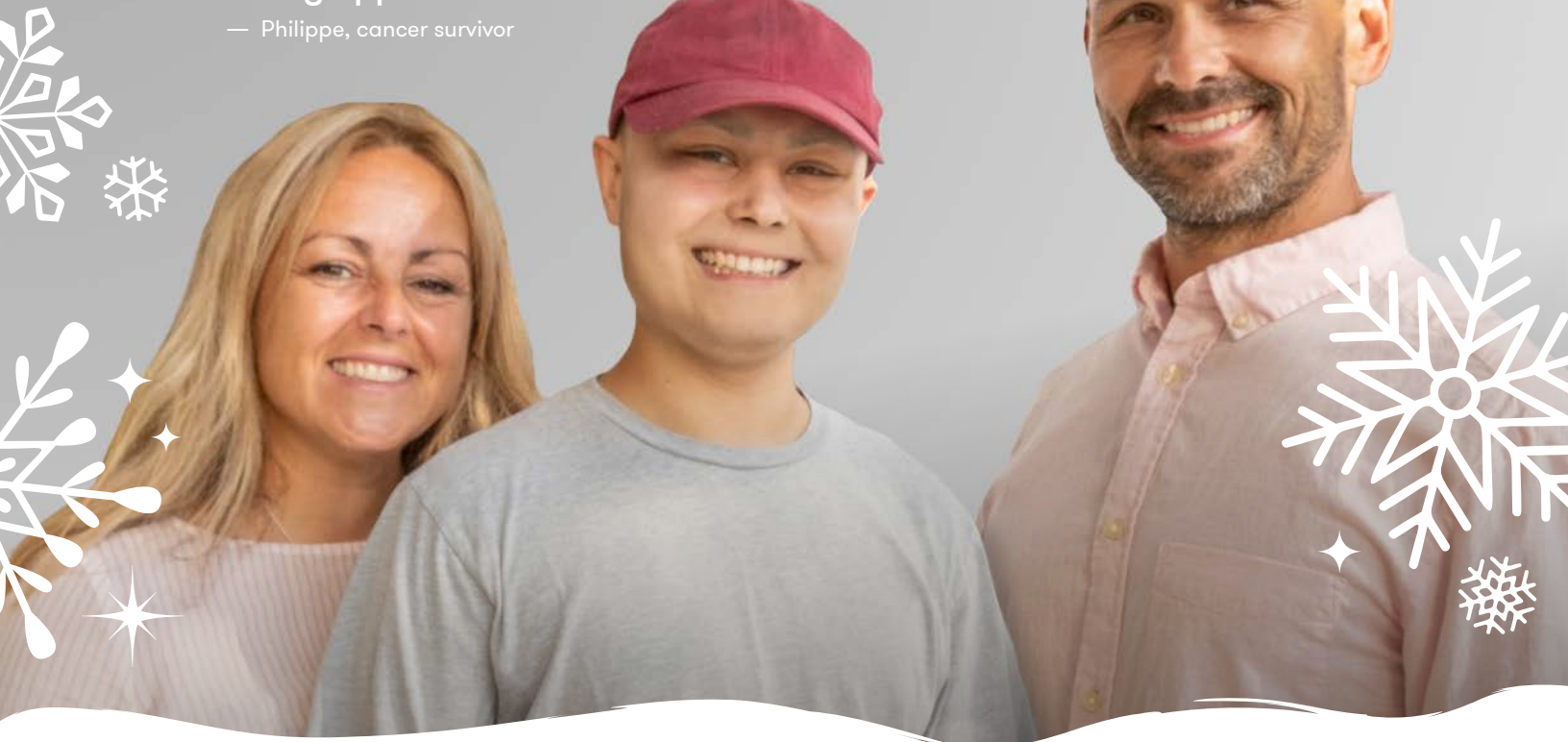




“Cancer picked the  
wrong opponent.”

— Philippe, cancer survivor



## When cancer comes for your child, it's hard not to feel that it's profoundly unfair. Wouldn't you agree?

In our case, it was difficult to accept because we thought Philippe had simply sprained his knee. But even though he was taking medication, the pain only grew, as did the swelling in his thigh. That's when we got the diagnosis. Philippe had osteosarcoma, a cancer of the long bones that is quite rare in children.

How can I explain my reaction? I was numb. Until my teen got his first chemotherapy treatment. Then my fear mixed with sadness: was my child going to die?

The prognosis for survival was between 70% and 80%. Meanwhile, Philippe was obsessed with one thing: keeping his leg.

We relied on the expertise of Dr. Robert Turcotte, a pioneer of many innovative procedures. Philippe, a passionate hockey and baseball player, would not be able to do competitive sports again. He would also have to abandon his dream of becoming a firefighter, learn how to walk again. These were huge losses, but my son made the choice to save his leg.

An X-ray then showed spots on his lungs. That evening, my husband and I took a walk. We sobbed and raged to release the pent up emotions.

After getting his prosthesis, Philippe underwent two more surgeries to remove tumours from his lungs. After a year-long battle, Philippe is finally cancer free and focused on regaining strength in his leg.

*I honestly don't know what we would have done without the incredible team at The Children's and the generosity of people like you! Your donations allow experts to offer exceptional care and help maintain programs like Child Life and the Tiny Tim Fund, which give support to families dealing with illness.*

During this medical odyssey, my son always said, “Cancer picked the wrong opponent.” This illness also had an upside; it brought out the best in my son and proved that with teamwork, anything is possible.

I hope that families like mine will be able to benefit from the support that helped us get through this ordeal.

Thank you for your generosity!

— Sonia, Philippe's mom

# What you've helped accomplish

Every single day, the impact of your gift is felt throughout The Children's.

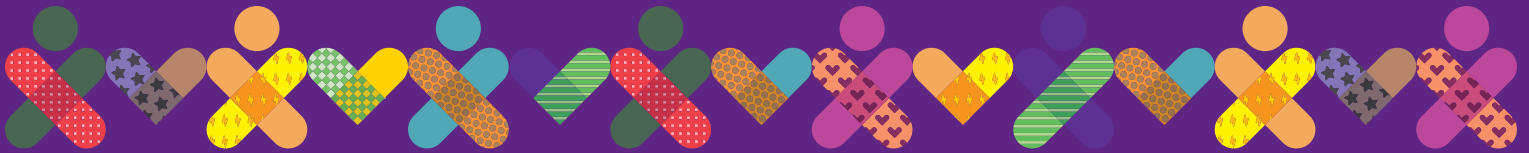
Whether they are coming in for an appointment to see a specialist, seeking urgent care in the Emergency Department or admitted to one of our care units, our patients and their families benefit from your generosity.

## Transforming lives

The Children's craniofacial and cleft palate team performs miracles, replacing tears and worry with smiles and hope. Last year 81 young lives were transformed through complex surgery and hundreds of patients received follow-up care and therapy, all thanks to you. More and more, the expertise of the craniofacial team is being sought out by families across the country, and beyond. Your steadfast support helps these families get the care they need.

## Child Life goes virtual

Covid-19 changed everything overnight for the Hospital's Child Life specialists. Strict health measures, kids and families in isolation and physical distancing meant that their traditional way of working had to be rethought. Thanks to your generosity, the necessary devices were obtained, making the shift to virtual quick and seamless. Regular online group activities were organized for in-patients, patients in day treatment centers and patients with chronic illness wanting to participate from home. Even the Habs' annual visit was virtual, much to the delight of The Children's young hockey fans.



## Easing grief one heartbeat at a time



**The death of a child is the ultimate tragedy. The Children's music therapists offer grieving parents a precious gift: a song set to the rhythm of their child's heartbeat.**

*"A heartbeat is a gentle, comforting sound that immediately puts parents in touch with a lost child in an intimate way," says Christelle Jacquet, a Children's music therapist.*

Thanks to donors like you who fund the Heartbeat Program, The Children's music therapists can now record an ailing child's heartbeat with an electronic stethoscope. Then, they play a song chosen by the family and superimpose the heartbeat. The range of pieces produced is broad - from lullabies to hard rock - making each recording a unique tribute. "In music therapy, rhythm is the basis of life. Sharing your heartbeat is powerful," adds Pascal Comeau, another Children's music therapist.

"I recorded the heartbeat of a woman in oncology, who was going to pass away after giving birth," Christelle recalls. "Mom found solace knowing part of her would continue to exist for her child and dad confided the recording helped him grieve and was a precious memory he shared with his daughter."

On another occasion, when a child's death was imminent, Christelle was called to record his heartbeat. She stayed with the family and played music until the end. The family said this helped them to let go of their child.

## Soothing broken hearts

"The ability to listen to our son James' heartbeat soothed our broken hearts and helped us heal," affirms Kristen, a mum who has benefited from the service. Your generous donations make this program possible. We are grateful for your support.



## The Children's COVID-19 media authority: Dr. Jesse Papenburg

His great skill as a communicator makes Dr. Jesse Papenburg the media's 'go-to guy' for accurate information about COVID-19, vaccines, and the virus' impact on children and teens. The Children's infectious diseases and medical microbiology specialist has done over 132 media interviews since March 2020.

"When the media asks me to explain or contextualize the pandemic, which is within my realm of expertise, I feel obligated," Dr. Papenburg explains. "If scientists and doctors don't comment, non-experts can take up the space with conspiracy theories, personal agendas or misinformation. During the pandemic, there have been a lot of loud voices, but I try to keep mine clear, calm and considered."

The clinician-researcher says the most challenging aspect of media interviews is conveying a clear message in 20 seconds, the length of the sound bite TV and radio reporters prefer to include in their reports.

### Microphone to microscope

Dr. Papenburg says the pandemic has underscored what clinician-scientists have known for a long time: infectious and immune diseases (like COVID-19) are among the greatest threats to human health in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. When not in front of a microphone, Dr. Papenburg is behind a microscope determining which children with pneumonia or bronchiolitis (both caused by viruses or bacteria) will benefit from antibiotics (antibiotics don't work on viruses). He notes that sometimes doctors prescribe antibiotics to up to 80% of children hospitalized with these ailments 'just in case', contributing to antibiotic resistance, which leads to longer hospital stays, higher medical costs and increased mortality. Your generosity supports Dr. Papenburg's research.

*"Researchers need donors who believe in novel and exploratory science. Gratefully, I received seed funding from The Children's Foundation, which, crucially, helped me launch my research and collect preliminary data necessary to secure larger grants to continue the work."*

He proudly points out that The Children's in collaboration with other McGill-affiliated hospitals and research institutes is a world leader in the study of major infectious and immune threats to human health thanks primarily to philanthropy—positive proof that donations save lives.



## Leroy: saved four times before his third birthday

**Leroy celebrated his third birthday: quite a feat considering The Children's saved his life four times!**

Before he was born - two months ahead of schedule - Leroy was diagnosed with a tumour on his spine. He underwent his first surgery at just 3 days old. Because the tumour was difficult to remove, the procedure lasted an excruciating 10 hours. The surgery was successful, but because the baby's intestine was about to rupture, the medical team had to create a stoma.

Just as Leroy was about to be discharged, he was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis (CF). His family was floored. Fortunately, CF specialist Dr. Larry Lands was there to answer all their questions.

*"You can't imagine how reassuring it is to have knowledgeable people by your side when you receive such devastating news," says Rachel, Leroy's mom.*

There was yet another hurdle when an MRI showed that the bones of Leroy's skull were fused together. And another surgery. But neurosurgeon Dr. Jean-Pierre Farmer helped them through this challenge. This delicate procedure was the easiest: the family was sent home four days later. Gradually, Leroy was growing stronger, but difficult times lay ahead. After experiencing bouts of vomiting, he found himself at The Children's once more, and the staff immediately knew it was serious. Diagnosis: septic shock. Leroy received an emergency intubation, and the family waited to learn the impact on his brain. An MRI showed a brain injury that would affect his motor skills. Leroy could no longer move or vocalize.

*How did his family keep it together? "Truth is, I cried for weeks on end, but because the team at The Children's is so dedicated, there was always someone to keep me going," says an emotional Rachel.*

Today, against all odds, Leroy can crawl and sit. He's babbling and has the cutest laugh. That's The Children's: excellence in care at every level. That's what your donations support. Thank you for saving lives like Leroy's.

# There's no place like home

After many long months away, I was thrilled to return to my second home to visit my friends at The Children's and lend a helping hand to the Les tannants au volant car rally, which raised \$300,000.

I also made a new friend: André-Philippe Gagnon. André-Philippe is helping to change the game as the Hospital's francophone ambassador. Welcome aboard!

My time in Montreal reminded me of everything that we've accomplished together – and how much there is left to do. If we've learned anything this past year and a half, it's how much we depend on the dedicated hospital professionals who take care of us when we need it most. Anything we can do to make their jobs easier comes back to us and our loved ones tenfold. I am more committed than ever to The Children's young patients and their families and hope that you will join me in making their lives better.

This December we are also appealing to your generosity through the P.K. Match, which gives you the chance to double the impact of your gift – but only if you give by December 31<sup>st</sup>\*. Together, we can brighten the holidays for countless sick children and their families.



*Wishing you a happy holiday season!*

*M.B.*

\* MAKE A DONATION TODAY AND BENEFIT FROM A 2021 TAX CREDIT. SEE DETAILS ON REPLY COUPON.



## The Little Brats Constellations

Put a twinkle back in the eyes of sick children.

Visit [childrenfoundation.com](http://childrenfoundation.com) by December 31<sup>st</sup> to learn how you can brighten the holidays of hospitalized young patients and their families with The Little Brats Constellations.

*Make The Children's shine with a thousand lights and give a glimmer of hope to sick children in Quebec.*

