



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Patient-driven initiative aims to ‘comfort’ MUHC chemotherapy patients

Cedars Cancer Foundation and MUHC announce official launch of the Bell Fund on World Cancer Day

MONTREAL, February 4, 2016 – Judy Martin vividly remembers the day she was told she had stage three breast cancer. “You need to fight with me,” her physician, Dr. Ari Meguerditchian, told her. “You’re never going to meet anyone who hates to lose more than me and I doubt that this will be the first thing I choose to lose at!” Martin responded. Cancer is a journey, with many milestones along the way. “The start and end of chemo are some of the biggest milestones, and the achievement should be recognized, which is why I am so proud that we are launching The Bell Fund today, to give patients support, inspiration, and hopefully a little comfort on this journey,” says Mrs. Martin, who founded the Fund with the support of the Cedars Cancer Foundation and Cedars CanSupport.

The Bell Fund will provide comfort kits to each new cancer patient at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC). “My own experience with cancer gave me insight on what items could make a patient’s experience easier,” says Mrs. Martin. The kit contains a fleece blanket to keep the patient warm, because chemotherapy patients often feel cold, with a foot pocket and a lap pocket to store a book or phone; a reusable water bottle to help patients swallow medication and quench their thirst; a note pad and pen to take notes during doctors’ visits; mints to soothe throats and remove the metal taste that some patients have during treatment; and a magazine to help pass the time. School children from the Knowlton Academy are also assisting The Bell Fund by writing notes to patients that wish them well, and will be included in the kits.

“The Comfort Kit is a great initiative that shows we understand what our patients are going through, and that there is a community of people who care passionately about them, which in turn gives them hope and inspiration, which is crucial during these difficult times,” says MUHC medical oncologist, Dr. Nathaniel Bouganim. “Additionally, patients who struggle during treatment are more prone to adverse events and are at higher risk of discontinuing therapy,” says Dr. Ari Meguerditchian, MUHC surgical oncologist. “This in turn ultimately affects recurrence and survival rates. Supporting our patients through each step ensures that they will be in the best shape possible as fast as possible for their treatment.”



More than 4,500 new cancer patients are diagnosed every year at the MUHC, and around 1,000 receive chemotherapy. To celebrate the accomplishment of making it through chemotherapy, patients are encouraged to ring one of several bells that are now positioned around the Cedars Cancer Centre and The Montreal Children’s Hospital. The bells are all engraved with the words: LUCKY, GRATEFUL, HOPEFUL. “Lucky may seem like a strange word to use, but I often describe my diagnosis as lucky, because for the next 455 days, I had the privilege of being cared for by the most caring team of professionals one could ask for,” says Mrs. Martin.

“We are grateful to Judy for leading this initiative and delighted with the strong support it has received from local sponsors,” adds Jeff Shamie, President and CEO of the Cedars Cancer Foundation. “It is further evidence of the creativity and compassion of both the volunteers and professionals who work at Cedars Can Support.”

About Cedars Cancer Foundation

For nearly 50 years, Cedars’ priority has been to help the MUHC and its Cancer Care Mission assure that patients and their families benefit from exceptional care and support, the latest knowledge and continuous technological advancements. Thanks to its annual campaign, as well as major gifts, planned giving, special events, and dedicated funds, — including but not limited to Sarah’s Fund for the Montreal Children’s Hospital; The Wilfred Howick Humanitarian Fund; the Dr. Edward J. Tabah, Vivian Saykaly and Dr. N. Blair Whittemore Visiting Professorships; and the Dr. Henry R. Shibata Cedars’ Fellowships in Oncology Research, —the Foundation supports the MUHC Cancer Care Mission via:

- Supporting **compassionate care**—prevention, diagnosis, treatment, post treatment, supportive care, and palliative care—for the **youngest paediatric patients to adolescents, young adults, and adults of all ages.**
- Funds for the purchase of **state-of-the-art equipment** for screening, diagnosing and treating patients.
- Provides **free emotional, psychological, practical and financial support** to patients and their families through **CanSupport.**
- **Builds and sustains awareness** of important cancer-related issues.
- Invests in **cancer research, patient education and training** at the MUHC for current and future healthcare teams through visiting professorships and fellowships.

About the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)

One of the world’s foremost academic health centres, the MUHC offers exceptional and integrated patient-centric care, research, teaching and technology assessment. Affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine of McGill University and part of the RUIS-McGill, the MUHC has a mandate to focus on



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complex care and is highly committed to working with partner organizations to ensure continuum of care in its community. The partner hospitals of the MUHC—the Lachine Hospital, the Montreal Chest Institute, the Montreal General Hospital, the Montreal Neurological Hospital, the Royal Victoria Hospital and the Montreal Children's Hospital—value multidisciplinary service throughout the lifespan, innovative technologies and practices, strategic partnerships and leadership in knowledge transfer. The MUHC is currently carrying out a \$2.355-billion Redevelopment Project on three sites - the Glen, the Montreal General and Lachine hospitals. The project will support environments that ensure patients and their families receive the best care possible, now and for many generations to come. The sites are also anchored in best sustainable-development practices, including LEED® and BOMA BEST guidelines.

muhc.ca

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