CTV visits Baycrest to learn about brain strengthening program for kids

The look on Daniel’s face said it all. The smart and inquisitive seven-year-old came to Baycrest with his mom on August 22 to be part of filming for a CTV News story about how to prepare a child’s brain for optimal learning in the classroom.

With a fresh haircut and boundless energy, Daniel couldn’t wait to get in front of the laptop computer set up in a colorful room at Baycrest’s Centre for Brain Fitness (CBF). He leapt into the chair and reached for the keyboard, eager to start playing an interactive, music-based cognitive training program brought to life with talking cartoon characters. The brain strengthening program, developed by CBF lead scientist Dr. Sylvain Moreno, has yielded exciting results in research testing with children – showing significant improvements in memory, attention, reading skills and overall preparedness for learning. The goal is to commercialize the program and make it widely available in the next few years and eventually develop additional cognitive strengthening product lines for older children, adults and seniors.

Last year Daniel was one of 48 young children taking part in a major research study to measure the cognitive benefits of Dr. Moreno’s neuroeducation program. “I think he is more inquisitive about everything [since he took part in the study],” said his mom Carolina during an interview with CTV reporter Zuraidah Alman. “He has more of an interest now in music and wants to learn an instrument.”

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Peking Union Medical College update

Due to difficulty securing visas, Baycrest’s visitors from Peking Union Medical College (PUMC) have been delayed. The students and faculty members are now arranging to complete their observeship in October 2012 instead.

Please note that Dr. Amy L. Kang’s lecture on geriatric care in China, scheduled for August 29, has been postponed to coincide with the October observship as well. Keep an eye on Baycrest Matters for finalized dates and times of PUMC’s much anticipated visit.

CTV visits Baycrest...continued from front page

“T’llike math, reading and chapter books,” said Daniel during his interview with CTV. “I really want to learn music because music is fun to learn and play.” He’ll start violin lessons this fall, says mom.

Asked what he liked most about the cognitive training cartoons, Daniel replied with a broad smile: “The fun part is they’re on the computer!” And what does he want to be when he grows up? A construction worker, a musician or maybe a scientist like Dr. Moreno, he told CTV.

The Toronto District School Board is testing Dr. Moreno’s computer learning program in a pilot project with several schools this fall. It should be available to all kids next year.

How to prepare your child’s brain for optimal learning

With another school year quickly approaching, there are ways to help prepare young children’s minds to be ready for classroom learning. Dr. Sylvain Moreno, lead scientist at Baycrest’s Centre for Brain Fitness and a parent of a young child, offers some tips to parents:

- Put your child in a structured environment such as summer camps to reduce the shock of transitioning back to the classroom in the fall. Whether it’s sports camps, art camps or science camps, any type of structured learning will stimulate the brain.
- Read books and sing songs with your child at home.
- Reduce computer play time at night before bed. Playing the computer can stimulate the neurons too much before bed time and make it harder to settle down and go to sleep.
- Most important, spend time with your child and give them lots of hugs!
Best practice project an interprofessional team effort

Ever since Baycrest was named a Registered Nursing Association of Ontario (RNAO) Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) candidate in February, an interprofessional team has been working on a project to implement RNAO best practice guidelines.

Now, with the project working groups formed, staff from many disciplines, along with point-of-care staff, management, and the Quality, Safety and Best Practice team, are getting involved.

“This partnership with the RNAO will support staff in using these guidelines in their everyday work to provide exemplary care for our clients,” says Lilibeth Jones-Lim, advanced practice leader, nurse and BPSO project lead.

The RNAO’s best practice guidelines recommend ways to bring current evidence-based clinical knowledge into care. Baycrest is implementing six guidelines:

- Prevention of falls and fall injuries in the older adult.
- Assessment and management of stages I to IV pressure ulcers.
- Screening for delirium, dementia and depression in older adults.
- Caregiving strategies for older adults with delirium, dementia and depression.
- Promoting continence through prompted voiding.
- Assessment and management of pain.

Each guideline is being implemented by a working group with interprofessional expertise. Sylvia Davidson, professional practice chief, Occupational Therapy, is co-lead of the group implementing guidelines on falls prevention and injuries. “Varying factors contribute to falls in older adults. Bringing different perspectives together allows us to look at the issue as widely as possible,” she says.

According to Jones-Lim, this interprofessional approach is important to the success of all working groups. “By drawing on interprofessional expertise to implement the guidelines, we’ll provide the best outcomes for our clients.”

The implementation project will unfold over Baycrest’s three-year BPSO candidacy period from 2012-15. Davidson says it’s a rewarding project. “Knowing that we are all focused on a common goal of improving the quality of life of our clients and residents makes the work extremely worthwhile.”

Professional growth opportunities

In addition to supporting nursing staff in their efforts to constantly improve the quality of care we provide, the BPSO candidacy will also offer a number of opportunities for professional growth.

Working groups

It’s not too late to join a working group. If you have a special interest in one of the six guidelines, you can gain experience conducting research, translating the guidelines to the point of care, and evaluating the outcomes. Contact Lilibeth Jones-Lim at ljoneslim@baycrest.org, or ext. 2570 for more information.

Champions network workshop

Baycrest will host an RNAO Best Practice Champion Workshop in the Fall of 2012. This day-long session will introduce staff to the implementation of best practice guidelines and evidence-based practice. Details to follow.

Guidelines summer institute

As a BPSO candidate, Baycrest sent two staff members to the Best Practice Guideline Summer Institute. “The summer institute offered practical information about implementing best practice guidelines within an organization,” says Deborah Sewell, advanced practice leader. “We’re already applying the concepts we learned in our working group.” This is an annual event for nurses to keep in mind for next year.
Sam Ruth Legacy Society members honoured

On August 14, the Baycrest Foundation recognized and thanked members of the Sam Ruth Legacy Society who braved the rain to gather for tea and a special presentation by Dr. Marcia Sokolowski in Loftus Hall. The society was created in 2002 to acknowledge donors who have made a meaningful commitment to Baycrest with a future legacy gift.

“Every day is an opportunity to learn at Baycrest”, said a beaming society member Brondell Shapiro, a retired teacher, Shapiro was introduced to Baycrest when her late mother spent her last three years as a patient in the hospital. Impressed with the quality of care, Shapiro began volunteering in the Creative Arts Studio store and resolved to include Baycrest in her will. “Each time I am involved in activities at Baycrest I am further impressed with the quality of this institution,” she said.

Throughout Baycrest’s history, legacy giving has brought about enormous change – helping the organization grow from the small “Jewish Old Folks Home” on Cecil Street to becoming a world leader in brain science. Legacy gifts enable Baycrest to plan on future revenue with confidence, and allow us to develop innovative and meaningful programs now and in the future.

To find out more about the Sam Ruth Legacy Society call Florence Weinberger at 416-785-2500 ext. 2055 or at fweinberger@baycrest.org.

3B Conversations take the stage

Come this fall, a new kind of town hall will be held in the impending Jacob Family Theatre in the Posluns’ Auditorium. Baycrest Business and Buzz, or 3B Conversations for short, will be hosted by chief executive officer and president Bill Reichman as one of the first events to be held in the new space.

Fast and fresh in format, 3B Conversations will devote half an hour to celebrating our successes throughout 2011/12 and looking forward to our plans and goals for the upcoming year, including the new strategic plan, the upcoming Foundation campaign and branding. The following half an hour will be just for staff – your time for asking your top-of-mind questions.

Dates and times for 3B Conversations are to be determined but you can start sending in your questions now at 3B@baycrest.org. Hard copy ballots for question submissions will also be available at a later time.
Baycrest’s $1 million investment brings new opportunities to hospital

Every day, Baycrest staff make it possible for us to remain a world leader in developing and implementing innovative solutions to the challenges of aging and brain health. Providing an excellent work environment for all staff, combined with high-quality care and positive patient experiences is a priority for Baycrest.

With this in mind we’re increasing the number of critical positions in the highest-priority areas of the hospital facility. The goal of increasing critical positions is to ensure the highest possible level of quality care and safety through optimum staff/patient ratios, reduced workloads and a better balance of our clinical staff mix based on innovation and best practice for meeting patient care needs.

The staffing recalibration project reflects needs across Baycrest’s clinical continuum and will be completed in phases. Phase 1 is now underway, and will be completed during the 2012/13 fiscal year.

This initial phase focuses on increasing the number of registered nursing staff where they are most critically needed in the hospital. Within our existing resources, Baycrest has dedicated $1 million to enhancing our nursing staff levels in the hospital during the coming year.

Over the past few months, hospital leadership, clinical managers, front-line staff and union representatives who represent nurses at Baycrest have come together to determine the most effective way to increase nursing resources. Based on the feedback collected and ideas presented, we devised, and revised, a variety of ideal scenarios and possible paths. Details of these staffing changes will be made public in the coming weeks.

If you have any questions about the staffing recalibration project, please contact Karima Velji, chief operating officer and chief nursing executive at ext. 2111 or at kvelji@baycrest.org.

Screening in the elderly: an ounce of prevention or a pound of trouble?

You’re invited to the next visiting professor lecture on Thursday, August 30, 1 to 2:15 p.m. in Classrooms ABC, second floor of the hospital. Dr. A. Mark Clarfield, Director, Medical School for International Health in Negev, Israel and professor (adjunct) at McGill University of Montreal, Canada will be presenting.

For more information, contact Rhona Porter, Academic Education, Centre for Education and Knowledge Exchange in Aging, at ext. 2892.
Baycrest experts write the book on Mild Cognitive Impairment

Three Baycrest experts in cognitive science have written the first comprehensive guide to Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) for a general audience.

People with MCI experience cognitive changes more substantial than those associated with normal aging but less severe than the cognitive problems associated with dementias like Alzheimer’s disease. MCI involving memory decline represents a significant risk of future dementia, with 80 per cent of people developing dementia within six years of their MCI diagnosis.

The book, entitled Living with Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Guide to Maximizing Brain Health and Reducing Risk of Dementia, sheds light on the condition, its diagnosis and treatment, and offers research-backed advice on lifestyle changes that can help people with MCI maintain cognitive health.

Living with Mild Cognitive Impairment is available for borrowing at the staff library and the Anne and Louis Pritzker Wellness Library, and for purchase at Oxford University Press (www.oup.com) and Amazon (www.amazon.ca).

Become a volunteer interpreter

Baycrest cares for clients who speak many different languages. As part of our commitment to providing quality care, Volunteer Services recruits and trains volunteers to interpret for clients who are unable to adequately communicate their care or treatment needs or wishes in English.

If you’re a volunteer or staff member who is bilingual or multilingual and you’re interested in helping our clients, become a volunteer interpreter.

Our training sessions help ensure we are providing the highest standards of interpretation for our clients.

For more information or to register for a session, contact Raquel Heayn at 416-785-2500 ext. 2572.

Volunteer interpreter training session

Wednesday, September 12
1:30 – 3:00 pm
Exton board room – Brain Health Complex, 2nd floor
This fall, in collaboration with clinicians at Baycrest, the Anne and Louis Pritzker Wellness Library will launch a Consumer Health Information Prescription service (CHIP). The goal of the CHIP service is to partner with health-care teams to deliver targeted, individualized information to our clients, residents, families and the public from trusted resources such as books, journals, pamphlets and selected high quality Internet sites.

Patients take the information prescription given to them by a clinician to the wellness library where they get started on their knowledge and information journey.

For more information on CHIP and other library initiatives, please contact the Wellness Library at 416-785-2500 ext. 3374 or at wellnesslibrary@baycrest.org. The library is open to Baycrest staff and volunteers as well as residents, clients and the general public.

The Anne and Louis Pritzker Wellness Library is now using a new email address: wellnesslibrary@baycrest.org. Our telephone number 416-785-2500 ext. 3374 and location on the main floor of the Apotex Centre building remain unchanged. We look forward to hearing from you at our new email address.
Baycrest Matters is an effective and far-reaching forum for announcing warm welcomes to new staff and bittersweet farewells to colleagues in the Baycrest community.

Don’t forget to let us know when a change occurs in your department. Keep Baycrest in the know at baycrestmatters@baycrest.org.

What you told us: communication survey results and prize draw winners announced

The results of the communication survey are in with more than 140 responses from members of the Baycrest community. We’ve received great feedback that will help Public Affairs improve the way we communicate with you about important events and information at Baycrest.

Some highlights from the data:

The top three communications vehicles you use to find out what’s happening at Baycrest are:

- Baycrest Matters
- All-staff emails
- The intranet

Fifty-five per cent of you report using the intranet every day; 16 per cent say you use the intranet every-other-day; and 19 per cent check it once a week.

When we asked you about LCD screens, posters, door signs at main entrances, and tent cards placed on tables, you reported consulting posters the most, with 93 per cent of you saying you read posters at least sometimes. But the door signs and LCD screens weren’t far behind, catching the attention of 90 per cent and 85 per cent, respectively.

Overall, 77 per cent of respondents say they’re either satisfied or very satisfied with our communications vehicles at Baycrest. Seven per cent are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and 16 per cent are undecided.

With your feedback in mind, Public Affairs will be installing 10 additional LCD screens throughout the campus and making changes to the information and messages we communicate on the screens. This is just one of the things we’re working on thanks to the results of our survey.

Prize draw winners

Three winners were drawn at random from all respondents. Each of the following lucky staff members will receive a gift card from Yorkdale, Chapters Indigo, or Starbucks.

- Sabina Ntim of the Apotex Centre
- Syrelle Bernstein of Volunteer Services
- Cassandra Arellano of Human Resources

Thanks to everyone who participated!