO SURGERY

CO-DIRECTORS :

D^r Esli Osmanlliu and D^r Dan Poenaru.

COLLABORATORS :

D^r Sherif Emil, Montréal Children's Hospital; Prof. Samira Rahimi, McGill University; and D^r Jocelyn Gravel, CHU Sainte-Justine.

SUMMARY :

The project seeks to use algorithms based on artificial intelligence to predict the complexity of a case involving a pediatric patient presenting with a ruptured appendix, as well as the extent of the perforation. In other words, the study will attempt to better understand the complexity of appendicitis in a child even before the patient goes to surgery. There is currently no predictive tool for this purpose. We will rely on AI algorithms to support the clinical process and shared decision-making in the ER. We are hoping to work with a databank drawn from a total of 800 patients. We believe that once validated, this tool could improve the care provided to children with acute appendicitis.



D^r Esli Osmanlliu



D^r Dan Poenaru



Dr Pierre Lachapelle



Dr Allison L. Dorfman

STUDY OF THE AGING OF THE RETINA AND MACULA AND ESTABLISHING WHETHER THE ADVERSE SIDE EFFECTS (ACUTE AND CHRONIC) OF RETINOACTIVE DRUGS USED ON PEDIATRIC PATIENTS CAN BE IDENTIFIED WITH AN ELECTRORETINOGRAM (FLASH AND MULTIFOCAL)

CO-DIRECTORS :

Dr Pierre Lachapelle and Dr Allison L. Dorfman.

COLLABORATORS :

Dr Cynthia Qian, Hôpital Ste-Justine; Dr Daniela Toffoli and Dr Jia Yue You, Montréal Children’s Hospital.

SUMMARY :

The retina identifies the light-sensitive tissue covering the rear of the eye. Certain medications administered to both adults and children can have adverse side effects on the retina which, if not detected in time, can lead to major visual deficits. We think that this timeframe (or “window” during which such side effects should be detected) is smaller in young children whose retina is not yet fully developed and thus vulnerable to the impact of such drugs. Our study would monitor changes in the retinal function of young patients administered this medication, and this so as to identify the early warning signs of the problem. The retina would be monitored using an electroretinogram to observe its electric response as depicted through a light source. To better explain, an electroretinogram is to the retina what an electrocardiogram is to the heart. We hope that our study will allow the retina of patients to be better protected while they receive necessary therapy.

MONITORING THE EFFECT OF POSTNATAL STEROIDS ON THE CARDIORESPIRATORY FUNCTION OF EXTREMELY PREMATURE INFANTS SUFFERING FROM BRONCHOPULMONARY DYSPLASIA : SPEC STUDY

CO-DIRECTORS :

D^r Gabriel Altit and D^r Guilherme Sant'Anna.

COLLABORATORS :

D^r Punnanee Wutthigate, Prof. Samantha Latremouille and D^r Jessica Simoneau, Research Institute at McGill University; D^r Anie Lapointe and D^r Andréanne Villeneuve, CHU Sainte-Justine.



D^r Gabriel Altit



D^r Guilherme Sant'Anna

SUMMARY :

Extremely premature newborns (born at <29 weeks) are very fragile and their immaturity leaves them highly vulnerable to various infections or inflammation. These infants need significant support if they hope to survive and have a fighting chance at growing and developing in an optimal manner. They are especially prone to suffering from respiratory failure and finding themselves on a mechanical vent to help their breathing. Ventilation in these types of cases involves pushing air into extremely fragile lungs that remain vulnerable to any further trauma, regardless of how careful practitioners are. The process often leads to further damage and subsequent inflammation, which in turn generates a vicious circle where gas exchange in the lungs becomes increasingly difficult. This then calls for still more mechanical support, which triggers further trauma and inflammation, and so on. Dexamethasone, a corticosteroid, allows for breaking the inflammation/ventilation cycle and removing the infant from the vent so as to transition to a more natural spontaneous ventilation method. One such non-invasive method consists of placing a small mask over the infant's nose which pushes in air so that the lungs will not be crushed like a deflating balloon. This steroid unfortunately has potential side effects on the activity and structure of the heart and other vital organs and functions. These effects have not been studied in any great detail, meaning that a rigorous and systematic approach consisting of repeated echography scans or ultrasounds (heart and lungs) will be required following administration of the medication.

Our project would monitor these newborns during their exposure to this medication, and this in two major centres (Montréal Children's Hospital and CHU Sainte-Justine). This would enable us to better understand the collateral impacts of this exposure while also gathering information for better targeting this therapy in needy newborns.



CHU DE SHERBROOKE RESEARCH CENTRE



CONTRIBUTION OF NON-TEACHING PROFESSIONALS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN (EXISTING AND DESIRED SERVICE OFFER)

DIRECTOR :

Prof. Audrée Jeanne Beaudoin, Université de Sherbrooke.

COLLABORATORS :

Prof. Chantal Camden and Prof. Mélanie Couture, Université de Sherbrooke; and Prof. Julie Poissant, Université du Québec à Montréal.



Prof. Audrée Jeanne Beaudoin

SUMMARY :

27 % of children in kindergarten/daycare in Québec have difficulty in at least one development sphere, and this percentage continues to climb. Aware that such developmental difficulties can follow a person for his entire life, bringing with them academic challenges, self-esteem issues, mental health problems, job-related issues and more, the Government of Québec introduced the *Educational Services Strategy for Children from Birth to Age 8 : It's All About the Children*, a measure that proposes an increase in the resources available for screening and supporting children who have difficulties while at daycare. The term daycare in this context includes accredited daycare centres (among them CPEs) and family daycare environments.

The project sought to answer the following question : How can non-teaching professionals support the development of children aged 0 to 5 years in a daycare setting ? To do so, two research objectives were set :

- ★ Describing the non-teaching professionals' service offers to support the development of children in a daycare setting (both existing and desired services)
- ★ Issuing recommendations, based on a consensus among experts, of the interdisciplinary service offer that should be privileged.



CHU DE QUÉBEC RESEARCH CENTRE



Prof. Michel Boivin



Dr Emmanuel Bujold



Prof. Célia Matte-Gagné



Prof. Gina Muckle



Dr Bruno Piedboeuf

CREATION OF AN INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INTERSECTORAL RESEARCH PLATFORM TO ACHIEVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR DETERMINANTS

CO-DIRECTORS :

P^{re} Gina Muckle, D^r Emmanuel Bujold, D^r Bruno Piedboeuf, P^{re} Célia Matte-Gagné et P^r Michel Boivin.

COLLABORATORS :

Prof. Amélie Petitclerc and Prof. George Tarabulsy, Université Laval; GRIP, CRUJeF and Prof. Isabelle Ouellet-Morin, Université de Montréal; and CESD, 31 collaborators affiliated with various Québec universities and research centres, among them the CRCHUQ, the CHU Sainte-Justine research centre, the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) and others.

SUMMARY :

Our project revolves around the creation of an interdisciplinary and intersectoral research platform to achieve a better understanding of children’s health and development and the associated determinants. This initiative will consist of a longitudinal study of a cohort of 4,000 yet-to-be born children and their family (mother and father), with monitoring as of the first trimester of pregnancy. The children will be regularly evaluated as regards their growth and development during the prenatal, perinatal and postnatal periods. After their birth, they will undergo cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural evaluations as well as physical and mental health examinations. The measures and indicators of the children’s health and development and of the associated determinants will be established by experts from various fields and based on comparable studies carried out in Québec, Canada and elsewhere. The characteristics of the prenatal and postnatal environments and the use of services available through the health and social services system will be documented. This research structure will subsequently enable many Québec researchers affiliated with different centres (such as the mother and child centres) to develop new knowledge as a means of bridging the disciplines involved. Research findings will also be valuable for professionals working with children and decision-makers.



4TH PROVINCIAL MOTHER-CHILD RESEARCH CONFERENCE

On October 29 and 30, 2020, the 4th provincial mother-child conference was held, albeit virtually. The Foundation of Stars was the main partner of this event organized by the CHU de Québec-Université Laval research centre.

We are thrilled, despite the limitations associated with the pandemic, to have been able to showcase (on the platform) and present to nearly 300 participants the latest breakthroughs in mother-child research in Québec. More specifically, 100 research projects in 7 major areas/ disciplines were submitted, which allowed us to support student-researcher exchanges despite the various public health directives. We would like to thank the event's organizers, D^r Richard Bélanger and M^s Aline Dumas.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS FROM THE NEXT GENERATION OF RESEARCHERS :

Best oral presentations :

- ★ Zahia Attari – McGill University
- ★ Joanie Melançon – Université Laval
- ★ Patrick Ntantu Nkinsa – Université de Montréal
- ★ Sharine Patel – McGill University

Best poster presentations :

- ★ Marie-Eve Brien – Université de Montréal
- ★ Tiphane Cavé – Université de Sherbrooke
- ★ Aurélie Lacouture – Université Laval
- ★ Émile Thivierge – Université de Montréal





FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2020-2021 once again allowed the Foundation of Stars to illustrate its agility and creativity. This annual report draws an impressive picture of the work carried out over the course of this exceptional year. In reading this document, you no doubt discovered the numerous charity events, fundraising initiatives by friends of the Foundation, and fundraising campaigns that took place over the course of the year. Our report also provided us an opportunity to further showcase the dedicated individuals who supported progress in the area of pediatric research as well as our child stars who benefited from research results and findings.

A total of **\$475,002** was remitted to help fund various research projects and grants !

We hope that this new year will allow us to gather yet more funds to continue supporting the fight against children's diseases.



ALLOCATION OF FUNDS EARMARKED FOR PEDIATRIC RESEARCH

PARTNERS	2020-2021	CUMULATIVE at March 31, 2019
PEDIATRIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE - MUHC MONTRÉAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL	\$123 653	\$29 830 014
CHU SAINTE-JUSTINE PAEDIATRIC RESEARCH CENTRE	\$158 653	\$29 830 014
CENTRE HOSPITALIER UNIVERSITAIRE DE QUÉBEC (CHUQ) PEDIATRIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE ⁽¹⁾	\$47 845	\$6 989 556
CENTRE HOSPITALIER UNIVERSITAIRE DE SHERBROOKE (CHUS) P EDIATRIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE ⁽²⁾	\$48 101	\$3 594 211
	\$50 000 ⁽³⁾	
GRANTS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF RESEARCHERS (FRQS)	\$19 250	\$1 068 914
SPECIAL PROJET (BRAIN CANCER) - D ^R NADA JABADO		\$200 000
CHILD AND YOUTH		\$100 000
MOTHER-CHILD RESEARCH, PROVINCIAL AWARD	\$2 500	\$14 000
CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDHOOD OBESITY		\$370 000
PROF. ISABELLE THIBAUT (CHUS) - EATING DISORDERS	\$25 000	\$25 000
TOTAL	\$475 002	\$72 021 709

(1) Since 1985

(2) Since 1999

(3) Funds remitted during the 8th Encan
des vins de Sherbrooke

The fiscal year ended on March 31, 2021.

The Foundation of Stars' financial statements
were audited by the firm Gosselin et associés.



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Anie Beaudoin
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Carole Lalande
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Carole McDermott
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Mireille Vaillant
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Each year, the Foundation of Stars is blessed to welcome new interns who share our desire to support research into children's diseases. These interns go above and beyond, and are instrumental in the success of our various fundraising initiatives. We wish them the absolute best in their professional careers moving forward ! Hence, a special thank you to our two interns :

Émilie Rousset and Alex Tremblay



AMBASSADORS AND MASTERS OF CEREMONIES

Throughout the year, we call upon those people we refer to as our 'discreet' heroes, the big-hearted supporters who greatly contribute to our fundraising efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of children from coast to coast. Without their precious assistance, we could not support as many research projects as we do.

A sincere THANK YOU to our generous donors, volunteers, regional directors, governors, ambassadors and event committee members for contributing to our success and to the Foundation of Stars' stellar reputation !



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