

What's New at NOVA?

We are very pleased to announce the launch of our newly created **Connie Moisan Bereavement Program** for the families of our palliative care patients. The program is made possible thanks to a donation from the Queen Elizabeth Community Cancer Fund.



The program will initially offer support group sessions at regular intervals in the NOVA Montréal territory. These sessions will be led by a NOVA Montréal social worker.

Given the palliative and end-of-life care expertise that NOVA has acquired over our long history, this extension of our services into the arena of grief and bereavement is a natural fit and will allow us to meet this important but often unmet need of our clients in the difficult period following the death of a loved one.

The program is being named after Ms. Constance-Marie Moisan. Connie dedicated herself to parapublic and community causes in Montreal. At the height of her career she assumed a variety of leadership roles within the community including: President of the Women's Canadian Club of Montreal, Director of L'Abri en Ville, Governor of Les Amis de la Montagne and Chairperson of the Canadian Directors of Volunteers in Healthcare. Many of these offices were held while she was employed as Director of Volunteer Services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Connie is fondly remembered for her dedication, optimism, generous spirit and for touching the lives of the many people she helped over the years.

Connie Moisan 
Bereavement Program

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MISSION

To provide compassionate, high-quality, personalized in-home care to people who are ill or nearing the end of life, as well as to the families who support them.

CORE VALUES

- Compassion
 - Quality
 - Respect
- Collaboration

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Marie-Claude Mainville

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



After 23 years of devoted service, it is with much emotion that I announce my retirement.

Since 1994 I have had the honour to work for both the Victoria Order of Nurses and NOVA Montréal. This experience has enriched my life. I am extremely proud of the all the work that has been accomplished and feel honoured by the trust that everyone has shown me.

Over the course of my 35-year nursing career, I have spent almost 30 years in palliative care. It has been a great privilege for me to cross paths with thousands of people, both clients and caregivers, during some of their most difficult moments.

These encounters have taught me to live my dreams before my life gives way, to appreciate each sunrise, to live in the moment (even though I still

sometimes find this difficult) and most of all, to love life and live it fully, so that I too can leave this world with peace in my heart.

I fondly remember the many names and faces, including a charming gentleman for whom I provided home support several years ago. His daughter calls me every year on my birthday to thank me again. Receiving this call is like a ray of sunshine that brightens my day. When I think back, I am still just as moved and humbled to have played even a small role in the last moments of life for so many people, for they too have given me so much.

Throughout the years, while tirelessly pursuing NOVA Montréal's mission, I continuously shared my passion for its noble cause. I put my heart into my work, and am now ready to pass the torch. I leave with sadness but the time has come to put into practice what I have learned over the years - live life to its fullest!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I would like to start by acknowledging the hard work and dedication of our Executive Director,

Marie-Claude Mainville who will be leaving us this fall. Her determination, contagious laugh and her capacity to listen and guide people all contributed to her success at NOVA Montréal. From all of us - Happy Retirement Marie-Claude!



NOVA Montréal is excited to welcome Ms. Rosemary O'Grady as our incoming Executive

Director. She joins us from the MUHC where she has worked as Nurse

Manager in Palliative & Supportive Care. She is highly motivated to work in community health care and is excited to join our team.

NOVA Montréal had a busy 2016-17! The board of directors approved a new strategic plan including the revision of NOVA Montréal's mission, vision and core values. The process helped us solidify our focus and reinforced the enormous need for our services. Last October, after much hard work, we received a 5-year re-accreditation from the Québec Accreditation Council for health services. Looking ahead, we are excited that 2018 will mark NOVA's 120th year of serving the Montréal community.

I want to sincerely thank you for your past support and encourage you to continue to give generously to help us prepare for the next 120 years of dedicated, compassionate service to the ill and aging in our community.

FUNDRAISING

As a non-profit, NOVA Montréal does not receive any direct government funding. Funds to operate NOVA Montréal come directly from foundations, corporations, community organizations and from you, our loyal donors. Without fundraising NOVA Montréal would not exist. We ask that you give generously so that NOVA Montréal can continue to provide our important services and meet the increase in demand for palliative care services as the population continues to age and wants to stay in the comfort of their home for as long as possible.

HOW YOUR DONATION SUPPORTS NOVA'S MISSION AND SERVICES

\$240

Provides the caregiver of a palliative care patient a much-needed **full night's sleep** thanks to a professional home health aide.

\$150

Enables us to offer a free **6-hour respite care** service to a family with a chronically ill child.

\$500

Provides **3 hours of respite care per day for 1 week** to the caregiver of a patient with Alzheimer's.

\$1000

Enables us to cover the costs of an on-call **palliative care nurse (24/7) for an entire week.**

Please donate today at WWW.NOVAMONTREAL.COM

EVENTS

I Medici di McGill Benefit Concert - November 2016

NOVA Montréal collaborated with the I Medici di McGill orchestra to organize a spectacular performance in support of NOVA Montréal's free healthcare services. The event was attended by 300 guests and raised over \$20,000.

The concert was uplifting and the audience - from youngsters to seniors and families - was both moved by the music and humbled by the reminder of the amazing impact that the NOVA Montréal workers have on members of our community going through difficult times.

A dedicated team of 21 volunteers offered 66 hours of service to help the event run smoothly. The performance was followed by a social gathering with light refreshments. A big thank you to all our sponsors, donors and guests!

Volunteer testimonial:

“ It was incredible to see months of hard work come together, and especially heartwarming to see the support NOVA received. ”



Children's Respite Program Family Day - April 2017

NOVA held its Family Day Event for the families and children from the Children's Respite Program. This program benefits children aged 0-6 with chronic illnesses and disabilities. Nine volunteers offered 45 hours of service, including engaging kids in a variety of recreational activities. The event also provided parents and caretakers with the opportunity to exchange resources, information and advice. Participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves and appreciated the opportunity to spend some quality time together with the NOVA family. Thank you to Restaurant SUBWAY for sponsoring the lunch, and to Westmount Recreational Centre for providing the space.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Allowing more people to live as **well** as possible, for as **long** as possible

This year, a **RECORD-BREAKING 47%** of our palliative care clients were able to pass away in the comfort of their home.

At some point in life, we all will face end of life issues. Most of us share a common wish - that when death comes it will be peaceful and free of pain. We want to be surrounded by our loved ones, comfortable, safe and well cared for.

The desire to die at home is so significant as one faces all the challenges related to their illness as well as end-of-life decisions. Unfortunately, there is still a large gap between the people who want to die at home and how many have this option. This is where NOVA's Free Palliative Care Program,

funded by our donors, plays a pivotal role in meeting the needs of our community.

Our in-home service consists of regular visits by a registered nurse case manager and a 24-hour, 7-days-a-week on-call nursing service.

Additionally, caregivers of clients who are 65 and over can also receive free respite care (day, evening and night) provided by our competent home health aides who are trained in palliative care.

Over the past year we provided **4090 hours** of in-home palliative care service and **378 hours of 24-hour emergency service** on evenings, nights, and weekends.



Patient Story

Respecting Dignity, Providing Companionship: NOVA Makes a Difference at the End of Life of an Extraordinary Montrealer

An excerpt from his obituary reads:

“His family adored him for his unique sense of humour, his honesty, and his incredible generosity. He brought high standards, strong opinions, a love of public speaking, and an iconic laugh to the communities he served.”

Mr. Garner died peacefully at home after a long battle with debilitating lung disease. The first individuals that had the honour of staying with him in the hours immediately following his passing were NOVA staff members. They lovingly changed Mr. Garner into his favourite cashmere sweater, played beautiful music, and waited for the morning when one of his sons arrived from Calgary.

Recently one of Mr. Garner's sons, Graham, shared some of his thoughts on how NOVA made such an important

difference in the last chapter of their father's life. Mr. Garner's wish was not to be hospitalized. As his condition worsened, the number of individuals coming in and out of the house increased. It takes a village to raise a child, but also a village of sorts, to support an individual at the end of life. In his last days, Mr. Garner was cared for 24/7 by a total of 10 NOVA staff.

Mr. Garner's wife passed away a few years before him and his sons and grandchildren live in Calgary and New York, so the NOVA staff provided a constant presence during his illness. Graham professed that it was the peace gained from the knowledge of NOVA staff presence that allowed him to sleep at night. NOVA staff kept the Garner family together in a figurative and literal sense, providing a continual source of reassurance and support. Compassionate in her awareness of how difficult it was for Mr. Garner's children and grandchildren to be so far from Montreal, the NOVA

nurse shared the daily news of Mr. Garner's physical and emotional state, in great detail with his sons, often phoning at the end of her shifts on her way home.

The nurse, said Graham, was like “a sister to the family”, “an amazing communicator”, someone who kept calm and collected in the face of many strained and trying situations. The respect was mutual as the staff viewed Mr. Garner as an exceptionally caring and generous individual, a true gentleman. Graham emphasized that the NOVA staff were instrumental in providing discreet and professional care in many delicate situations so that this proud man could preserve his dignity through the most difficult moments.

Aleksandra Trajkovic

A life well lived, and its closure, laced with genuine caring, not just professional excellence, is a true testament to NOVA's mission.

CHILDREN'S RESPITE

Giving parents a much needed break from their daily duties

This program provides free in-home respite care to families of chronically ill (physically or intellectually) preschool-aged children. The care may include reading to the children, playing games, feeding them or simply being with them in order to give the family members a much needed rest or personal time. NOVA Montréal is the only organization in Quebec to offer free respite care on a regular basis.

Over the past year, we provided **3,557 hours** of health aide service and an additional **288 hours** of volunteer support.

The hardest part of being a parent is having a sick child and not being able to make them better.



Patient Story

Unconditional Trust at the Heart of Care For A Sick Toddler
(Fictional names are used to protect the family's privacy)

Meet Jonathan: a 19-month old toddler with pulmonary hypertension, hearing and vision loss, nonresponsive to the environment, and fed through a tube. It is difficult to imagine, let alone live, the heartbreaking challenge of being this child's mother. As a parent, you may be lost or completely disheartened, or, like Mrs. Simpson, you could develop a faith and hope so strong that they make her son Jonathan smile.

Mrs. Simpson states that over a short period of time, she developed unconditional trust in NOVA staff. They

are the only other ones allowed to assist with 13 daily tube changes involved in Jonathan's feeding. She uses these precious moments to nap, catch up on chores, and give herself a little attention that caregivers usually neglect.

Mrs. Simpson describes the significance of sensory stimulation for Jonathan, noting that lack of response from him may be very disheartening for the person trying to interact. However, the NOVA personnel shine in their steady efforts to stimulate Jonathan through reading, music, and talking to him.

There is nothing under the sun as rewarding as a child's smile. After months of persistent loving effort, Jonathan is now smiling when happy and even giving kisses. Mrs. Simpson sends a message to any and all parents who may feel isolated by the illness of their child: HOPE, as well as the skillful, courageous, gentle companionship of the NOVA personnel, makes an incredible difference.

Aleksandra Trajkovic

IN-HOME SUPPORT

Helping patients and their care-givers

This program provides **comprehensive in-home services** such as basic care (bathing, exercises, etc.), cognitive stimulation activities, and custom respite to caregivers. NOVA Montréal is able to offer this service at a low rate compared to other private services.

Thanks to funding from **L'Appui Montréal**, we are currently able to offer our services to low-income families, as well as their caregivers, at even lower rates. In special cases, we also provide these services free of charge.

A total of **20,675 hours** of direct service was offered this past year and an additional **275 hours of support** were provided by our trained volunteers.

L'APPU POUR LES PROCHES AIDANTS D'AINÉS

One person caring about another represents life's GREATEST value.
Jim Rohn

LESSONS FOR THE LIVING

I think everyone would agree that it takes a very special person to be a palliative care nurse. People who feel called to do this work must have a great deal of compassion, patience and emotional stability. They give a lot to patients and their families everyday but they also get back by way of friendships, gratitude and sometimes surprising and profound life insights and wisdom.

Facing death can bring great clarity in terms of what is truly important. Bronnie Ware, an Australian woman who spent many years working in palliative care was so touched by what people shared with her in their final days that she wrote a book entitled: *The Top 5 Regrets of the Dying** (Hay House Inc. 2012). Bronnie shares that many of their dying wishes echoed this request 'Please share my message so others learn by my mistakes.' I thought these reflections might be of interest to NOVA Montréal supporters.

We also asked NOVA palliative care

workers what wishes or regrets their patients expressed to them in their last days? In the box to the right are the answers they heard time and time again.

Before she died, one elderly woman made Bronnie promise that she would live a life true to herself. Bronnie says 'I didn't take that promise lightly. I knew that no matter how hard it would be to stay true to my own path-and it does take courage to do that-nothing could be as painful as lying on your deathbed with that regret. I was seeing it first hand.'

On behalf of all our clients we wish to express gratitude to all of NOVA Montréal's palliative care workers for being there and listening and holding a place in your heart for all our clients. And thank you to all those who shared their wisdom and who continue to inspire us all to live courageous lives in alignment with what is most meaningful and true for us.

Jackie Roberge

Top 5 Regrets of the Dying*

1

I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me

I wish I hadn't worked so hard

2

3

I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings

I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends

4

5

I wish I had let myself be happier

NOVA's Top Regrets of the Dying

I wish I had spent more time with my family

6

7

I wish I had taken more time to pursue my dreams

VOLUNTEERING

A BIG THANKS TO OUR 60 VOLUNTEERS

At NOVA Montréal our volunteers are an integral part of our team representing over **700 client-support hours** and over 900 administrative support hours in 2016-17. This is **an increase of 87%** versus last year. A recent survey showed that **95% of volunteers felt very recognized** and valued by their volunteer supervisor and 86% felt they were given opportunities to grow in their volunteer role.



Thanks to the following educators for their project partnerships: Matea Dixon of Yaldei Development Centre, as well as Mike D'Abate, Melissa Gentleman and Julia Waks from Philip Layton and the MacKay Centre School (EMSB).

Want to get involved?

We have a wide array of opportunities for you to get involved depending on your interests, expertise, the time you have available and our evolving needs.

Here are some options to consider:

- Children's Respite care
- In-home/palliative care support
- Fundraising or event management
- Administrative support
- Board or committee member
- Technical support