

Council on Palliative Care

David, the great King of Israel, who ruled over 3,500 years ago, probably suffered from prostate or kidney cancer. Scholarly inquiry of ancient biblical texts, in which the king stated “I forget to eat my bread, my flesh failed of fatness and my bones cleave to my skin” indicate that he was suffering from cancer wasting, otherwise known as cachexia. (1)

Cancer cachexia ultimately affects 80% of people with advanced cancer, yet cancer-wasting remains understudied and inde)CTz`A`M;j) CR.R`GA`NM) CTAA`WGj)MGA;RA)eGnCTR`GzNMMj)dCG`GA`NM)eCT;`NzMjG)rCN`;
a complex metabolic process whose

The Council on Palliative

Volunteerism in Palliative Care

by Rosemary Byrne

Volunteerism in Palliative Care (Continued from page 2)

must complete 18 hours of training. Each spring and fall, the McGill teaching hospitals organize training sessions for incoming potential volunteers. The hospitals take turns hosting the training session. This spring's session will be held at St Mary's Hospital. In order to enrol in the training program, potential volunteers can register by contacting the palliative care volunteer managers at the Montreal General Hospital, the Jewish General Hospital or St. Mary's Hospital. There is a registration fee of \$35.00 which covers photocopies and light refreshments.

The training session is divided into modules which are presented by experts in the field. Topics include: the role of the volunteer, the philosophy of palliative care and the team approach, the dying process, how to speak to the patient and their family, the many faces of palliative care, grief and loss, ethnic and cultural diversity, ethics for volunteers, supporting families, and boundary issues and self-care.

After completion of the training session, the volunteers can apply to one of the hospitals. The palliative care volunteer managers from the McGill teaching hospitals are present for the training session, and distribute application forms to potential volunteers. Volunteering in palliative care is very rewarding, but it is not for everyone. So screening is an important part of the process, as the goal is to match the volunteer to the program. Volunteers may want to visit several of the McGill sites before choosing their hospital, and the hospitals as well choose their volunteers. The volunteers are interviewed and, if accepted, are given an orientation to the service. Most programs have new volunteers "shadow" experienced volunteers for the first month or two.

If you are interested in working as a volunteer in palliative care, the time is right, as a new course is beginning in early May.

**Rosemary Byrne, Palliative Care Volunteer Services Manager
Hope and Cope, Jewish General Hospital**

Cancer Nutrition-Rehabilitation Programme

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- Offer nutritional and rehabilitation programmes for patients who are suffering from these symptoms.
- Educate patients, family caregivers and other health professionals in new ways to manage the above symptoms.

Cancer cachexia is as much a social and cultural phenomenon as it is a biological. More exploratory studies into the lived experience of both people suffering from cachexia and their loved ones, watching the person wasting away, are warranted for a greater understanding. A new vision of care for people with cancer wasting is to enable those people with advancing cancer, to maintain dignity, function, and rekindle a sense of hope for the future. Just like the opening of Pandora's box, where hope flutters out, following the flood of miseries, to offer consolation, compassion and care.

The McGill Cancer Nutrition-Rehabilitation Programme's (CNRP) web site is: www.mcgill.ca/cnr.

Wilma Falconer, Clinical Research Nurse Coordinator (CNRP)

Happenings!..

Hike for Hospice

The Council will host the *Hike for Hospice*, which is held in many cities across Canada annually. This is the second year that this event will be held in Québec. It will take place on May 1st at the Parc Jean-Drapeau, Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve. Registration is at 9:00 A.M. and the *Hike* will begin at 10:00 A.M.

Last year's Hike was fun in spite of the rain! There were approximately 100 'Hikers' and the event raised just under \$15,000.

Proceeds from this year's Hike will be divided between The Council (for the Children's Corners) and The Lighthouse, Children and Families to build and operate Québec's first respite home and pediatric palliative care facility.

Workshops

The second annual **R. David Bourke Memorial** was held on October 19th, 2004 at St. Andrew's – Dominion Douglas Church. The topic was *End-of-Life Decisions - Yours to Make*. The panel discussion was moderated by Richard L. Cruess, M.D. Co-Chairperson of The Council on Palliative Care. The panellists were Michael Dworkind, M.D., Associate Professor of Family Medi-

