

Baycrest Matters

A bi-weekly update for Baycrest staff, families and clients

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I'm 90 going on middle age: A view of the world through the eyes of the elderly

Photographer and psychiatrist Joel Walker, MD, FRCP, presented to Baycrest a rare, historical photographic collection of clients (1981-1983), which are permanently installed in Classrooms ABC and the Telehealth Boardroom and will be used as a learning tool. The photographs are not just considered art, but are a record of the preservation of the human spirit. Joel presented his work during Interprofessional Rounds last month.

Joel's lifework is based on the unique integration of his photography with his psychiatric practice. After completing his residency in psychiatry (which included a double rotation at Baycrest during his internship) in the 1970s, he was not quite ready to enter into practice, so he decided to take a year off. He

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In the early 1980s, a group of Baycrest clients had the opportunity to learn how to take photographs and to share their emotions through a therapeutic "camera class." This man used the camera to document his wife's journey of Alzheimer's disease.

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bought a camera and taught himself how to use it.

When he finally set up his practice, he decorated his office with his own photographs. His patients would see them while waiting for their appointment and discuss the images with Joel, often relating them to their own experiences and conflicts. He soon realized the therapeutic value of his photographs which led him to develop the Walker Visuals, a series of abstracts which would encourage discussion between patient and therapist, now a widespread tool.

Joel set up an interactive exhibit called "See and Tell" in New York where viewers were invited to write down their feelings provoked by the photographs. The exhibit was covered by media outlets across North America, including Time magazine. Joel then presented "See and Tell" at psychiatric and social work conferences world-wide, which established him as one of the pioneers of phototherapy.

In the early 1980s, Joel returned to Baycrest as a volunteer along with his friend and fellow photographer Michael Gilbert, introducing residents and patients to photography. "We gave the participants Polaroid cameras at first, so that they could experience the instant gratification of immediately seeing the photo you took. We quickly moved on to 35mm cameras which allowed more control and creativity," Joel explains. The average age of the participants was 87 years old. Some of them were stroke survivors or suffered from physical challenges like arthritis or impaired vision. "We would modify the cameras to

accommodate these issues," Joel adds.

At first the "camera class" was a recreational activity, but it soon evolved into a therapeutic program. For three years, a group of about 15 members met every Thursday for three hours, taking photos of their surroundings, what they liked, each other and their own self portraits. They explored Baycrest inside and out and went on fieldtrips to places like Center Island and Kensington Market. "The class was not just about how to take photos, but what the images meant to us, how they made people feel. The feedback was outstanding," Joel reflects.

At Interprofessional Rounds, Joel shared stories of the class participants, including Rose, who was at first depressed and unengaged when she joined the class. Within months, she became animated, joyful and helpful. When commenting on her self-portrait, a woman named Emma described herself as "a beautiful person in a broken, old body," while another participant used the camera to document his wife's journey through Alzheimer's disease. One man summed it up best when he stated: "we are not just verbalizing, we are picturizing."

"The camera helped these individuals to express themselves creatively, but also increased feelings of self worth and discovery. They proved to themselves and to their families that you are never too old to learn and to grow," states Joel. He submitted a collection of the class's works to the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition at

Nathan Philp Square in the student category under the name "The Young Photographers." They won second prize.

Joel also spent time creating intimate portraits of Baycrest residents and patients. He would get very close to them with camera in one hand and a tape recorder in the other, and draw out their words by saying, "Ida, you were 10 years old and leaving your home in Russia. You knew you would never return. How did you feel?" He would snap his camera as they told their story. These are the portraits that are now installed at Baycrest. Although none of these clients are still alive, their spirit is permanently emblazoned on the walls. **BM**



Emma depicts peace and friendship with a paper dove and the loving arms of her classmates in this photograph.

RRI Conference explores how factors affect aging

Known as a forum where some of North America's best minds in cognitive science gather, Baycrest's 19th Annual Rotman Research Institute Conference in Toronto attracted over 400 participating clinicians, scientists and students earlier this month.

Keynote speaker Dr. Mark D'Esposito (University of California at Berkeley), who is world renowned for his work on the mechanisms of brain function for memory and attention and how these are affected by aging and brain disease, applauded the work conducted at Baycrest on the rehabilitation of executive functions in aging. His team applied an intervention developed by Rotman Research Institute scientist **Dr. Brian Levine** (in collaboration with Professor Ian Robertson, Trinity College, Dublin) and expanded on this work by incorporating novel measures of brain imaging to assess training effects in the brain.

The conference explored how the brain changes with healthy aging and the factors that may influence those changes for better or for worse. Here is a look at some contributing factors:

Cognitive Reserve

Two adults in similar health may suffer the same trauma to the brain (like a stroke or

Alzheimer's disease) but one may look clinically better than the other. Dr. Yaakov Stern (Columbia University), one of the world's leading researchers in dementia, attributes this to "cognitive reserve", the idea that some individuals are better able to tolerate or cope with progressive brain pathology without demonstrating the severe clinical symptoms of cognitive decline. Early-life education, mid-life occupation and late-life leisure activities which are mentally stimulating may all be influencing factors.

Sleep

The deep and restorative sleep we enjoy in our youth happens less frequently for many individuals as they age, says Dr. Brian Murray, who runs the Sleep Lab at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Over 40 percent of people aged 65 and older will experience two common sleep pathologies: restless leg syndrome (RLS) or sleep apnea. RLS is now recognized as an important risk factor of cardiovascular disease. Sleep apnea, if left untreated, can lead to severe cardiovascular events and even silent brain infarctions that contribute to dementia.

These sleep disruptions are treatable, but Dr. Murray warns against quick fixes like sleeping pills. Studies have shown that sedative hypnotics increase the risk of daytime fatigue which

can lead to falls, memory loss and even pseudo-depression.

Hearing loss

By age 65 years, a quarter of the population will suffer from clinically significant hearing loss, making it increasingly difficult to engage in conversations in a noisy environment. Aging brains are slower to process information, requiring more *effortful* listening to comprehend information. Many individuals also deny that they have hearing loss, which can be also mistaken for cognitive impairment. For people with an age-related cognitive disorder, a hearing difficulty can exacerbate it even more.

There are helpful solutions, including comfortable, high-tech hearing aids, and helpful communication strategies like asking people to speak slowly and clearly, and seeking out quieter spaces to socialize, explained presenter **Marilyn Reed**, a senior audiologist at Baycrest.

Stress

Chronic, unrelenting stress can impair memory performance in older adults and is associated with shrinkage of the hippocampus, a crucial brain region involved in learning and memory. According to Dr. Sonia Lupien, an international expert on stress and cognition from the University of Montreal, when

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we're exposed to stress over a long period of time, our stress hormones overwork and start to deregulate, causing memory impairment. Older adults are also more sensitive to stress than younger adults.

Scientists are now identifying the factors that contribute to the stress response in older adults, such as low social and family support, low self esteem, poverty, depression and personality.

Genes

There is overwhelming scientific evidence that genetic factors in some way influence individual

differences in cognitive ability, but most of the studies are on people aged 40 and younger. So far there is little evidence that genetic factors affect cognitive abilities in early life to the point that they are *enduring* in later life, reported Dr. Matt McGue, a leading behavioural geneticist at the University of Minnesota. However, Dr. McGue cautioned that more research is needed to better understand the degree to which inheritable genes factor into *late-life* cognitive functioning, the interactions that take place between genes (polymorphism), and how one's environment and lifestyle interacts with genes and cognitive aging.

Estrogen

Estrogen treatment may be a cognitive protector for women, says Dr. Barbara Sherwin, a professor in the departments of Psychology, Obstetrics and Gynecology at McGill University. The world-renowned pioneer in estrogen and memory research says studies have shown that estrogen treatment, when initiated at the beginning of menopause in healthy women or immediately after a hysterectomy, helps to protect aspects of cognitive function that deteriorate with normal aging.

Attention - Product Safety Alert

Baycrest has removed all **TRIAD - ORAL RELIEF PREMOISTENED SWABS** due a safety concern with this product. The use of **all cotton and foam-tipped oral care products** are considered unsafe for Baycrest clients to use, since the swab tip may detach from its stick, resulting in a choking hazard. If you come across either of these products, please consult with your unit director/program manager.

If you currently bring this product into Baycrest for a resident or client, we ask you to no longer do so. Please speak to a care team member who can suggest alternative products such as a suction toothbrush, regular toothbrush and

toothpaste, bite block and oral moisturizing spray.

The well-being and safety of our clients and residents are top priorities and we ask that you speak to a care team member before you use any product (including medication and

products that are to be used for the personal care of the client) for a resident/client's care. Safety is a collaborative effort between Baycrest, clients and families and we appreciate your support in making Baycrest a safe environment.



Can you help?

As one of the painters on staff, **Mark Anderson** has kept Baycrest looking fresh and modern for over 23 years. Before joining Baycrest, he worked at another facility dedicated to seniors, and for over 30 years, he has learned to appreciate the importance of aging well and good health. However, for Mark and his family, good health is something that may be in the hands of a stranger, since Mark's wife Rosanna Anderson needs a liver transplant as soon as possible. Mark is hoping that someone from the Baycrest community may be a compatible donor.

Rosanna, a secretary with the Toronto District Catholic School Board, began to have health issues in November 2006 and suffered from a perforated ulcer in April 2007. She had emergency surgery to repair the hole to her stomach, but when it was difficult to stop the bleeding, it was discovered that Rosanna's liver was compromised, resulting from an underlying condition. Rosanna returned home a few weeks after the surgery, but has returned when her condition worsened.

She was placed on the liver transplant list at Toronto General

Hospital in October 2007, and her doctor has told Mark and his family that Rosanna's best option would be to receive a living donor liver transplant. Neither Mark nor his three grown children are matches.

Toronto General Hospital has conducted living donor liver transplants since March 2000. Living donation can significantly reduce the waiting time for liver transplant candidates and has the advantage of ensuring that the surgery is thoroughly planned and prepared for by recipient, donor, and transplant team.

Living donors will have one lobe of the liver removed and transplanted into the recipient. The recipient's complete diseased liver is removed during the surgery. The transplanted lobe will eventually regenerate enough tissue to function at a satisfactory level for the recipient. The remaining liver tissue within the donor will also regenerate tissue, continuing to function normally for the living donor.

Living donors must be someone who shares a compatible blood group with Rosanna, who is type O; between the ages of 18 and 60 years; in good health and a suitable match; freely willing to donate.

Although Rosanna is home, she is in constant discomfort and has to go to hospital every two weeks for paracentesis - a procedure to drain fluid from the belly. She sometime requires treatments at hospital three to four times a week to stabilize her electrolytes, and she was twice admitted with life threatening complications. She follows a salt-free diet and carefully watches what she eats. Yet Mark and his family fear that her time will run out. Unfortunately, about 15 percent of patients waiting for transplants will die before a liver becomes available.

Mark has been married to Rosanna for nearly 27 years and knew her 10 years before that. He hopes that she will be part of his life for decades to come.

Can you help? If you are interested in learning more about the Living Donor Liver Transplant Program at Toronto General Hospital, please obtain information from Mark Anderson, Physical Plant, Room BW03, 416-785-2500 ext. 2046, or contact Cailin MacLeod, Toronto General Hospital, 416-340-4800, ext. 7594.

It's time to apply for the Hy & Bertha Shore and Harry & Sara Gorman Award.

Through the generosity of the Shore and Gorman families, up to six awards are granted annually to employees who wish to further their education. The award may also be used to produce an innovative educational product such as a video, audiotape, computer software, manual, or teaching tool.

Eligibility/Criteria Information and application forms are available online at Baycrest@Work and at the Department of Organizational Effectiveness.

The deadline for submissions is *May 15*.

Absolutely no applications will be accepted after this date.

Please contact **Ursula Watson** at 416-785-2500 ext. 2365 or uwatson@baycrest.org if you have any questions.



Alzheimer Society

Training for Private Companions

The Alzheimer Society, in partnership with Baycrest is offering **Enhanced Training for Private Companions who work with Persons with Dementia**. These sessions will be offered free of charge at Baycrest in May 2009.

Topics that will be covered are:

- Techniques that will support and improve communication with people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
- Learning how your understanding and approach can often prevent or diffuse responsive behavior.
- Understanding the essential role that you play in influencing the quality of life for persons with dementia.
- Recognizing that persons with dementia need meaning in their lives as much as anyone else.

This nine hour training session will be offered in the Posluns Auditorium in three hour sessions from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. on:

• **Wednesday, May 6 • Wednesday, May 13 • Wednesday, May 20**

If you participate in the full program you will receive a certificate of completion from the Alzheimer Society.

RSVP to Fran Cossever by May 3, 2009

at 416-785-2500 ext. 3195 or fcossever@baycrest.org

Baycrest Enriching Care
Enhancing Knowledge
Enlightening Minds

Baycrest is an academic
health sciences centre
fully affiliated with



Remembering Sonia Reichman

Early last week Sonia Reichman, former manager, Communication Disorders, passed away. Sonia was an important member of the Baycrest family and a valuable leader for 15 years.

Sonia's leadership of the Communication Disorders Department greatly contributed to the success and high caliber of services currently provided by our audiology and speech language pathology staff. Sonia also made numerous contributions to the centre as a whole, among them the

coordination of Eating Assistance during the SARS crisis and as co-chair of the Client and Family Centred Care and Service Committee. Sonia always advocated on behalf of the client.

In addition to the role of the Interim Professional Practice Leader for Speech-Language Pathology, Sonia assumed the role of the Acting Program Director for the Community /Ambulatory services in January 2008, and was tremendously effective in supporting the Brain Health Centre

Clinics and the Ambulatory Team's transition to program management and in preparation for accreditation. She also assisted with the development of a collaborative practice model to support Speech Language Pathology and Audiology.

Sonia touched so many lives during her time at Baycrest. She will be sorely missed, and our hearts and deepest sympathies are with her family.

Walk with the Cohons at the Baycrest BOARDwalk

Baycrest Foundation recently announced the chairs of this year's Baycrest BOARDwalk: Susan and George Cohon and their exceptional golden retriever, Tilly, who is trained as a therapy dog, and brought the Cohons to Baycrest as volunteers. Now in its fifth year, the Baycrest BOARDwalk is a short stroll around Baycrest Campus, complete with a mid-walk snack of herring and schnapps and a backyard barbeque at the finish line.

The Cohons have been active in numerous charitable activities for decades. George is the founder of McDonald's in Canada and Russia and also the founder of Ronald McDonald House Charities in both countries. Among Susan's many charitable involvements was her position as chair of Variety Village. These days, George, Susan and Tilly can often be found visiting patients at Baycrest Hospital.

This year, they wanted to become more involved at Baycrest and were very pleased to be invited to co-chair the 2009 BOARDwalk.

"The Cohons' participation in this event is a great opportunity for them to show the Baycrest community their appreciation for the remarkable work being done here every day," says

Mark Gryfe, president, Baycrest Foundation.

All Baycrest staff members, volunteers, residents and family members are invited to participate and help to raise funds for Baycrest, by either organizing a team, to walk as part of a team or to sponsor a colleague who is walking. The Baycrest BOARDwalk is a fun way for all to show their support while enjoying the fresh air, the company of their peers and entertainment.

Please join George, Susan and Tilly at the Baycrest BOARDwalk on Thursday, June 18 at 5:00 p.m. immediately following the Annual General Meeting of Baycrest and the Baycrest Foundation. For details and registration, please go to: www.baycrest.org/boardwalk or call **Carol Berns** at 416-785-2500, ext. 2035.



Join Baycrest BOARDwalk chairs George and Susan Cohon and their dog Tilly on Thursday, June 18.

Join us for an
afternoon of
relaxation!

Stress Relief Day

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
at the Wagman Centre
55 Ameer Avenue

Please register by May 12, 2009
Wagman Centre Office
(416) 785-2500 Ext. 2267
Fee: \$15.00 - Members
\$20.00 - Guest
Includes Light refreshments

Keynote Speaker:
Gretchen Kerr, Ph.D., Associate Dean,
Undergraduate Education, University of
Toronto

30 minute Workshops to follow:
Aromology
Yoga
Massage Therapy
NIA (Martial and Healing Arts of Dance)

Announcements

Congratulations to **Dr. Angela Troyer**, clinical neuropsychologist, who has been appointed as Baycrest's Research Ethics Board chair. Dr. Troyer has been the interim REB Chair since January 2008, and her contributions to research ethics and to the research process at Baycrest have been very much appreciated, over this past 13 months.

Changes in the E-Health Program

This year the E-Health Program established goals that focused on promoting and supporting performance management, monitoring, measurement, and reporting, expansion of our Business Intelligence, and customer service. In order to achieve these goals, there are some changes in the management

structure to reflect the unique skill of the E-Health Management team:

- ◆ **Conrado Miranda** will manage Decision Support, in addition to Health Records & Admitting.
- ◆ **Andrew Pigou** will manage Informatics.
- ◆ **Wayne Harris** will manage Customer Service & Support, in addition to Technical Services.

Announcements from Food and Nutrition Services:

Our condolences go to the following staff members and their families:

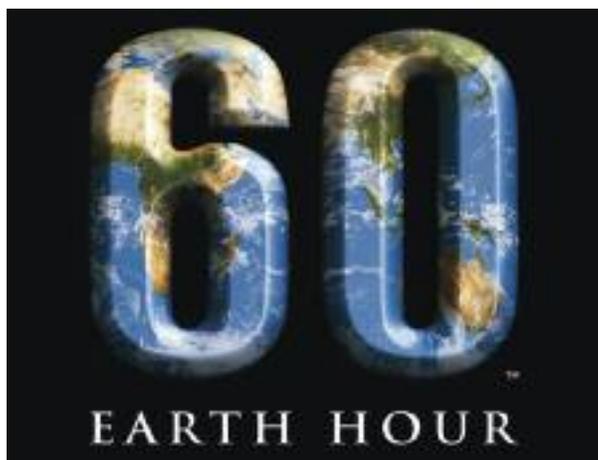
- ◆ **Janet Vercillo**, manager, on the loss of her father-in-law, Raffaele Vercillo.

- ◆ **Leon Grant**, kitchen helper, on the loss of his son, Jahmelle Grant.
- ◆ **Lina Rubinshteyn**, food services aide, on the loss of her husband, Yosef Rubinshteyn.
- ◆ **Anna Ching**, food services aide, on the loss of her mother, Suet Lam.

Our congratulations go to the following staff members and their families:

- ◆ **Lina Rubinshteyn**, food services aide, on the recent marriage of her daughter.
- ◆ **Mara Rotstaine**, food services aide, on the recent marriage of her son.
- ◆ **Lydia English**, secretary, on the recent birth of her granddaughter.

Mazel Tov!



Baycrest

Enriching Care
Enhancing Knowledge
Enlightening Minds

TURN your **lights OFF** for an hour and join millions across the planet who are helping to stop climate change.



in support of **EARTH HOUR**
8:30 pm - 9:30 pm, Saturday,
March 28, 2009.

