

# WHAT'S UP?

at The Royal

a newsletter for staff and volunteers



The best of people, page 4



Cultivating growth, page 7



Shoppers Drug Mart Run for Women, page 9



Emily Deacon, director of professional practice and Tracey Welsh, director of community building, Foundation, deliver these personal care items which were graciously donated by Shoppers Drug Mart.

## Morale Boosters: spreading joy and bringing people closer together

It's probably safe to say that everyone remembers how they felt in March 2020. On March 9, Canada recorded its first COVID-19 death. On March 11, Ottawa reported its first COVID-19 patient. On March 15, Ottawa's

chief medical officer asked residents to stay home and to strictly limit social gatherings. Hospitals across the region – including The Royal – mobilized as they anticipated a surge in patients and potential shortages of PPE.

“It was just such an anxiety-provoking time for everybody,” recalls Emily Deacon, director of professional practice. Senior management recognized there was a gap

that needed to be filled. Deacon was named Morale Officer and together with Greg Stenman, built the Morale Boosters, a group with a simple yet important goal: to bring good cheer to

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## ICE CREAM DAY



Sarah Donovan, occupational therapy assistant and Natalie Zizzo, occupational therapist, Forensic Treatment Unit.



Carleigh Meehan, secretary, Community Mental Health Program.



Vivi Gouthro, RN and Chantal Séguin, RPN, Mood and Anxiety Outpatient clinic.

### ...Morale Boosters continued

staff and clients across all campuses of The Royal.

The committee is made of 15 individuals and comprises staff from different campuses and programs, as well as the Foundation. Volunteers, clients, and families are also represented. Members of the original Boosters and Staff4U, groups that have traditionally been focused on staff events, also play a key role.

At the outset, one of their goals was to bolster our internal community, which we were relying on more than ever, by helping staff to get to know one another better. Video interviews with staff were shared via YouTube (only accessible to those who have a direct link) and a contest showcased baby photos and fun facts about Morale Booster committee members. Biweekly, physically-distanced performances revealed some surprises in terms of talented performers among Royal staff.

Stenman, a recreation therapist in the geriatrics program at The Royal, says they're bringing colleagues closer together, which is especially important in a time of crisis.

"I feel that working at The Royal, you get ensconced in your own little group," he says. "You kind of lose sight of what's going on around you in regards to the rest of the hospital and I think initiatives like the Morale Boosters helps people recognize that we're all in this together."

Stenman wrote a song, "The Covid Country Blues," in the early days of the pandemic. It's been played for clients and staff alike. It now has over 1,000 views on YouTube. "It's a funny song with a serious message," says Deacon,

for activities, and even some sweet treats.

The Foundation co-ordinated a donation of toiletries from Shoppers Drug Mart. "These personal care items



Rosemarie Gabriel, secretary, Mood & Anxiety holding her TaylorMade golf balls from ClubLink.



Tricia Hickey, RN serving an ice cream treat to Morgan Shaillee, RN in the Secure Treatment Unit.



The PPE Band (left to right) Front row: Allison Eadie, social worker; Nick Feltz, behavioural therapist. Middle row: Robert Blasutti, Facility Services. Back row: Greg Stenman, recreation therapist and Laura Grunder, occupational therapist.

who says she can't carry a tune but is happy it makes people smile.

The Morale Boosters also extended their reach to clients who couldn't leave the premises during the height of the pandemic and bought art and craft supplies, books, puzzles, movies, adult colouring books, board games, prizes

are very much needed right now & I am sure our clients will appreciate this thoughtful donation," wrote director of volunteer services, Annmarie Nicholson, in a tweet on May 16, 2020.

New computer tablets were also given to clients in an effort to give them the

*Continued on page 3...*

...Morale Boosters continued

(virtual) social connections needed during a very challenging time.

In Brockville, Michael Whalen took on the role as official Morale Booster at the FTU, and Tricia Hickey covered the STU while on modified work hours.

“It was a huge help during the early days of COVID, with the snacks, the games I implemented at the STU and me constantly moving around the building to talk with staff... all were a HUGE HIT!!” writes Hickey in an email.

Sally Burrows, an admin assistant in professional practice, took on the challenge of creating lighthearted emails as a way to share links to videos, contests, and fun photos with Royal staff.

Deacon says she’s received glowing feedback about the Morale Boosters. It’s



Inpatient staff have worked hard to support our clients through a very isolating time. Here is the Community Mental Health staff delivering phones donated by TELUS for client use.

also given her a boost, too. “I love how willing people were to be in our silly videos and to be interviewed, or sharing fun facts about themselves,” she says.

The Morale Boosters are open to ideas and feedback. Send an email to [moraleboosters@theroyal.ca](mailto:moraleboosters@theroyal.ca).

## Reflecting and Learning: A message from Joanne Bezzubetz

It has been more than six months since COVID-19 changed our world. I am so proud of the way Team Royal has stepped up throughout this time. You have pulled together and adapted to an unprecedented situation while never wavering in your commitment to our clients, families and community.

Recently we asked some members of our executive team to share one word to describe the past year and another word to summarize their feelings for the year ahead. I thought I would do the same to reflect on this time.

One word to describe the past six months: **Revealing**

We have always said that The Royal is committed to excellence but your level of excellence has truly been revealed. I saw so many of you step into new roles like leading our emergency response, working in our surge unit, and deploying to Long Term Care during

the outbreaks. And in your current roles you found ways to continue engaging and supporting clients, families and colleagues while meeting the challenge keeping everyone safe. You have all come together to maintain the highest quality care despite the unfamiliar circumstances.

Our capacity for speed and agility was also revealed throughout our pandemic response. For example, our C-Prompt was created in just two weeks. We provided accessible mental health treatment to more than 540 individuals in close collaboration with primary care providers. This clinic exemplified the type of responsiveness and collaboration that we aspire to – and revealed that we can achieve it.

The pandemic has also revealed and intensified the need for better access to mental health and addictions care - we have seen this in our clinical work and

through our research. We must work to deliver on that need now and into the future. That brings me to my word for the year ahead.

One word as we look ahead at the coming year: **Evolving**

The pandemic is by no means over so we must keep up our commitment to safety – but that doesn’t mean we will do everything the same. We will adapt based on what we have learned, taking the opportunity to reimagine our services.

We are building our future based on what we have learned and guided by insight providing by clients, families, and partner organizations through our strategic planning process. Through collaboration and innovation we will be the best we can be.

Stay tuned over the coming weeks to learn more – about our strategy and how you can help bring it to life.

# THE BEST OF PEOPLE at the HARDEST OF TIMES

When some of Ottawa's most vulnerable residents needed help during the pandemic, The Royal joined hospitals from throughout the region to answer the call.

"When the seven homes in the Champlain region (experienced outbreaks), the Champlain Covid-19 Response Committee asked for acute care, or hospitals, to support those homes," explains Nancy Lesiuk, manager of patient care services of The Royal's geriatric program.

The Royal partnered with CHEO to support Madonna Care Community, a long-term care home in Orleans.

Twenty staff members from The Royal volunteered to be redeployed. Nurses, managers, RPNs, and social workers filled 329 shifts at Madonna between April 30 and June 7.



Carmelina Cimaglia, Laura MacLaurin, Pam Jackson, Jackie Nairn, Josée Lavoie, Dominique Kane and Patricia Lapp.

Their focus was the residents' everyday needs: feeding, grooming, bathing, hydration.

"It was very humbling to go in and support the teams," describes Lesiuk.

"It really was an organization-wide effort," says Joanne Bezzubetz, CEO and president of The Royal, who expressed her gratitude in a virtual town hall with staff on June 24. She thanked the staff who volunteered, but also those who stayed behind to cover shifts.

Lesiuk says the remaining staff in the geriatric program "redesigned and reimagined" services in a significant way.

"From March 13 to the end of May, we did over 250 consults, virtually. We still were working, but with four staff. Those four staff worked very hard, absolutely."

Staff who went to Madonna have told Lesiuk they were grateful for the support they received from The Royal while they were there.

"Every second day we had two calls with Dr. Susan Farrell. They could call in and just have a debrief of the day of how they

were feeling," describes Lesiuk, who made herself available by phone or text. "I tried to go every weekend to the hotel, just to see them – physically distancing of course – just to make sure everyone's ok or bring them a snack."

The work was physically and emotionally draining, so it might be a surprise to hear that the staff members who went to Madonna say they would go back if needed.

"Whatever individual reason drew them to volunteer, they're really glad that they went," says Carol-Anne Cumming, director of patient care services for The Royal's Geriatric Mental Health Program and a member of the IMS Operations group that helped support the staff deployment to Madonna.

"They truly made a difference when it mattered the most... We got the best of people at the hardest of times. And they made the biggest difference."

## A HEARTFELT Thank you

These are a few of the comments Madonna staff wrote on a card they presented to The Royal:

*"So amazing to work with such professional people. Wonderful to see all sectors working together."*

*"Thank you for all the support and amazing work you have done."*

*"Thank you for all you have done for our home."*

# BRINGING SAFEWARDS BACK TO OTTAWA

Submitted by Jodi Lusk

Safewards is an internationally renowned evidence-based model of care developed in the United Kingdom by Len Bowers (King's College London) and colleagues to help decrease violence and aggression on inpatient mental health units. The model has shown to be effective in empirical studies, with decreases in occurrences of conflict and containment by 15% and 24% respectively.

Conflict refers to all behaviours that threaten patient and staff safety (e.g., violence, elopement), and containment is the term used to describe staff actions that help minimize harmful outcomes (e.g. PRN medication, therapeutic engagement, restraints). Recognizing its importance, the Integrated Forensics Program

first piloted this model in 2016. It is now being revitalized with full implementation of all ten interventions. To support this, a mass recruitment and orientation of Safewards Champions occurred. The Champions have unique roles in teaching, guiding, modeling, and sharing the philosophy of Safewards with others. They are commended for taking on extra responsibilities and orient new staff and clients to Safewards. Our physician liaison Champion is working in collaboration with the physician Champion to ensure seamless integration of the model. This knowledge translation to clinical practice greatly improves the safety and security of all patients and staff. Sanjay Sharma from the Client Advisory Council was consulted, who gave strategic guidance on the patient

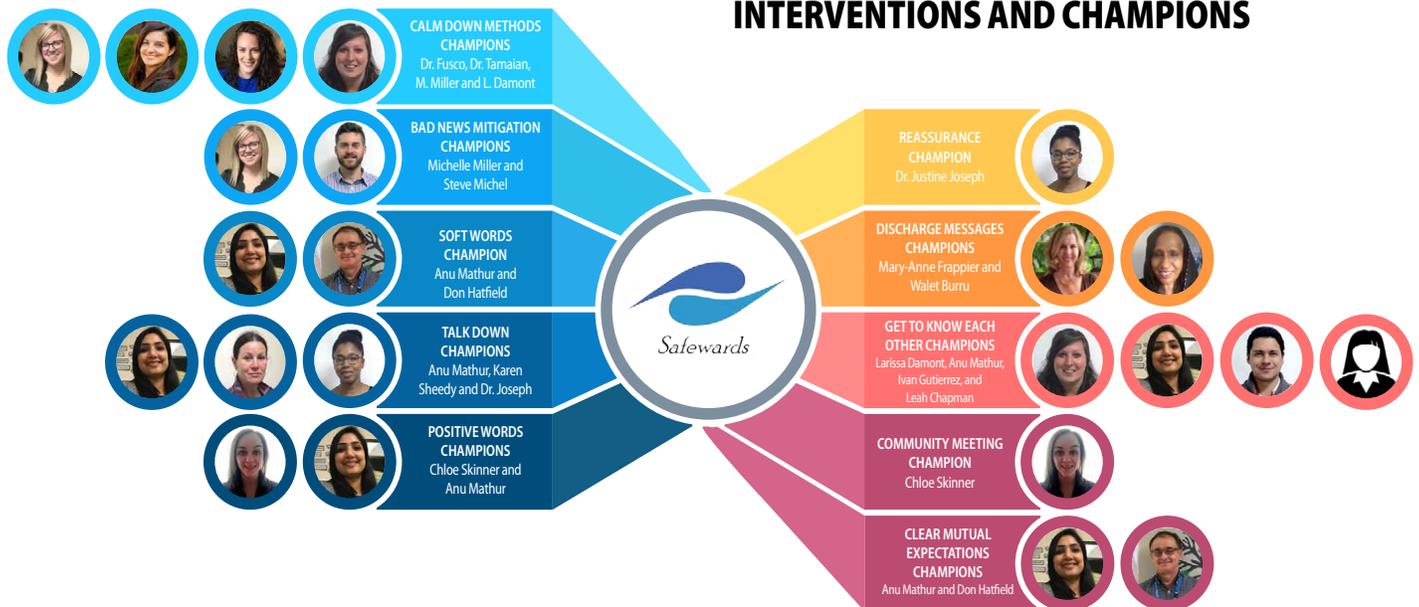
experience and client-centered care.

Thanks to a dedicated team of over 14 interdisciplinary Champions, the ten Safewards interventions have been applied over the past nine months to the Forensics Assessment and Rehabilitation Units with a goal of long-term sustainability. Each month, a working group of Safewards Champions meets to make decisions, strategize about areas of concern, create user friendly tools, and address the fidelity of the model. A Safewards binder containing descriptions, theory, plans, and tools is located on both units. In the near future, all Forensic staff will have access to this information from e-Learning modules on PALMS.

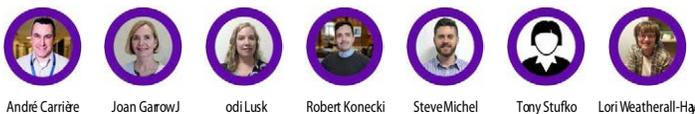
At a regional level, The Royal is present at the provincial "Safewards Community

*Continued on page 6...*

## 10 SAFEWARDS INTERVENTIONS AND CHAMPIONS



### SAFEWARDS WORKING GROUP



### PHYSICIAN CHAMPION



Dr. Strile

### PHYSICIAN LIAISON CHAMPION



Lori Weatherall-Hay

### CLIENT ADVISOR



Sanjay Sharma

# HELPING THE COMMUNITY DURING THE PANDEMIC

Whether it's redeploying staff to Madonna Care Community in Ottawa ([see story on page 4](#)), adapting our care models to support clients while minimizing the risks of COVID, or bringing good cheer to staff inboxes ([see cover story](#)), The Royal has kept an eye to the wider community in a number of different ways during the pandemic. "I'm so inspired by the efforts of our staff during these challenging times," said Joanne Bezzubetz, president and CEO of The Royal. "It gives me hope, and I am secure in the knowledge that we will continue to look out for one another long after the pandemic is over."

## C-PROMPT

On April 6, The Royal established C-PROMPT to temporarily provide support and mental health care services to individuals with urgent mental health issues during the pandemic. The clinic came together quickly and made a huge positive impact thanks to dozens of staff and physicians who contributed their time and expertise. In its 17 weeks of operations, C-PROMPT provided services to over 540 individuals;

95% of appointments were virtual. In addition to filling a gap in services related to the pandemic, C-PROMPT also demonstrated a clear need for expanded secondary level mental health services in Ottawa. The Royal is actively planning, engaging partners and fundraising to create a permanent prompt care clinic.

## Surge unit

The Royal played an important role in the regional hospital response to the pandemic. Our temporary Surge Unit provided outstanding care to almost 50 new patients in order to quickly free up needed space in acute care settings.

## Q&As

Many people had questions and concerns about their mental health, especially in the early months of the pandemic. In response, communications staff developed a submittable form and posted it online at [theroyal.ca](http://theroyal.ca) so anyone could submit their question anonymously. Experts from across The Royal helped provide the answers which were then shared on the website and social media. Check it out at [theroyal.ca](http://theroyal.ca).

## Media interviews

Mental health has been on everyone's mind since the start of the pandemic and The Royal stepped up to share expertise about a range of mental health-related topics. Whether it's advice about supporting friends and family members struggling with mental health, coping with a substance use disorder, or handling frustration and anger in times of uncertainty, Royal staff appeared online, in newspapers, and on radio and TV to explain the most pressing issues regarding our mental health during the pandemic to a broad audience in Ottawa and beyond. The full list of our experts in the media and links to their interviews can be found at [theroyal.ca](http://theroyal.ca).

## Virtual care

The number of virtual appointments via OTN and Zoom skyrocketed during the pandemic. Even family support groups moved to a virtual model. A new tip sheet for clients and families was developed in partnership with the Client Advisory Council to help individuals navigate this new technology. It's free for anyone to download at [theroyal.ca](http://theroyal.ca).

## ...Safewards continued

of Practice" alongside other forensics mental health care facilities. It is a bi-monthly forum to exchange information, share resources and ideas, identify ways to build Safewards into point-of-care work flows, and support one another.

The Integrated Forensics Program is proud to be revitalizing Safewards, and

early data analysis around aggressive incidents is promising. We hope that the Safewards model will also influence the social climate (measured using the Essen Climate Evaluation Schema) on the units in a positive way, leading to more positive perceptions of care, increased feelings of safety, and better interpersonal cohesion between

inpatients. We are excited to see the impact of Safewards on both clients and staff alike as this model moves into the future.

For more information about Safewards see Jodi Lusk, RN (Risk Coordinator of Integrated Forensics Program) or go to [safewards.net](http://safewards.net).

# Cultivating Growth

The courtyard of the Assessment and Stabilization Unit at The Royal became a little bit greener this summer.

ASU was the lucky beneficiary of a raised planter, which has grown into an aromatherapy garden for clients.

Dale Patterson, a recreation therapist with ASU, originally attempted to spruce up the underused space with indoor plants borrowed from the office areas, but there were no funds available to make other improvements.

She shared the story about the courtyard beautification project to The Royal's Tuesday knitting group, which has been meeting by Zoom during the pandemic. One member of the group – who wishes to be identified only as the Moffatt family – offered up some lumber and volunteered the services of her husband and children



Clients enjoyed getting their hands dirty planting the herbs in the raised box.

to build a raised planter. She also organized a donation of soil and herbs from Brown's Independent Grocer in Stittsville.

Within a week, the Moffatt family built and delivered a compact 2'x3' waist-high planter. Its unique design allows the top section to be lifted up and out of its base, making it easier to place it on the ground to add or remove plants or soil.



Dale Patterson (right) thanks the Moffatt Family and Brown's Your Independent Grocer in Stittsville for making the ASU raised aromatherapy box a reality.

The first herbs to make their debut in the new aromatherapy garden were chosen for their strong fragrance: lemon balm, sage, and oregano. Sage, which is used for smudging ceremonies, is of particular importance to Indigenous clients.

Clients – as well as staff – touch the plants when they visit, gently rubbing the leaves and taking in the scent.

Most gardeners will probably agree that putting your hands in the soil is good for our health, both physically and mentally.

"It's getting your hands in the soil. It's so powerful, and calming, but it's also about reconnecting. For some people it's something they did with their families, their parents. For others, gardening is a completely new experience," says Patterson.

The act of gardening itself reminds us that it's good to give, and that hard work can reap rewards.

Clients water and care for their garden multiple times a day. There's a real sense of ownership and pride. "They know when there's a new leaf!" laughs Patterson. Not only do the clients learn how to care for the plants, but they pass that knowledge on to incoming clients.

A side effect of time spent outdoors is that it can give rise to conversations that may not happen otherwise.

"There's more willingness to share," says Patterson. "It helps us get to know clients better. The aromatherapy garden has been nothing but positive. It stimulates conversation, discussion, talking about memories and remembering positive times in their life."

Patterson says it's important for clients to find healthy alternatives to substance use; activities they can spend time and energy on later on.

"That's part of being a rec therapist. It's almost like you're setting out a smorgasbord of opportunities, for the person just to find out what they like and what they don't like."

Although individuals aren't likely to leave The Royal with plans to study horticulture, Patterson says they might be inspired enough to buy a plant and put it on their windowsill at home.

"We encourage people to be open-minded and experimental within a safe environment. It's ok if gardening isn't for them. Your journey through life is to find out what it is you like and to enjoy the journey. Because that is what contributes to making you an interesting and richer person."

# MEET OUR PSYCHOLOGY RESIDENTS

Psychology residents compete annually across Canada and the U.S. for positions in The Royal's residency program in clinical psychology. Each resident typically brings 1,000 to 7,000 hours of

supervised experience in clinical care and research to The Royal's programs.

The residency program is led by Dr. Nina Fusco, director of training, and

Dr. Philip Grandia, assistant director of training, in consultation with training committee members.



## Brooke Beatie

Brooke Beatie is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at the University of

Manitoba. She is completing a primary rotation in the Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinic, and secondary rotations in the Schizophrenia Recovery Program and Youth Psychiatry Program. Brooke's primary research interest is in mental health help-seeking and improving service utilization and resource accessibility for the general public and underserved populations. Her dissertation research is focused on exploring mild cognitive impairment (MCI) caregivers' identity, mental health, and support needs.



## Lê-Anh Dinh-Williams

Lê-Anh Dinh-Williams is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at the University of

Toronto (Scarborough). She is completing a primary rotation in Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinic, and secondary rotations in the Substance Use and Concurrent Disorders Program – Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) Service and the Mood and Anxiety Disorders Program. Her program of research examines how mindfulness-based and other novel interventions impact people's ability to derive pleasure and meaning from their experiences, and how this relates to their wellbeing in the long-term.



## Victoria Stead

Victoria Stead is a doctoral candidate in the clinical psychology stream at McMaster

University. She is completing a primary rotation in the Youth Psychiatry Program, and secondary rotations in the Community Mental Health Program and the Substance Use and Concurrent Disorders Program - Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) Service. Her dissertation research examines biological and social correlates of borderline personality disorder in adolescents.



## Charlene Belu

Charlene Belu is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at the University

of New Brunswick. She is completing a primary rotation in the Substance Use and Concurrent Disorders Program and secondary rotations in the Youth Psychiatry Program and the Mood and Anxiety Disorders Program. Her primary program of research examines processes underlying the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of romantic relationships, focusing on individual and relational dynamics.



## Stephanie Korol

Stephanie Korol is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at the University

of Regina. She is completing a primary rotation in the Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinic, and secondary rotations in the Integrated Forensics Program (ROMHC) and the Schizophrenia Recovery Program. Her dissertation research explores the relationships between intolerance of uncertainty, problematic smartphone use, and mindfulness.

## Proud of what we've achieved, excited about what we'll do next.

Recently, The Royal has connected with hundreds of people across our community who shared their ideas for the future of mental health. In the coming weeks, we will embark on a new strategy shaped by these perspectives. Stay tuned to learn more!

Our future is grounded in the important work we have already done as a hospital without walls. Check out [theroyal.ca/yearinreview](https://theroyal.ca/yearinreview) for highlights from the past year.

# Ottawa remains **top Canadian city** in fundraising & participants!



Heather Brown and her team, The Royal Rumblers

Thank you to the 5,006 participants, who registered in the first-ever virtual Run for Women, brought to you by the LOVE YOU by Shoppers Drug Mart™ program. This is an incredible new record.

Over the past eight years, over 19,000 people have participated in Ottawa's Run for Women event; raising over \$1.7m to support women in our community living with mental illness.

Not only did all Captains, participants and donors contribute significantly to the event's fundraising success, but they also helped to build community and inspired people to prioritize their mental health along with their physical health.

A special shout out to the 217 Royal inspired team captains who recruited 3,009 teammates. To date, with registration proceeds, Shoppers Drug Mart in-store and community fundraising, \$546,597 has been raised for women's mental health programs at The Royal!



- Top:** Joanne Bezzubetz
- Middle:** Shana Carley and Darlene Gordon.
- Bottom:** Team Track Attackers: Melanie Taylor with her dog Holly, Dr. Vinay Lodha, Dr. Chetna Taylor, Lisa Hans, Harry in the arms of his Mom Laura Grunder, Carmelina Cimaglia, Ginette Viau, and Shelley Dibranon



Cynthia Little and her team, Who Moved The Finish Line!



Anita Manley



If you had a meeting with Dr. Michael Seto this summer you may have noticed his Zoom background. Did you know it is related to his interest in animated films by Hayao Miyazaki? Read on for five things that you may not have known about The Royal's director of the forensic research unit.

## Five things to know about Dr. Michael Seto

*Dr. Michael Seto is busy, but it's a balanced kind of busy, and rarely involves late nights at his desk.*

*Seto is now into his second term as the director of the forensic research unit. Last year he became a fellow of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). This past summer he was promoted to full professor of psychiatry at the University of Ottawa and received the Donald O. Hebb Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology as a Science.*

*Research is a passion, especially as it connects to client care. He has published extensively on pedophilia, online offending, sexual offending, and frequently presents on these topics at scientific meetings and professional workshops.*

Here are five things to know about Dr. Michael Seto:

### **1. Integrating research and care isn't just a catch-phrase.**

"One of the things I've always been happy about with the forensic research unit is that we've always had a really strong alliance with the clinical program," says Seto, who is currently doing some clinical supervision at Brockville. "We have clinicians who are involved in research. Almost all of the research going on right now is very clinical, involves patients, and is focused on clinical questions and problems. The results often feed right back into what we do."

He cites the example of Safewards ([see page 5](#)), a model designed to reduce incidents involving patients and staff. "The forensic program was asked to pilot it and so we did an evaluation to see if it had an impact in terms of aggressive incidents,"

says Seto. Early data analysis in Ottawa shows it's a promising model. (Brockville is following components of the Safewards Model, and staff participate in the Safewards Community of Practice meetings with the other forensic sites.)

### **2. There's a potential new project in the works.**

In August, Seto and a colleague at Johns Hopkins were invited to submit a proposal to a private foundation for a "really ambitious" five-year, multi-million-dollar research program geared at preventing child sexual abuse.

"There's been a lot of support from them, I think they're really keen on it, although of course it's not finalized yet," says Seto, who adds they'll know in the late fall if they've been given a green light. The proposal involves evaluating interventions that focus on people who might be at risk of

*Continued on page 11...*

...Dr. Seto continued

perpetrating abuse, and creating an online clearinghouse of the most effective supports.

### 3. He's disciplined about time management.

As a general rule, Seto tries not to let his work spill over into the evenings or weekends. His strategy is to prioritize his time and avoid overcommitting.

"I believe that you can get the stuff done in the time that you have," he says. "There's this idea that if you're really serious about an academic career that you have to be working 50, 60, 90 hours a week – I don't think that's healthy or sustainable. I think that's why people burn out. My intention is not to be unhappy, or unhealthy, or to burn out," he says.

When he's not working, he likes to spend time with his family outdoors, fishing and hiking. He also enjoys cooking and recently mastered the art of sourdough bread (#pandemicbaking).

### 4. There's a special place in his heart for the animated films of Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli.

... in fact, a still from a 2001 Studio Ghibli film called Spirited Away, was his Zoom background for part of the summer. (He says it's been seen in dozens of video calls and no one has asked about it yet.) My Neighbour Totoro and Howl's Moving Castle are among his favourite Miyazaki films. He's been to the Studio Ghibli museum in Tokyo and hopes someday to visit the Studio Ghibli theme park, which is scheduled to be completed in 2022.



Members of the Client Advisory Council at the Brockville Mental Health Centre hosted an art show to illustrate how they are coping during the pandemic. [Read the full story on theroyal.ca.](#)

### 5. He is a fan of social media, especially Twitter.

Seto believes that for researchers, "Twitter is an expectation, and even an obligation." It's a way to promote one's work and connect with like minded colleagues, but he also sees it as an opportunity to build a bridge between the academic and research world, and the general public.

Between links to journal articles and academic discussions, a scroll through his timeline reveals photos of pasta bakes and the results of recent fishing expeditions, but that's all part of building an authentic presence online, says Seto. "You're not just this person who works at The Royal talking about his research findings, you are a person too. It makes you human, and I think that means that people can hear you better." (You can follow him at [twitter.com/MCSeto](https://twitter.com/MCSeto).)

## Royal stories you may have missed on theroyal.ca

- [The Recovery Program celebrates a special milestone, and an evolution in mental health care](#)
- [Understanding the brain in relation to addictive substances](#)
- [More youth to receive virtual mental health care thanks to RBC Foundation donation](#)
- [New research reveals effects of oral contraceptives on brain development](#)
- [Annemarie Wolff wins Governor General's Academic Gold Medal](#)
- [What is it like to have OCD during a global pandemic?](#)
- [Mapping out a better understanding of PTSD](#)

# Centre of Excellence, a Network of Networks



How do you thank someone who has put their life on the line so you can enjoy the incredible rights and liberties you enjoy living in Canada?

You thank them by ensuring they have everything they need in their life during and after service. We thank them by being committed to their mental health and well being.

The Centre of Excellence on PTSD and Related Mental Health Conditions (the Centre) was established because Veterans and their families deserve quality mental health care.

Our purpose is to build strong community networks to ensure Veterans, first responders, and their families have the best possible supports and services.

Housed within The Royal and funded by Veterans Affairs Canada, the Centre brings people together, take what we all know about PTSD and mental health conditions and how to treat them, widely share that

information, and ensure our collective knowledge is reflected in the work we do.

Our work focuses on a cycle of knowledge, practice, and policy, built upon a foundation of collective action. Envisioned by a collaborative group of people with lived experience and technical expertise in the fields of mental health and Veteran services, the Centre's partnerships with Veterans and their families, service providers, and researchers take a Veteran-centred approach to respect the power and wisdom of lived and living experience.

At the Centre we seek to gather and synthesize current knowledge around PTSD and Veteran mental health but also generate new knowledge. We ask ourselves: what are new areas of research where we can lead efforts and make a true impact on the lives of Veterans and their families?

We then bring together partners to transform that knowledge into practice; coaching and training service providers, supporting knowledge mobilization, co-creating and sharing emerging and best practices, bridging the gap between knowing and doing.

But our work is only possible if done in collaboration, by becoming a network of networks.

As we participate in, support, and lead various communities of practice on specific topics, we are advised by four Reference Groups: Veterans, Veterans Families, Service Providers, and Researchers. Representatives from these Reference Groups form the Centre's Advisory Council, providing strategic advice on initiatives and informing priority areas of future work.

This structure will ensure lived experience informs all elements of our work through a grassroots approach to strategy development.

*Continued on page 13...*

...Centre of Excellence continued

The Royal is a hospital without walls. We are a Centre of Excellence without limits. We pledge to produce the highest quality research, presented in the most accessible way.

Only by bridging the gap between knowledge and practice with quality, accessible information, tools, and resources, can we make the biggest impact and enhance the wellbeing of every Canadian Veteran and their family.

Stay up to date on news from the Centre of Excellence by joining our mailing list and following us on [Twitter](#). You can also follow our [LinkedIn](#) page for updates.

Centre of Excellence on PTSD

# Network of NETWORKS



## Meet Dr. Florence Dzierszinski, the new IMHR president and vice-president of research

Dr. Florence Dzierszinski has been named the new president of The Royal's Institute of Mental Health Research, affiliated with the University of Ottawa, and vice-president of research at The Royal. In this role, Dr. Dzierszinski will champion the next chapter in ground-breaking mental health research and foster an integrated research and clinical



Dr. Florence Dzierszinski

model at The Royal, driven by the needs and experiences of clients and families in our region. [Click here for our Q&A with Dr. Dzierszinski](#) and learn about what inspired her to get into the sciences, her thoughts about innovation in mental health and fostering meaningful engagement with clients and families, what the future looks like at The Royal, and more.

### Are you social?

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# important changes

coming to  
The Royal's flu vaccination program

Every service or program at The Royal has made adjustments due to the coronavirus, and the seasonal flu vaccination program is no exception. Virginia Smith, an occupational health and safety analyst and member of The Royal's Flu Vaccine Working Group, says there will be major changes in the way the seasonal flu shot will be delivered to staff.

Due to physical distancing guidelines, large scale events such as family flu clinics, open houses and coffee pots, won't be happening. Roving clinics will look different as well. Instead of visiting multiple units per shift, the focus is likely to be on one unit at a time.

The working group hopes to bump up the number of people giving flu shots this year by enlisting pharmacists, and other partners.

## **Predicting what percentage of staff will get their flu shot this year**

The percentage of staff who got their flu shot increased by 6% in 2019-2020 to 54%. (A total of 662 flu shots were given across all campuses.) Smith predicts that months of public health messaging, mandated mask wearing, and unprecedented attention to infection prevention will result in more people seeking out the seasonal flu shot this year, despite changes to the process.

Smith says there's no doubt that flu season is going to overlap with COVID-19, and that there are still many questions that need to be addressed. If you don't normally get a shot and you're on the fence about getting it, "this is the year to do it," she says, especially for your peace of mind.

"The flu has similar symptoms. Why not get your flu shot and feel like you are doing something about your health, and public health, and mental health?" asks Smith. "I'm lucky I can get it done at the hospital. I have to think about other people – it's not just about me and my children, it's about everybody."

"We want to make it easy for people to get their flu shot," says Danielle Simpson, the director of quality and patient safety and a member of the Flu Vaccine Working Group. "The flu shot is a step you can take to help prevent the flu. The more we do to stay healthy lessens the potential drain on health care resources when they are needed elsewhere."

More details about the scheduling of flu shot clinics across the organization will be circulated as they become available.

## **Tell OC. Health!**

If you get a seasonal flu shot at your neighbourhood pharmacy or doctor's office, you need to let Occupational Health know about it. It's easy. When you're getting your shot, let the person know you'll need proof of vaccination. Snap a photo of your proof of vaccination with your mobile phone and email it to [OHSS@theroyal.ca](mailto:OHSS@theroyal.ca). It's important. "It all comes down to outbreak management," says Virginia Smith, an occupational health and safety analyst at The Royal. "If we have an outbreak of the flu on any given unit – either on the part of the clients or on part of the staff – not having that flu shot can actually restrict staff from working in that area."

## **Survey says!**

A staff survey in February 2020 revealed that most respondents received their vaccine at The Royal instead of out in the community. The main reason why people chose to get vaccinated was to protect themselves, their family, their patients, and colleagues. Most survey participants agreed strongly that all staff should get vaccinated and that it was easy to get the flu shot.

## **Thank you!**

Thank you to The Royal's Flu Vaccine Working Group, and to our Flu Shot Champions!



# NO YOGA MAT NEEDED

Have you ever tried a walking meditation?

Walking meditation is not about getting somewhere on foot. You are not trying to get anywhere, even to the next step. There is no arriving, other than continually arriving in the present moment.

Ashleigh McGuinty, a recreational therapist with The Royal, led walking meditation sessions with staff earlier this year. The sessions gave participants a chance to practice meditation and breathing techniques.

## Try a walking meditation on your next lunch break:

- Pick a quiet spot, such as the wooded area behind The Royal in Ottawa, or if you're in Brockville, under the trees on the front lawn overlooking the St. Lawrence.
- Take deep breaths. Think about exhaling your stress and worries, and inhaling fresh, healing air.
- Acknowledge and set aside intrusive thoughts and instead, focus on each breath, your muscles, the feeling of feet on the ground, and the sights and sounds around you. "Be centred and balanced and mindful of every step," says McGuinty.

Look out for new meditation opportunities for staff this fall. Read more about walking meditation at [mindful.org/walking-meditation](https://mindful.org/walking-meditation).

Let us know

## What's Up

at The Royal!

We are looking for your story ideas and suggestions!

Send us an email at [communications@theroyal.ca](mailto:communications@theroyal.ca)

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