

# BUILDING ON SUCCESS: The Hospital for Sick Children

Success is what happens when you make excellence a priority, engage your workforce and allow innovation to flourish. These are not end goals, they are qualities of a top-performing organization; they take years to nurture and vigilance to maintain.

The Hospital for Sick Children has always set its sights high. Today our organization is in a stronger position than ever to lead innovative



and collaborative initiatives that will improve the health of children and youth.

With the opening in September of the Peter Gilgan Centre for Research and Learning, SickKids raised the profile of paediatric research and celebrated the progress we've made since 1954 when our Research Institute was established with income from the invention of Pabulum.

It was at SickKids that surgery to correct transposition of the great arteries of the heart (the birth defect of "blue babies") was pioneered in 1963. It was at SickKids, in 1972, that Canada's first bone marrow transplant program began, and it was at SickKids that Dr. Lap-Chee Tsui led a team that published its discovery in 1989 of the gene which, when defective, is responsible for cystic fibrosis.

Each successful innovation puts us in a better position to recruit world-leading scientists and their teams who, in turn, are able to attract significant grants that foster new and exciting discoveries.

The Gilgan Centre may be the

largest child health research tower in the world. Guided by the SickKids vision for healthier children and a better world, it was built on innovative architectural principles to nurture innovation and discovery. It is a physical manifestation of SickKids' vision for extensive and intensive collaboration among disciplines.

The centre has 16 floors dedicated exclusively to scientists and their staff, and more floors for education, conferences and support services. With the help of shared spaces, connective staircases and unique meeting rooms, we have developed six neighbourhoods that provide unique opportunities for multidisciplinary collaboration:

• Brain & Mental Health • Organ Systems & Disease • Patients, Populations & Policy • Genetic & Genomic Medicine • Cancer & Stem Cell Biology • Molecules, Cells & Therapies

## LEADERS IN MENTAL HEALTH

Take the neighbourhood for Brain & Mental Health. SickKids is well posi-

tioned to lead initiatives in this field. Here basic scientists, clinician-scientists and health professionals will examine such issues as pain management, brain injury and repair, vision and auditory perception, epilepsy, and cognitive and neuropsychiatric disorders such as ADHD, autism, obsessive compulsive disorder and schizophrenia.

Indeed, SickKids is home to every discipline that can be brought to bear on mental health, ranging from computer scientists to psychopharmacologists. Our leadership team in Brain & Mental Health represents psychology, social work, neurology, neurosurgery, psychiatry, and our research program in neurosciences and mental health.

Mental health is an evolving field. Not long ago it was generally understood that "bad families" were the cause of mental illness.

Many myths have led to the stigma for children and youth suffering from mental disorder, including the belief that all (or at least most) children are happy, but if they are not, "it's their fault", or "their par-

ent's fault". Other unhelpful myths include the assertion that "any dream can be realized if you just work hard enough" and that "bad" behaviour is the result of "wanting attention" or "being spoiled".

Today, researchers have helped us understand that physical and mental health are inseparable. For example, we know now that:

- Children with mental disorders are at increased risk of injuries, communicable diseases, diabetes, obesity, CVD and asthma.
- Child and adolescent nicotine use leads to increased risk of all adult substance abuse (especially alcohol abuse).
- Children who present with medically unexplained physical symptoms (MUPS) are at risk of growing up to be adults with MUPS.

This understanding is key in our new collaboration with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and University of Toronto. Together we recruited Dr. Peter Szatmari, a renowned autism researcher and psychiatrist, who was named the inaugural Patsy and Jamie Anderson

Chair in Child and Youth Mental Health in September.

Dr. Szatmari and his team plan to develop an integrated child and youth mental health program which we hope will benefit children across Ontario, throughout Canada and the world.



A common goal: SickKids is driven by the energy of innovation and collaboration. People at SickKids, from scholars to support staff, are engaged, and international researchers are lining up to come and work for us, attracted by our vision for healthier children and a better world. See [www.sickkids.ca](http://www.sickkids.ca)