MONTRÉAL SACRÉ-CŒUR HOSPITAL FOUNDATION
50 YEARS

LIAISON

SPRING 2026 | VOLUME 11 | NUMBER 1

The Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital:

Devoting heart and soul

to every patient, for 100 years.

Pénélope McQuade, the Foundation's spokesperson, alongside **Sister Claire Houde**, Head of Providence Works in Quebec and the Eastern United States.

In this issue:

> The Sacré-Cœur Hospital's Story

> The Sisters of Providence, visionary women driven by compassion

> Projects bringing hope in adult mental health and child and adolescent psychiatry

Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital is celebrating a remarkable milestone this year: its 100th anniversary!

In honour of this centenary, the Foundation is proud to celebrate the expertise and dedication of the entire hospital staff, who have cared for every patient at Sacré-Cœur over the past hundred years. It is also an opportunity to honour the founders who built the hospital a century ago and the pioneers who have shaped it over the decades.

Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital's founders: visionary women driven by compassion

Pénélope McQuade, spokesperson for the Foundation, spoke with Sister Claire Houde of the Sisters of Providence. Sister Houde, who has played a central role at the hospital and its Foundation for decades, recounts the fascinating story of the hospital's founding and its evolution over the past century.

The Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital is a cornerstone of its community—a place where people who are sick or injured receive expert care, and a hub for specialists pushing the boundaries of medicine. The hospital was founded 100 years ago by the Sisters of Providence, visionary women passionately committed to improving the health and education of their community.

A hospital built for the community

Sacré-Cœur began as a sanatorium. What inspired its transformation into a hospital for the seriously ill?

The Sisters of Providence were devoted to helping the most disadvantaged and vulnerable—essentially, anyone in need. At the turn of the 20th century, tuberculosis was claiming countless lives. The Sisters founded what they called a "hospital for incurables" to care for those suffering from the disease. Their main goal was to ease human suffering, with health as their top priority. At that time, services for people in need were extremely limited outside religious communities.

The "hospital for incurables" was destroyed by a fire in 1923. What came next for the Sisters of Providence?

The need for health care was immense, and the Sisters were determined to rebuild. They began by purchasing a large plot of land in northwest Montreal, setting aside one million square feet for a new hospital.

Construction progressed steadily over the decades as funding became available. With limited resources, the Sisters borrowed money and went door to door collecting donations to cover costs. The rotunda and central wings were completed in the 1920s, and the building gradually expanded as new funding arrived. Despite the financial challenges, the Sisters never wavered in their vision of creating a hospital that would serve and uplift the community for generations.

Building a hospital is no small feat. How did they manage it?

The Sisters were closely attuned to the needs of the patients they would serve. They worked with skilled and trusted experts to plan and build strategically, creating a space designed for recovery under the best possible conditions. They enlisted leading professionals—architects to realize their vision and artists and decorators to shape the grounds and interiors in ways that would support patients' healing.

Once the hospital was built and ready to receive patients, what role did the Sisters of Providence play?

The Sisters devoted their lives to caring for others. this spirit, they lived in the hospital, assisting doctors around the clock. They dedicated themselves entirely to caring for patients' physical needs and offering comfort and spiritual support.

A legacy of evolving care

Sacré-Cœur became a general hospital in the 1950s. What prompted this change?

The Sisters adapted as the community's needs evolved. In earlier decades, lung disease was a major health concern, and tuberculosis caused many deaths. As medical science advanced, tuberculosis cases declined, but new health challenges emerged.

Sacré-Cœur grew into one of the major institutions founded by the Sisters of Providence. The hospital developed advanced expertise to meet society's changing needs. Starting with pulmonology, it expanded into specialties such as orthopedics, cardiology and trauma care. Innovation, training and professional development have remained a constant at Sacré-Cœur. Generations of health care professionals have honed their skills there. Many of them stayed at the hospital for decades.

Sacré-Cœur Hospital isn't the only milestone being celebrated this year. The Foundation is also marking its 50th anniversary. Why was it created in 1976?

Hospitals need a lot of specialized equipment. In the 1970s, it became clear that even with careful management, government funding alone couldn't cover all costs or meet every patient's needs. A foundation can support a wide range of initiatives and bring together a community of donors around a shared mission. Without it, many of the hospital's projects and the help it provides to patients simply wouldn't be possible.

Has the Foundation supported any major projects?

In the early 2000s, the Foundation helped fund the acquisition of a da Vinci surgical robot, which cost $4.3 million (not including installation). This advanced robot is a powerful tool for surgeons, but it has a serious price tag. The hospital Board hesitated at first, because there were so many needs across other departments. Ultimately, they decided to go ahead with the purchase. It was only the second robot of its kind in Canada. Over the years, the Foundation has continued to fund upgrades, and the da Vinci robot is still in use today.

How does the Sisters of Providence's legacy live on at the hospital?

If there's one value that has endured at Sacré-Cœur, it's compassion. The ongoing care for patients and the dedication to the Sisters' original mission—to help the sick and injured—are truly heartwarming and a source of pride. The hospital's tradition of care, innovation and excellence continues today. New health challenges still arise, but the caregivers and researchers at Sacré-Cœur remain committed to addressing them and supporting those in need. □

A special encounter between Pénélope McQuade and Sister Houde

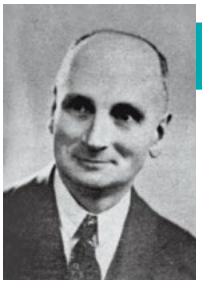
In this video, where the warmth and humanity of both women shine through, Sister Houde recounts the founding of Sacré-Cœur Hospital and shares memorable moments from its century-long history. She explains how the values that define Sacré-Cœur—compassion, innovation and excellence—were instilled long before the hospital opened in 1926.

To watch the full interview:
(In french only)

The pioneers who shaped Sacré-Cœur

Over the past century, the health care teams at Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital have been beacons of excellence, innovation and dedication. These teams include outstanding specialists who have helped make Sacré-Cœur a world-class university hospital.

At the turn of the 20th century, tuberculosis was the leading cause of death in Canada. Before effective antibiotics became widely available in the 1950s and 60s, treatments were largely ineffective. Hospitalization could ease patients' suffering but could not cure the disease. Because tuberculosis often involved complex health issues, caring for affected patients helped drive the development of major medical specialties. Sacré-Cœur Hospital has been home to generations of pioneers who have left their mark on their field of expertise. Here are five of them.



1931

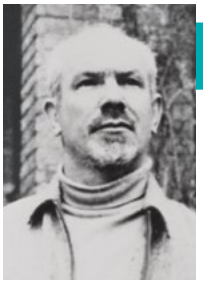
DR. JOSEPH-ÉDOUARD SAMSON

A pioneer of orthopedics

Dr. Joseph-Édouard Samson was a physician whose work profoundly shaped medicine in Quebec. Born in Quebec City, he graduated in medicine from Université Laval in 1919 and specialized in orthopedic surgery at the New York Orthopaedic Hospital, gaining the expertise that would influence both his career and the development of orthopedics in Canada.

Dr. Samson helped found Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus in Quebec City in 1923, but his greatest impact came in Montreal, where he moved in 1930. In **1931**, he established the Orthopedic Department at Sacré-Cœur Hospital, which would become the leading training centre for orthopedics in Quebec and referral centre for all of Canada. Dr. Samson was a dedicated teacher, passing on his knowledge to numerous surgeons and helping to develop orthopedics as an academic discipline.

Dr. Samson died in 1963, leaving a lasting legacy as a pioneer of orthopedic education and practice in Quebec. His work at Sacré-Cœur was a key step in the hospital's growth and is still evident today in the skill and expertise of its Orthopedic Department.



1933

DR. NORMAN BETHUNE

An innovator in humanitarian medicine

Dr. Norman Bethune is one of the most famous physicians to have practised at Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital. He joined the hospital in **1933**, before gaining international recognition as a wartime surgeon. Along with Dr. Georges Deshaies, he founded Quebec's first French-language thoracic surgery department.

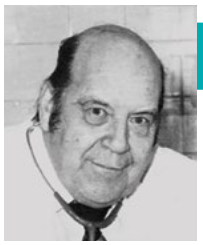
Dr. Bethune's choice of specialty was not accidental: he had contracted tuberculosis in 1926 and recovered thanks to an experimental procedure called artificial pneumothorax. As a surgeon, he quickly gained recognition by designing innovative instruments to operate on and drain patients' lungs. By introducing blood transfusion services, he helped make Sacré-Cœur Hospital one of the first hospitals to establish a blood bank.

Driven by his humanist values, Dr. Bethune cared for the poorest and most vulnerable patients before leaving to serve on the front lines of the Spanish Civil War, where he established mobile blood transfusion units and trained medical staff. He later continued his medical work in China, treating soldiers and civilians under extremely challenging conditions. He died in November 1939 of septicemia contracted during surgery.

1964

Did you know...?

Obstetrics was one of the first departments created at Sacré-Cœur. In **1964**, the Hospital recorded an enviable record: the highest number of births in Canada, with 4,000 babies!



1950

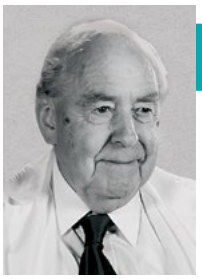
DR. JACQUES GOUGOUX

A leader in pulmonology

Dr. Jacques Gougoux was another key figure in the history of pulmonology at Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital. A dedicated physician and respected specialist, he began his career in **1950**, when the hospital was transitioning from a sanatorium to a major respiratory health centre.

In 1963, he became head of the Pulmonology Department, a position he held until 1975. Under his leadership, the department was organized and modernized, becoming a vital centre for teaching and clinical research. Alongside his hospital work, Dr. Gougoux taught at the Université de Montréal Faculty of Medicine, training several generations of pulmonologists.

Deeply committed to the hospital and its Pulmonology Department, which he considered among the best in Quebec, Dr. Gougoux helped establish the high standards of care and professionalism that continue to define the department. He died in 2004, leaving a lasting legacy as a pioneer who helped make Sacré-Cœur a cornerstone of respiratory medicine in Quebec.



1973

DR. RÉGINALD NADEAU

A founder of modern cardiology at Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital

Dr. Réginald Nadeau was a driving force in the development of cardiology at Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital. In **1973**, together with other physicians, he founded the Sacré-Cœur Hospital Research Centre, creating a hub of expertise that would transform cardiac care at the hospital.

Under Dr. Nadeau's guidance, cardiology research took an integrated approach, bringing clinicians and researchers together, developing new screening methods, and improving therapeutic strategies. This innovative framework helped Sacré-Cœur become a leader in cardiovascular health.

Dr. Nadeau's impact is still evident today. The Research Centre now brings together dozens of full-time and affiliated researchers, along with numerous students, cementing Sacré-Cœur's reputation as a centre of excellence in cardiology and chronic disease. His leadership helped the hospital build deep expertise and gain global recognition for the quality of its care and its pioneering contributions to cardiac research.

1976

DR. HENRI ATLAS

The surgeon who revolutionized Sacré-Cœur and trauma care

An unassuming visionary and a surgeon of exceptional skill, Dr. Henri Atlas laid the foundations of modern trauma care.

Until **1976**, Sacré-Cœur had no dedicated trauma unit. At a time when the hospital's university affiliation was at risk and patients were scattered throughout the facility, Dr. Atlas chose to focus on trauma. Located at the crossroads of four major highways, the hospital made emergency care for road accident victims essential, and he was among the first to establish a formal trauma unit—long before modern standards existed. With remarkable foresight, Dr. Atlas recognized that effective trauma care requires a cohesive, interdisciplinary team that is fast, organized and efficient.

Throughout his career, he took a broader view than most of his contemporaries. He advocated for a hospital divided into two sectors—urgent care and trauma, and elective—a vision still relevant today. Despite some pushback, he was an early adopter of laparoscopic surgery at Sacré-Cœur and an innovator in bariatric surgery long before it became common in Quebec. Driven by his belief that technology could transform surgical practice, Dr. Atlas also made a significant, though often overlooked, contribution to the development of surgical robotics. His work helped make Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital a leading centre for trauma care in Quebec, across Canada and internationally.

Dr. Ronald Denis paid a heartfelt tribute to his mentor, Dr. Atlas, who passed away in October 2025.

Read his testimony

Mr. Guy Crevier shares with us a page of history

Our Foundation is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year! Like the Hospital, it was created by the Sisters of Providence. Mr. Crevier is one of the six founding members. Today, he still works with us as an accounting consultant, and he agreed to share some memories with us.

With the precision of a true accountant, Mr. Crevier quickly set the record straight. The Foundation was created in March 1970, he said. It all began with a major bequest of one million dollars—a colossal sum at the time—left to the hospital in 1969 through the estate of Sophie Letang.

For years, the Foundation's income came solely from the interest on this bequest, a few other bequests and even a portion of the Sisters of Providence's own salaries. There were no fundraising activities or solicitations, Mr. Crevier recalled. A trustworthy person to the Sisters of Providence, he held a number of positions throughout his career, including external auditor, assistant and director of finance at the Hospital, and finally, general manager and consultant for the Foundation.

A change in leadership at both the hospital and its board led to the creation of a new foundation in 1976, retaining the original name. Its mission remained unchanged: to support teaching, research and patient care.

"The Sisters placed great importance on direct patient care. Investments had to directly benefit patients."

– Mr. Guy Crevier (with Sister Houde in the picture)

Early events and professionalization

The first fundraising event was held on June 11, 1984: the Omnium golf tournament, which generated $19,000 in revenue. The Gala followed in 1992, and raised more than $60,000 in its first year. Even today, these two events have their place in the Foundation's calendar. As activities increased, the organization could no longer rely solely on volunteers to sustain its development. The Foundation hired its first professional staff in 1986.

With staff now in place, a major fundraising campaign was launched in 1990 under the leadership of Sister Marie-Paule Levaque. Supported by Premier Robert Bourassa and chaired by Jeannine Guillevin Wood, it raised $6 million—far exceeding the target—to expand the Research Centre and acquire equipment, including an MRI machine.

A lasting bond with the Sisters of Providence

Mr. Crevier attended a Sisters of Providence school in his early childhood. Years later, he became an auditor at Samson Bélair, where his path led him to cross theirs again. He remembers the determination and business sense of Sister Marie-Paule Levaque, with whom he helped establish Sacré-Cœur's first foundation, and his friendship with Sister Claire Houde, the community's finance leader who succeeded Sister Levaque.

The first major fundraising campaign.

50 years of progress and innovation

Since 1976, the Foundation has contributed more than $100 million to Sacré-Cœur Hospital and established a major endowment fund.

Guy believes that the Foundation's 1984 reorganization, which expanded the board from five to more than 20 members, was a pivotal moment in its history. He also highlights two other milestones: Sacré-Cœur Hospital becoming the designated hospital for the Formula 1 Grand Prix in 1985, and, more recently, the construction of the Integrated Trauma Centre, which will enhance the Hospital's services and expertise. He mentions as well the contributions of Dr. Léon Dontigny, a pioneer in simulation-based training with the Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) program, and Dr. Ronald Denis, whose efforts were key in establishing the Hospital's leading trauma care program.

After 60 years of service, Guy Crevier remains committed to a core belief: "A Foundation exists to raise funds and channel them to meet the needs of patients." ◘

MENTAL HEALTH

Projects bringing hope

The Foundation will support a variety of projects at Albert-Prévost Mental Health Hospital and Rivière-des-Prairies Mental Health Hospital, designed to make a meaningful difference. Thanks to your generosity, $1.1 million will be invested to improve care for children, adolescents and adults.

Albert-Prévost Hospital

Four key initiatives will directly enhance the experience of adults hospitalized for mental health care:

1. **Selected intensive care and inpatient rooms will be redesigned** to create a calm, safe and wellness-focused environment. With features such as adjustable lighting, soothing music, and comfort items like weighted blankets and cushions, these upgraded rooms will help reduce anxiety and support better emotional regulation.
2. The **Grand Salon** is a common area for rest and relaxation for both patients and staff and the main setting for therapeutic activities. It will be fully transformed into a warm, adaptable and welcoming space for all.
3. Soothing murals, new furniture and various equipment will be added to **patient areas** to create a more human-centred environment and reduce stress for hospitalized patients.
4. The **geriatric psychiatry clinic** will be renovated to better meet the needs of seniors receiving mental health care. The redesigned space will be more accessible and adapted for patients and staff.

Rivière-des-Prairies Hospital

Several major projects will transform child and adolescent psychiatry care environments:

1. The **cafeteria and reception area will be revitalized** to make these essential spaces brighter, welcoming and more restful for young patients, families and staff.
2. A major project will create **family lounges** and improve visiting rooms. These facilities will provide parents with the opportunity to rest and recharge and spend time with their hospitalized child. Such spaces are currently lacking, particularly in pediatric intensive care.
3. The **first-episode psychosis program (PPEP)** will also receive essential support. Serving more than 300 young people, the program will be able to continue and expand its activities: school-based prevention, therapeutic activities (sports and group activities, access to public spaces), support for returning to school, emergency assistance for housing stability, peer support and more.
4. The Foundation will support the creation of a **specialized shuttle service** and a food and pharmaceutical assistance program for the most vulnerable patients, to remove financial and logistical obstacles to care.

A vital new perspective on mental health

A new six-episode documentary series by **Paul Arcand** and **Monic Néron**, broadcast this winter on Télé-Québec, explores the realities of families supporting a loved one with a mental health disorder. *Je suis là : les proches aidants en santé mentale* offers a compelling and moving portrait, giving a voice to those whose experiences are rarely heard: relatives of people living with mental illness, family members who became caregivers, and frontline professionals. The series provides a sensitive, insightful look at the daily challenges they face.

To watch the serie:
(In french only)

The documentary explores care pathways, crises and family realities, highlighting some of the daily challenges faced by the hospitals' teams. Rivière-des-Prairies Mental Health Hospital and Albert-Prévost Mental Health Hospital are **two of the three hospitals supported by our Foundation**.

2026 EVENTS

Celebrating Sacré-Cœur's 100th anniversary!

ONGOING

COMMEMORATIVE EXHIBITION

Location: Corridor leading to the hospital cafeteria

ONGOING

SACRÉ-CŒUR HOSPITAL'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY GRAND LOTTERY

Next draws: April 15th and May 13th

loteriesacrecoeur.org

APRIL 25

THE CENTENNIAL BALL OF MONTREAL SACRÉ-CŒUR HOSPITAL

Location: La Nesra, Montreal

OUTDOOR YOGA — POSTPONED

DECEMBER

LET'S LIGHT UP SACRÉ-CŒUR

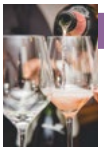
Location: At the Sacré-Cœur's main entrance alley

Our classic events are back... with a special 100th-anniversary twist!

JUNE 16

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Saint-Raphaël Golf Club



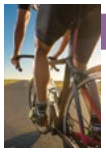
SEPTEMBER 17

WINE-TASTING EVENT

In the Salons Privés RBC, Place Ville-Marie

Our community is joining in as well!

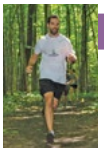
Here are a few partner events this year:



JUNE 6

BOUGEZ-ONCO CYCLING AND YOGA EVENT

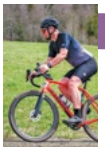
MRC de Deux-Montagnes



JULY 18

LE SENTIER DE L'ESPOIR FITNESS RACE

Rigaud



AUGUST 29

CARDIO TREMCO CYCLING EVENT

Oka

Follow us on social media!

Don't miss any of our exciting events during Montreal Sacré-Cœur Hospital's centennial year.

Pénélope McQuade
Volunteer spokesperson

YOU CAN MAKE A DONATION:

♥ **Online** at fondationhscm.org ♥ **By Cheque** ♥ **By Phone**

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Founded in 1976 by the Sisters of Providence, the Montréal Sacré-Cœur Hospital Foundation has its raison d'être to help the extended Sacré-Cœur, Albert-Prévost and Rivière-des-Prairies team constantly improve the care, treatment and environment of patients, while supporting the research and teaching activity of these major university hospitals.

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