

Korf: Going global for charity work



SUZANNE KORF, SPECIAL TO THE MONTREAL GAZETTE

More from Suzanne Korf, Special to the Montreal Gazette

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Karz 4 Kidz, a car show aimed at raising funds for the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation, was held in Kirkland on July 22. DAVE SIDAWAY / MONTREAL GAZETTE

Hallmark commercials almost always make me cry. So do stories of those who perform acts of

kindness and of ordinary people who do extraordinary things. But these stories aren't just reserved for television and the internet. They are everywhere around us.

People are full of surprises.

In my work, for instance, I can point to multiple examples of people caring for others and going above and beyond. And not just those who are right in front of them, but those less fortunate who are far away.

Last week, I met with a friend who is an executive at Tenaquip and a conversation about the weather led to the forest fires burning in British Columbia, and the volunteer firefighters and relief workers who are helping the thousands of people who have been forced from their homes.

I also met with volunteers organizing the Sian Bradwell StrikeOut Cancer fundraiser which will take place next January in support of children with cancer. The conversation took place during their West Island softball tournament which has raised funds for almost 30 years for the cause. They spoke of the importance of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September. In Canada, about 880 children under 15 years of age are diagnosed with cancer every year and only 5 per cent of all cancer research funding goes toward pediatric cancer.

I recently received an email from Meghan Straub. A native West Islander, she works at the Montreal Children's Hospital as a physiotherapist as well as at the Cappino physiotherapy and wellness clinic in Dorval. She was accepted as a volunteer for a Physiotherapy Without Borders trip to Ecuador this coming September, organized by Terre Sans Frontières, and will be going on a two-week mission to Ricaurte, Ecuador to help provide services to children with handicaps and their families.

Straub is by no means the only person at the Children's hospital to give her time and expertise to help those less fortunate in other parts of the globe. Since the 1960s, staff members have worked in more than 28 low-income countries, including Kenya, Ethiopia,

India, Haiti and Rwanda.

Dr. Jean-Martin Laberge is one of these exceptional people. For 15 years, he and his wife Louise, have travelled around the world to operate on sick children and train local pediatricians.

I am humbled by the acts of these amazing people I have the fortune to cross paths with. While I am not ready to travel out west to fight fires or to a distant country to build better communities, I can dream of the day when I might do the same and support those who are doing the work today.

So I will sign myself up for the StrikeOut Cancer event, sponsor Straub at jedonneenligne.org/terresansfrontieres (<http://jedonneenligne.org/terresansfrontieres>) under Mission Equateur, make a donation to the Jean-Martin Laberge Fellowship in Global Pediatrics, and dream of the acts of heroism and kindness I am putting into motion.

— Suzanne Korf, a Pointe-Claire resident, is a director of development for the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation.

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