Advancing human health with partners in Africa
Message from the Dean and Vice-President

McMaster University’s Faculty of Health Sciences boasts an enviable tradition of extending beyond the confines of its labs, classrooms and offices to pioneer innovative discoveries and international partnerships that benefit human and societal health and well-being around the world. Global health research and education are critical cornerstones of McMaster’s mission. It is imperative that we equip our future health care professionals with the knowledge and skills they will need to successfully engage in clinical, research and public health careers that are increasingly focused on global health. At the same time, possessing this amount of global health expertise, McMaster is expertly positioned to share that knowledge to improve the lives of others.

In this edition of Network, we offer a glimpse into the tireless efforts of our faculty members who are working to improve health care in Africa. Over many years we have cultivated initiatives that enhance integrated health care delivery models and interprofessional education and care in African nations, with an ultimate goal of making a real impact on patient health.

Indeed, McMaster’s Faculty of Health Sciences’ fundamental impact on Africa’s health has truly been extraordinary. As you will discover in this edition’s cover story, our efforts are realized in many ways: including helping build the first medical school in Namibia, to using rehabilitation to help those living with HIV in Zambia, and others.

As a result of these, and other international efforts, it is no wonder McMaster University has achieved worldwide distinction as an outstanding institution for research, teaching and learning.

In addition to our feature story, we share several other successes recently achieved among the faculty, staff, students and alumni of all our schools and departments. These include novel programs that support research, scholarly and clinical endeavours, impressive awards and honours, support from government agencies, non-profit foundations and industry, and highlights of some of our alumni who are making meaningful footprints locally, nationally and internationally.

We also unveil a new look to the magazine that reflects a redesigned brand for McMaster University. The University’s new brand aims to share and celebrate the ways in which McMaster’s best and brightest minds are advancing human and societal health and well-being.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Network and learning more about the tremendous impact we are having on a global scale. I encourage you to stay up-to-date on all of our accomplishments in research, education and innovation on the Faculty of Health Sciences’ website at fhs.mcmaster.ca.

Paul O’Byrne, MB, FRCPC, FRSC
Dean and Vice-President
Faculty of Health Sciences
McMaster cultivates medicinal cannabis knowledge

Medicinal cannabis has been legal in Canada since 2001, but there is still little research proving its effectiveness.

A new research centre has been launched by McMaster University and St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton to address the issue.

The multidisciplinary Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Medicinal Cannabis Research (CMCR) will focus on conducting research, sharing evidence-based information and creating a network of professionals interested in further understanding medicinal cannabis.

Leading this initiative are co-directors James MacKillop and Jason Busse and medical advisor, Dr. Ramesh Zacharias.

MacKillop is a professor of psychiatry and neurosciences at McMaster’s Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, and director of the Peter Boris Centre for Addictions Research at St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton.

Busse is an associate professor of anesthesia for McMaster’s medical school and a researcher for the Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre.

Zacharias is a pain specialist, medical director of the Michael G. DeGroote Pain Clinic at Hamilton Health Sciences and assistant chief coroner for Ontario.

The Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Medicinal Cannabis Research is funded by the Michael G. DeGroote Initiative for Innovation in Healthcare, with contributions from philanthropists Michael G. DeGroote and the Boris family of Hamilton.

The website for the Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Medicinal Cannabis Research is at cannabisresearch.mcmaster.ca.

McMaster researchers receive $14 million to establish fracture study

McMaster University researchers Mohit Bhandari and Sheila Sprague, together with Gerard Slobogean of the University of Maryland, have received funding of more than $14 million for a new research program in fracture management.

The Program of Randomized trials to Evaluate Pre-operative antiseptic skin solutions In orthopaedic Trauma (PREP-IT) will be a joint initiative co-ordinated by the Centre for Evidence-Based Orthopedics at McMaster University and the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center at the University of Maryland.

“This funding enables a collaborative effort to improve outcomes of fracture care worldwide and further establishes our team at McMaster University as global leaders with a longstanding vision of large, innovative surgical trials,” said Bhandari, professor of the Department of Surgery at the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine.

Mohit Bhandari (left) and Sheila Sprague from McMaster University, together with Gerard Slobogean from the University of Maryland, have received more than $14 million to advance fracture research.

PREP-IT consists of two sister multi-centre randomized crossover trials that will compare the effect of different skin preparation solutions on the incidence of surgical site infections and unplanned fracture-related reoperations in fracture patients.

A number of McMaster researchers and faculty members will be involved in the PREP-IT initiative including Gordon Guyatt, P.J. Devereaux and Lehana Thabane. More than 20 hospitals across North America will participate in the two trials.
Donation supports ‘omics’ health research

Philanthropist and local businessman Alfred (Fred) Voytek is helping support health research at McMaster University with a donation in excess of $500,000 towards research in the area of ‘omics’, which includes the use of new technologies to uncover the genomic, metabolomic and gut microbiomic signatures of future disease development.

Along with his excitement of the future potential for new discoveries in this area, Mr. Voytek is sympathetic to the difficult funding climate facing health researchers in Canada.

He was intrigued to learn of some of the research led by McMaster University professor Sonia Anand, Canada Research Chair in Ethnic Diversity and Cardiovascular Disease, and senior scientist at the Population Health Research Institute. Dr. Anand leads the NutriGen Alliance made up of several birth cohort studies including South Asians and Aboriginal peoples.

“Fred Voytek’s generosity is amazing,” said Anand, noting his support will enable initiation of multi-ethnic studies of ‘omic’ influences on cardio-metabolic traits including adiposity, insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome.

“Dr. Anand is doing wonderful work, and I wanted to support it,” said Voytek.

“Mr. Voytek’s generous support will propel innovative and fundamentally important projects that are key to the future health of Canadians,” added Paul O’Byrne, dean and vice-president of McMaster’s Faculty of Health Sciences.

Friendship bench honours Dr. Robert Chu

DeGroote School of Medicine. Robert took his life on Sept. 5, 2016; he was 25 years old. His mother, Clara, said she hopes the bench starts a conversation. That conversation, she hoped, could make a difference in someone’s life.

“In our age of technology we, as a society, are losing sight of the importance of human relationships,” she said. “It is our wish that this Friendship Bench can make a difference. We hope it creates a safe haven where people can communicate and have social support in a face-to-face interaction.”

The Friendship Bench program of bright yellow benches was co-founded by Sam Fiorella in honour of his son Lucas, a 19-year-old Carleton University student who took his own life in 2014.

The initiative continues to grow, as benches can now be found at more than 30 university and college campuses across Canada.

The Amazing Race

McMaster medical student Sam Lambert, left, and partner Paul Mitskopoulos celebrate winning The Amazing Race Canada.

Sam Lambert, a first-year medical student at the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine at McMaster University, won season five of The Amazing Race Canada. Lambert and his boyfriend, Paul Mitskopoulos, were the first team to cross the finish line during the finale of the reality television competition.

The journey spanned four countries, six provinces, 17 cities and more than 50,000 kilometres.

As winners of The Amazing Race Canada, the duo receive $250,000 in cash, two new SUVs and a trip for two around the world.

“It feels unbelievable,” said Lambert of the victory.

Lambert hails from Oakville and started medical school at McMaster in August.

“McMaster was the best choice for me because the medical school has a focus on selecting people with diverse backgrounds and I felt like I could join a program that would value the experience I have,” said Lambert, who has a degree in business.

“I really appreciate the problem-based learning that McMaster offers as well.”

Lambert said medical school has been both challenging and rewarding. As for his future, he’s still determining which field of medicine he would like to pursue.

“I think I want to be an ob-gyn or a pediatrician,” he said. “I love children and I think women’s health is extremely important. Working with mothers throughout the term of a pregnancy is something that appeals to me.”
Top students drawn to new combined program

A new program that began in September at McMaster and combines engineering and health sciences has attracted many of the best and brightest minds.

A group of 128 students from throughout Ontario, across Canada and around the world have started their first year in the Integrated Biomedical Engineering and Health Sciences (iBioMed) program. The inaugural cohort was selected from more than 920 applicants.

Arjun Raghavan, who calls Winnipeg, Manitoba home, is a first-year student. An aspiring MD candidate, he was interested in the program to gain a solid foundation in biomedical engineering that would be applicable to his future practice of medicine in a clinical or research environment.

“I applied to iBioMed because I was attracted by the curriculum offered by two well-known faculties, engineering and health sciences,” Raghavan said.

“The program’s well-structured curriculum is the perfect avenue to realize my goals; that is, meeting the requirements of admission to medical school while acquiring a biomedical/mechanical engineering degree. I found this to be unique among Canadian universities.”

Graduate inspired to pursue drug discovery and commercialization

It was while caring for his younger brother that Sheetij Ricky Ghoshal realized he wanted to help take medical discovery from the bench to the bedside.

Ghoshal was a second-year student in biochemistry at McMaster with hopes of becoming a doctor when his brother, Gaurav, became critically ill. The then Grade 12 student was diagnosed with a rare, life-altering condition called subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), caused by the measles virus.

Ghoshal took a leave of absence from McMaster so he could move home to Mississauga and help his close-knit family care for Gaurav.

“Sheetij Ricky
Ghoshal

After spending a lot of time in hospitals with my brother, I realized that doctors and health-care professionals are limited in the ways they can help people by what’s available to them, whether it is medication or medical devices, and they can only use what’s approved and on the market,” he said. “I started to realize that is where I would be better suited.”

Following his three-year absence to help care for his brother and support his family, Ghoshal returned to McMaster in 2014.

When he learned about the new program called Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization starting at the university in January 2015, he knew he had to apply.

On November 16, he was one of the first eight graduates of the master’s portion of the program at McMaster University’s fall convocation.

The iBioMed program is the first in Canada to offer an interdisciplinary five-year biomedical program that integrates engineering with health sciences. It is also the only health sciences program in health, engineering science and entrepreneurship.

The innovative four-plus-one year bachelor-master multidisciplinary training program is concentrated in the biomedical sciences and equips graduates with strong discovery research skills, business acumen and an experiential connection to the health sciences sector.

His class of eight is a familiar group, as seven of the students also completed a bachelor degree in the program.

All eight have landed jobs in their field of study. Five of the students transitioned into full-time employment at the company where they did their internship.

After serving as an intern at Glysantis, a subsidiary of Mirexus Biotechnologies Inc. in Guelph, Ghoshal was hired this fall as a senior business development associate at the company.
An international study has found that the combination of two drugs – rivaroxaban and aspirin – is superior to aspirin alone in preventing further heart complications in people with vascular disease.

The study of 27,400 people with stable coronary or peripheral artery disease from 33 countries worldwide was published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Results show that the combination of 2.5 mg of rivaroxaban twice daily plus 100 mg of aspirin once daily was significantly better than only aspirin or only rivaroxaban in preventing heart attacks, strokes and death.

Rivaroxaban, often known by the brand name Xarelto, is an anticoagulant, aspirin is an antiplatelet drug, and both are blood thinners. The study, called COMPASS, is led by the Population Health Research Institute of McMaster University and Hamilton Health Sciences.

A second paper from the same study, published in The Lancet, shows that the same drug combination is superior to aspirin for the risk of losing limbs or severe limb ischemia (limitation of blood flow to a limb), as well as decreasing cardiovascular events, among patients with peripheral artery disease (PAD).

The study looked at 7,470 patients with PAD who took part in the COMPASS study, and found the combination reduced heart attacks, stroke or cardiovascular death by 28 per cent and damage to limbs by 46 per cent.

Rivaroxaban alone was not superior to aspirin in preventing heart attacks, stroke, cardiovascular death, or limb events. Both the combination and rivaroxaban alone had increased major bleeding, but not fatal nor critical organ bleeding.

Killing cancer cells indirectly by powering up fat cells in the bone marrow could help acute myeloid leukemia patients, according to a new study.

Researchers with the McMaster Stem Cell and Cancer Research Institute found that boosting adipocytes, or fat cells, located in the bone marrow suppressed cancerous leukemia cells but – in a surprise to the research team – induced the regeneration of healthy blood cells at the same time.

The study was published in the journal Nature Cell Biology.

“Our approach represents a different way of looking at leukemia and considers the entire bone marrow as an ecosystem, rather than the traditional approach of studying and trying to directly kill the diseased cells themselves,” said Allison Boyd, postdoctoral fellow with the research institute and first author of the study.

The McMaster-led study included detailed study and imaging of individual leukemia cells compared to healthy cells residing in the bone marrow, which revealed the effects of targeting fat cells. A drug commonly used to moderate diabetes that induces fat cell production in the bone marrow was used and was found to help foster red blood cell production as well as suppress leukemic disease.

Researchers find combination therapy works best for heart diseases
Reduced exposure to risk factors like bullying could reduce mental illness in extreme preemies

McMaster researchers have found that decreased exposure to bullying and family problems during childhood and adolescence could help reduce adult mental illness in extremely low birth weight preemies.

Furthermore, mental health support for extremely low birth weight survivors who are born at 2.2 pounds or less, and their parents could also prove beneficial.


It showed that although these preemies were not necessarily exposed to a larger number of risk factors compared to their normal birth weight counterparts, these stresses appeared to have a greater impact on their mental health as adults.

“If we can find meaningful interventions for extremely low birth weight survivors and their parents, we can improve the lives of preterm survivors and prevent the development of depression and anxiety in adulthood,” said Ryan J. Van Lieshout, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioural neurosciences at McMaster University and the Albert Einstein/Irving Zucker Chair in Neuroscience.

The study was of the McMaster extremely low birth weight cohort, which includes a group of 179 extremely low birth weight survivors and 145 normal birth weight controls born between 1977 and 1982.

International study shows moderate consumption of fats and carbohydrates best for health

Research with more than 135,000 people across five continents has shown that a diet which includes a moderate intake of fat and fruits and vegetables, and avoidance of high carbohydrates, is associated with lower risk of death.

To be specific about moderate, the lowest risk of death was in those people who consume three to four servings (or a total of 375 to 500 grams) of fruits, vegetables and legumes a day, with little additional benefit from more.

As well, contrary to popular belief, consuming a higher amount of fat (about 35 per cent of energy) is associated with a lower risk of death compared to lower intakes.

However, a diet high in carbohydrates (of more than 60 per cent of energy) is related to higher mortality, although not with the risk of cardiovascular disease.

These are the top messages of two reports published in *The Lancet* from a major global study led by researchers of the Population Health Research Institute of McMaster University and Hamilton Health Sciences.

The data comes from the Prospective Urban Rural Epidemiology (PURE) study which followed more than 135,000 people from 18 low-income, middle-income and high-income countries. The study asked people about their diet and followed them for an average of seven and half years.
Advancing human health with our partners in Africa

Rebecca Kruisselbrink, front left, is chair of the Subspecialty Global Health Subcommittee at McMaster.
Mentoring a Ugandan hematologist at a Hamilton hospital, partnering on occupational therapy research for those living with HIV in Zambia, and teaching internal medicine at the first medical school in Namibia.

These are just three examples of the vast array of initiatives that members of the McMaster University’s Faculty of Health Sciences are fostering in Africa.

The continent, which is the second largest and most populated in the world, faces both tremendous challenges and opportunities in the realm of human health.

McMaster’s mission of communicating knowledge, inspiring personal growth and serving society is embodied in the work taking place through partnerships with counterparts half a world away.

“We have an incredible amount of expertise at McMaster and an opportunity to share that knowledge to improve the lives of others,” says Paul O’Byrne, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences and an ardent supporter of partnerships with Africa.

“Our impact is far-reaching, sometimes more than we can even anticipate.”

The tradition of the global health work of the Faculty of Health Sciences in Africa began early on in its history, and continues to grow.

These are just a few of the stories of how faculty are working together with African policy makers, academics, physicians and others to improve the quality of patient care and save lives.

“Our impact is far-reaching, sometimes more than we can even anticipate.” – Paul O’Byrne
BUILDING THE FIRST MEDICAL SCHOOL IN NAMIBIA

Christian Kraeker MD ’06 has lost track of the exact number of times he has travelled to Namibia to help develop the country’s first cohort of locally-trained physicians. His estimate is 14.

Medical professionals are a national need in the southwestern African country that is home to 2.5 million people.

Until recently, the problem was compounded by a lack of a medical school in the country to train doctors, but that changed in 2010 when the University of Namibia (UNAM) School of Medicine opened its doors and welcomed its first group of 55 medical students.

Prior to its opening, the school put out an international call for medical professionals to help develop the curriculum and serve as guest instructors.

Kraeker, associate professor of internal medicine in the Department of Medicine at the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, was one of those who answered the call.

“I was working on my masters of tropical medicine in the U.K. at the time, so I went to UNAM to teach internal medicine and work on my thesis,” he says, noting he had not visited the country prior to that time.

“I got along with everyone so well during my first visit and I continued going back between two to three times a year.”

Kraeker, now also an adjunct professor of internal medicine in the Department of Medicine, travels to Namibia each spring and fall to give lectures, perform hospital bedside teaching, help develop curriculum and assist with exams.

“Being part of training these students is very cool,” he says. “After they graduate, a lot of these kids will go back home because they want to make a difference in their communities as physicians. In some cases, they will be the only doctors in their area, but as we train more students, hopefully that will change.”

Kraeker says he gets as much out of the experience as he gives. He has worked in Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ecuador and Peru, but has focused his efforts solely on Namibia for the past seven years.

Of course, it also helps that the climate of the country is more temperate than ours.

“For the past seven years, leaving Canada for the month of February and going somewhere warm has been great,” he says.

The UNAM School of Medicine faculty members are currently working with its international team of medical professionals, including Kraeker, to develop a post-graduate program to foster a cohort of specialists and scientists.

Martha Fulford MD ’96 says it was an easy sell when Kraeker asked her to become part of the UNAM School of Medicine initiative. As someone who had previously worked in international development in Zimbabwe, the concept was appealing.

Fulford started as a guest instructor at UNAM in 2013, and has made three more trips to Namibia since.

“One of the things I feel strongly about is sustainability,” says Fulford, associate professor of infectious diseases in the Department of Medicine.

“By going out and helping to create the curriculum, develop the lectures and train years of students in the medical school, that has made a sustainable impact on the country.”

Fulford says she is always impressed by the students in the UNAM School of Medicine.

“What I enjoy the most is the diversity of the students representing different cultural backgrounds of Namibia and the gender diversity,” she says. “It is also amazing to see their shear enthusiasm. I think they see it as a huge opportunity and they appreciate how hard it was to get to where they are.”

Fulford points out the medical challenges facing Namibia are different than in Canada.

There are struggles retaining physicians in the public sector, a lack of medical professionals across the board, as well as difficulty accessing medication in the public health sector.

According to the World Health Organization, the top 10 causes of death are currently AIDS, diarrhea, pneumonia, pulmonary tuberculosis, health failure, other respiratory system ailments, anemia, malnutrition, stroke and malaria. The average life expectancy is about 62 years. Newborn mortality accounts for 50 per cent of child mortality.

“You see a degree of medical conditions we don’t see here,” she says. “While they have the facilities, they are lacking trained people to treat them.”

Among the McMaster faculty members also lending their time and talents at the UNAM School of Medicine are Assistant Professor Zain Chagla, Professor Akbar Panju, Associate Professor Tim O’Shea, Associate Professor Philippe El-Helou and Assistant Professor Serena Gundy, all of whom are in the Department of Medicine.

Martha Fulford is fostering sustainable medical care in Namibia as a guest instructor at the country’s first medical school.
USING REHABILITATION TO HELP THOSE LIVING WITH HIV IN ZAMBIA

Patty Solomon MHSc ’86, associate dean and director of McMaster’s School of Rehabilitation Science, is part of a Canadian-Zambian team along with colleagues from the University of Toronto which is focused on research on rehabilitation in Zambia related to HIV.

Improved access to antiretroviral therapy in Sub-Saharan Africa has transformed HIV from a death sentence into a chronic illness, creating daily life challenges.

This research focuses on the evolution of care to better address the long-term management of HIV as a chronic condition. It is aptly called the Sepo project.

“In Zambia, Sepo means hope,” says Solomon, a physiotherapist by trade who is known for her research in the emerging field of HIV, disability and the role of rehabilitation.

“Our research projects are focused on understanding the types of disabilities people with HIV are experiencing in Zambia and the necessary supports in low resource settings.”

The term ‘disability’ is broad in this sense, encompassing physical impairment, activity limitations and social participation restrictions.

“We are focused on improving day-to-day life, from helping people learn to manage chronic pain and fatigue to how they can engage in work and provide for themselves,” Solomon says. “These disabilities are often amenable to rehabilitation.”

Solomon has travelled to Zambia several times for Sepo-related research. She says the project’s success is reliant on its partners, among which are the University of Zambia and Lusaka Trust Hospital in Zambia.

“You have to work intimately with people on the ground in order to make it meaningful,” says Solomon, noting this includes collaborating with people living with HIV, policymakers, non-government organizations (NGOs) and health providers. The current Sepo research focuses on the types of rehabilitation support health providers and disability organizations can provide for those living with HIV in Zambia, with a focus on the difference in the needs of residents in urban and rural areas.

NURTURING PSYCHIATRISTS IN UGANDA

Three times a year, a small group of McMaster psychiatry faculty and residents travels to Uganda for a shared learning experience at the psychiatric hospital at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST).

This is one aspect of a collaborative partnership in postgraduate psychiatry training between McMaster and MUST called McMUST, established in 2014 by Sheila Harms BHSc ’97 and MD ’03, who has previously racked up years of individual psychiatry efforts in Zambia and Uganda.

Harms is the program director for postgraduate psychiatry training in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, as well as a newly-minted adjunct associate professor at MUST.

“There are only two programs in Uganda that teach postgraduate psychiatry residents despite the country having the same population as Canada,” says Harms, who did part of her post-graduate residency in Uganda.

“Through McMUST, McMaster faculty join MUST faculty to teach, while our residents join their residents for learning in a very different setting.”

Harms says there is a strong willingness to develop psychiatrists in Uganda, but a lack of resources.

“They are already doing a lot of good work, so we are simply adding to the critical mass to get the effort off the ground,” she says.

Harms says in addition to bolstering Ugandan postgraduate psychiatry training, the collaboration also gives McMaster residents valuable training.

“Our residents tell me it is an experience that alters not only their professional perspective, but their personal identity within psychiatry,” she says, noting the initiative is resident driven under her guidance.

“Ninety per cent of the Ugandan population accesses traditional healers for mental health problems. The popular discourse rejects the Western notion that mental health can be treated by medicine. Those who are coming to the hospital are a small minority, so by the time they do, the acuity and severity of the illness is incredible, with co-morbidities of infectious disease and other injuries.”

The McMUST initiative includes a bi-weekly Skype call between the residents and faculty, as well as collaborative research projects by the residents.

Harms is currently working towards extending the McMaster visits from two weeks to a month. Future plans also include extending the program to develop an interdisciplinary focus.

Residents Achille Bapolisi and Mike Brown during a community psychiatry outreach visit in rural Western Uganda.
SUPPORTING HEALTHY LIFE TRAJECTORIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Promoting health in mothers and babies around the world is a priority for Deborah Sloboda.

Sloboda is a Canada Research Chair in Perinatal Programming and an associate professor of the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences. She is an investigator on an intervention cohort study focused on reducing transgenerational risk of obesity and metabolic disease in the disadvantaged urban area of Soweto in Johannesburg, South Africa.

“In Soweto, more than 30 per cent of women enter pregnancy overweight or obese. Women have high rates of gestational diabetes, anemia and depression, and high rates of giving birth to low birth weight babies,” she says.

“Soweto represents a vulnerable population, and this community-based intervention study aims to improve the health and well-being of disadvantaged women before and during pregnancy to improve health outcomes in their children.”

The five-year study is called the Building Knowledge and a Foundation for Healthy Life Trajectories in South Africa: A Preconception Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD) Intervention Cohort. Funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, it began in 2017.

The program is a partnership between a South African group led by Shane Norris from Wits University and a Canadian contingent led by Stephen Lye of the University of Toronto.

“Dr. Norris and Dr. Lye have established a strong, multi-disciplinary team of investigators and knowledge users to support women and children in reaching healthy life trajectories to address issues of chronic non-communicable diseases, including obesity and related conditions,” says Sloboda.

Sloboda notes that a healthy start to life, beginning in the womb, and growth and development during the first 2,000 days of life, underpins health and wellbeing throughout early childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

MENTORING SUBSPECIALISTS FROM UGANDA IN HAMILTON

One of the challenges facing doctors in Africa is a lack of subspeciality medical education.

Hardworking physicians would like to help more patients, but are not always able to access additional training.

As a way to help fill the gap, an exchange program was created in 2000 called the St. Joseph’s Health System-McMaster-Makerere International Outreach Program collaboration for Promotion of Health Care in Low Income Countries.

The initiative involves multiple departments and divisions of McMaster’s Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton and the International Outreach Program (IOP), as well Makerere and Mbarara Universities in Uganda.

There are also trainees coming from Guyana in South America through an exchange partnership with the University of Guyana.

“More than 100 residents and fellows in a variety of disciplines received training at McMaster since 2000, and they have gone home to Uganda and Guyana to practise medicine, teach residents and students, and take on leadership positions in their home countries,” says Rebecca Kruisselbrink, MD ’08 and a clinical assistant professor of the Department of Medicine. “We have data to indicate that over 96 per cent of our graduates return and stay in their country of origin.”

Kruisselbrink has been the chair of the Subspecialty Global Health Subcommittee, McMaster University since 2013, serving as the link between McMaster’s faculty members and Uganda’s education and health systems.

As such, she travels to the country at least one month each year to meet with potential candidates and health officials to ensure the program is in alignment with the country’s greatest subspecialty needs.

“We want to make sure we are training physicians who are going to become educators and leaders back home,” says Kruisselbrink, who is also a long-time volunteer assisting with medical outreach in rural Ghana with the NGO International Needs.

Physicians accepted into the program from Uganda, as well as Guyana, come to McMaster for a period of up to one year. Generally speaking, they have already completed medical school as well as their residency program, worked for a number of years in a teaching and clinical capacity, and are looking to subspecialize.

“They are coming for full, hands-on subspecialty training because, to date, it isn’t offered in a formalized capacity in Uganda,” says Kruisselbrink. “If you go back a few years, there was no hematologist in Uganda. Now there are several and they have all been trained at McMaster.”

Kruisselbrink, who made her first trip to Uganda in 2011 says it is clear to her the health system is improving because of the collaborative exchange program.

“In the last five to six years, I have seen so much change in such a positive way,” says Kruisselbrink.

“Quality improvement rounds are held regularly, paying attention what could have been done differently; physicians are challenging the status quo; patients are cared for differently. Most of all, there is an increased awareness of what is possible to achieve and physician-leaders seeking to achieve it.”
Mark Crowther, MSc ’98, professor and chair of the Department of Medicine, was recruited to become involved in the IOP-McMaster-Makerere initiative close to 15 years ago.

Shortly after, the physician mentored and befriended a Ugandan trainee visiting Hamilton named Henry Ddungu, who opened his eyes to the differences in health care and the need for the program.

“I had conceptually been aware of the fact that we are extremely privileged to live Canada, but it had never been hammered home until I became friends with Henry,” says Crowther, noting Ddungu is now a consultant in hematology/oncology at the Uganda Cancer Institute. “Henry showed me there are enthusiastic and smart medical professionals in Uganda who are unable to get to the next level because of a lack of resources and organizational framework in their country.”

Crowther, a hematologist, has since been to Uganda at least eight times and has served as a mentor to a number of visiting trainees in Hamilton.

He also became chair of the IOP in 2016, and part of his responsibilities is recruiting mentors for the collaboration with McMaster.

Many faculty members within general internal medicine, endocrinology, infectious diseases, anesthesia, hematology, nephrology, surgery, orthopedics, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, psychiatry and other disciplines including nursing have been involved in the program, either visiting onsite and providing education in the Uganda, or teaching visiting trainees in Hamilton.

Crowther notes McMaster faculty support is strong due to the positive feedback from the program.

“It’s a lot of fun, but it’s also inspiring because although these trainees are going back to an extremely resource-limited environment, they are very eager to learn,” Crowther says. “When we train them adequately, they are going to save more lives than we could even imagine.”

O’Byrne notes the program’s impact when he recalls a recent meeting he attended with senior leadership and medical school faculty at Makerere University.

“Approximately two-thirds of the people in that room had trained here at McMaster or had a connection with our university,”

Jean Chamberlain Froese vividly remembers visiting Uganda in 1997 as a volunteer obstetrician.

The medical supplies closet at a rural health centre where women delivered their babies was bare. There was no basic medical equipment or even medication.

Right then and there, she knew something had to change.

“In today’s world when we talk about equity and people’s rights, many times there are no rights for women in the developing world to have a safe delivery,” says Chamberlain Froese, associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology at McMaster. “In Uganda, many women die because they can’t get the care they need.”

After spending five years in Yemen, “Dr. Jean” as she is known, spent the past 12 years living and raising her family in Uganda while fostering maternal health in Africa.

She found there are three delays that contribute to the death of women during pregnancy and labour. The first is decision to seek care, the second is transportation to the nearest health facility and the third is a lack of resources, from medication to a doctor.

“There are many different delays, but at least half are before the mother even gets to the hospital,” she says. “For me, the most important thing was realizing I’m the last link in the chain and we keep losing these mothers in the first two delays.”

Chamberlain Froese says that simply contributing her skills as a physician was not enough. She knew social change was the only way to make a difference.

As such, she founded Save the Mothers in 2005. The non-profit organization promotes maternal health in the developing world through education, public awareness and advocacy. Based in Uganda and North America, Save the Mothers is part of a global movement to improve the health of mothers and babies.

In 2005, Save the Mothers launched its first program, a Master’s of Public Health Leadership, at Uganda Christian University, near Uganda’s capital, Kampala.

“We have trained 450 East African professionals who are politicians, journalists, religious leaders and in other disciplines who are now advocating for safe motherhood in their own theatres of influence,” she says. “It’s about bringing change to a society from within. I’m not bringing the change. They are bringing the change.”

Chamberlain Froese and her family, including her husband and three children aged 11, 12 and 14, permanently moved back to Hamilton in May 2017.

She works as an obstetrician at St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton, but continues to be as dedicated as ever to her organization and its mandate. Each February and October, she will travel to Uganda to continue the work of Save the Mothers on the ground and offer her services to patients.

She is also working towards establishing a similar public health leadership training program for West Africa in Ghana.

“When you see women dying from a preventable cause, it changes your perspective,” she says. “There’s a great feeling about seeing a need and being able to bring others around that can help. It’s a privilege to do what I do.”

Jean Chamberlain Froese with a mother and newborn baby in Kawolo General Hospital in Uganda.
Almost 40 years ago, Robert Lancaster was an intern for chief resident Paul O’Byrne, now dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University.

This fall, Bobbi Lancaster, a McMaster medical graduate of 1978, family physician in Arizona, professional golfer, author and transgender woman was the keynote speaker at the annual Founders’ Dinner for the second-year students of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine.

Her talk about her life, the challenges, her stumbles through medical school including guidance from the late faculty member Ronald McAuley, her career success, family and her transition at age 60 was warmly received.

“Bobbi is very courageous, a change maker who has a story that is inspirational and builds understanding. I’m very proud of her, and glad she brought her message to our students,” said O’Byrne.

Her inspiring presentation is available on the Faculty of Health Sciences’ YouTube channel at http://bit.ly/2AHvCWy.

The Dundas Lioness Club has donated $5,000 to support the McMaster Student Outreach Collaborative, known as MacSOC.

MacSOC provides free food, clothing, basic personal needs and health information to people who are homeless or marginally housed in Hamilton, and operates out of a space in a downtown church.

President Sue Anne Dix said the group is a women’s service club with a main purpose to help those who are in need.

“The young ladies from MacSOC came out and spoke to us, and we were very impressed with what they do.”

Nursing student and MacSOC president Elizabeth Di Giacomo said the generous gift will have a big impact.

“We’re really grateful,” she said. “It’s a significant and substantial donation. We have ideas on ways to improve what we do and to make sure we can continue.”

Students, staff and faculty members from across campus are involved, but MacSOC plays a special role in the School of Nursing. Nursing students can engage with MacSOC as part of their first- and second-year service learning placements. This year, 10 students from two courses are working with MacSOC.
Is there a way to motivate first-year university students to be physically active as a means to enhance their post-secondary experience and foster positive mental health?

That’s the question driving a new study at McMaster University led by Matthew Kwan, assistant professor and associate director of the Infant and Child Health Lab in the Department of Family Medicine.

The 12-week Physical Literacy intervention for first-year University Students (PLUS) Study is focused on understanding how to prevent the decline in physical activity associated with the transition from high school to university and its impact on mental health.

“Research shows that this transition period is associated with major declines in physical activity, with students being more physically active in high school than in their first year of university,” said Kwan.

“We are trying to figure out ways to stimulate activity as they experience this significant transition in their lives. Being physically active is critically important to their overall well-being.”

Detailed data is being collected of the behavioural, fitness, motivational and mental health outcomes of participants before, during and after the study.

A video about the initiative is available on the Faculty of Health Sciences’ YouTube channel at https://youtu.be/4f2_hbc7LKk.

A program with a storied history at the Faculty of Health Sciences for more than 45 years has a new name and is expanding. The Program for Educational Research and Development (PERD) has been renamed the McMaster program for Education Research, Innovation and Theory (MERIT).

MERIT is collaborating with faculty to engage in high-impact, high-value education scholarship. There are new initiatives and events, as well as a drive for more scholars and scientists to join its ranks.

The vision of the program is to grow a community of scientists and clinicians to advance health professions education through research and applied science.

“We are building a community, sharing in the mission of advancing the best practices in how we teach, assess and evaluate,” said Jonathan Sherbino, assistant dean of education research for McMaster’s Faculty of Health Sciences and an associate professor in the Department of Medicine.

Applications are welcome for MERIT members, scholars or scientists.

To learn more about MERIT, visit https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/perd/.
Mark Crowther, professor and chair of the Department of Medicine, has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Crowther received the honour in recognition of his research contributions toward the treatment and prevention of blood clot complications.

As such, he was named to the Academy of Science of the Royal Society of Canada, which is the country’s highest academic honour.

Crowther holds joint appointments to the departments of medicine and pathology and molecular medicine, and he is also an associate member of the Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence and Impact.

From left, Adam O’Brodovich (son of the late Maureen Andrew), Geoff Norman and Brian Haynes at the 2017 Community of Distinction ceremony.
Eileen Hutton first midwife inducted into Canadian Academy of Health Sciences

Eileen Hutton, assistant dean of midwifery at McMaster University, is the first midwife to be inducted as a Fellow into the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. Considered to be one of the highest honours for members of the Canadian health sciences community, she and 51 other new Fellows were formally celebrated at a ceremony in Ottawa.

In addition to her role as assistant dean for the past 10 years, Hutton is a professor of the departments of obstetrics and gynecology as well as health research, evidence and impact.

Heddle receives Canadian Blood Services Lifetime Achievement Award

Professor of medicine Nancy Heddle has received the Canadian Blood Services Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognizes individuals whose contributions are recognized as both extraordinary and world class in the field of transfusion or transplantation medicine, stem cell or cord blood research in Canada or abroad.

Heddle’s contributions to transfusion medicine have led to changes in routine laboratory testing, blood processing and transfusion practice. Her research, published in more than 200 peer-reviewed publications, has also pushed the boundaries of clinical trial design through new research methodology.

Four rehabilitation science alumni honoured

Four alumni of McMaster’s School of Rehabilitation Science were honoured this fall. They took the school’s Distinguished Alumni Award which recognizes graduates who display leadership, achievement and contributions to the areas of scholarly activity, education, clinical practice or the community at large. Recipients are selected in each of school’s programs of occupational therapy, physiotherapy, rehabilitation science, and health management.

The 2017 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients are: Sukaina Dada – Occupational therapy (’09), Carmen Kirkness-Asche – Physiotherapy (’94) (posthumous), Greg Spadoni – Rehabilitation science (’02) and Stephanie Hill – Health management (’16).

The Distinguished Alumni Award was established in 2012 in conjunction with the McMaster’s 125th anniversary and the 20th class graduating from the School of Rehabilitation.

William (Bill) Bensen was born in Hamilton in 1949, the son of a local physician and the grandson of a McMaster University philosophy professor. Four generations of Bensens learned or taught at McMaster and Bill was in the second graduating class from the university’s medical school. As one of Hamilton’s first rheumatologists, he developed a practice that was as eclectic in its approach, as it was remarkable in its care.

Bill was one of the first physicians to suggest that patients – patients! – should be in charge of their own health. Revolutionary! Knowing that many arthritis patients would never be cured, Bill developed the “Personal Best Approach” to arthritis. His motto was that even lacking a cure, a patient could always feel better.

An admirer of Sherlock Holmes, Bill – like Joseph Bell, the real-life physician who inspired Arthur Conan Doyle – was able to diagnose patients through an uncanny process of observation and deduction.

One story involves Bill watching a new patient take a few steps into his office. “Stop right there,” said Bill. “You have a sore hip from old soccer injuries.” The astonished and correctly diagnosed patient sat down, mesmerized by the doctor with magic powers.

Bill’s Holmesian deductions were no parlour game. They established his credibility and he knew that an important part of the healing process is the patient’s belief in the caregiver. The art of medicine was as important to Bill as the science.

Bill’s life was rich. He and his wife Wynn were prominent Canadian art and antique collectors, and he thoroughly enjoyed his family that included sons, Robert, Ryan and Jayson, and their families. They were all affectionately well acquainted with Bill’s penchant for storytelling, and his ability to turn every story into a lesson on Canadian history or one of his heroes or both. (He was a great admirer of Winston Churchill, William Osler, the pioneering Canadian physician and CPR president William Cornelius Van Horne.)

Bill was a master of joyous intrigue, and his schemes always started the same way: “Call me crazy, but I have an idea.” He would cup his hand over his chin and rub his bottle-brush moustache. If he didn’t have your complete attention, he would whisper conspiratorially, “I don’t know if we can pull this off, but …”. Once you leaned in to listen, he knew he had you, and soon you were helping him create a display of Inuit art in McMaster’s Health Sciences library.

As a family man, Bill never lost his passion for the joys of childhood. He once told his boys of a mysterious, evil snowball gang to inspire them to build the best snow fort and lay in the largest arsenal of snowballs. Only after his sons grew distracted waiting for the confrontation did Bill appear from behind the house with a giant plastic bin containing his own stockpile of winter weapons. The resulting exchange of fire became Bensen legend.

Bill’s life was well lived and full of achievement, but it ended too soon and with much still to do. He was intent on building the art collection of McMaster’s David Braley Health Sciences Centre, writing a book about Canadian history, and meeting his grandson, Elijah, who would be born two months after Bill died. Still, the measure of Bill Bensen’s life is found in what he accomplished, not in regrets. The guest book of his online obituary is signed by dozens of his patients. Many described themselves not just as patients, but as friends. Bill would have liked it that way.

Written by John Kelton, friend and colleague of Bill Bensen and former dean and vice-president of the Faculty. Previously published in The Globe & Mail.
Award honours rheumatologist

The William G. Bensen Distinguished Faculty Award has been created by the Faculty of Health Sciences in tribute to clinical professor Bill Bensen who died in March.

Bensen was a graduate of the medical class of ’73, a Hamilton rheumatologist and an ardent supporter of the Faculty of Health Sciences as well as Canadian culture. He and his wife Wynn have donated or loaned several major art pieces to the Faculty, including the etched glass wall in the Health Sciences Library.

The award will be announced each year at the annual Founders’ Dinner for second year students of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, an event co-founded by Bensen. The award will go to a faculty member of the school who demonstrates McMaster University’s core values of excellence, integrity and leadership.

In announcing the award, Dean and Vice-President of the Faculty of Health Sciences Paul O’Byrne said that, like Bensen, award winners will have a career of service to the medical school, with values reflective of the spirit of learning, teaching and nurturing future graduates, and have prominence and success in their professional career.

The inaugural winner of the award is Rick Adachi, a fellow rheumatologist and close colleague of Bill Bensen.

Adachi, MD ’79, is a McMaster professor of medicine, active researcher, holds the Actavis Chair in Rheumatology for Better Bone Health, and is a staff rheumatologist for St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton.

Renowned McMaster nurse scientist dies

Heather Arthur, a renowned McMaster University nurse scientist who pioneered cardiac rehabilitation research in Canada, died July 27 of cancer.

A McMaster School of Nursing alumna, Arthur joined the Faculty in 1981 and retired in late 2013 as a professor emerita.

During Arthur’s career, she held the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario/Michael G. DeGroote Endowed Chair in Cardiovascular Nursing Research, and she was the chief scientific officer at Hamilton Health Sciences.

Arthur became the first woman and the first nursing professional to be awarded the Canadian Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation Terry Kavanagh Prize in 2013.

In recognition of her pioneering contributions, the Heather M. Arthur Population Health Research Institute/Hamilton Health Sciences Chair in Inter-Professional Health Research was established in the McMaster School of Nursing to further interdisciplinary health research.

Sandra Carroll, acting associate dean and director of McMaster’s School of Nursing, considered Arthur both a mentor and a friend.

“Her mentorship over the years has influenced the course of my career,” said Carroll.

“I will always be grateful her hearing her words of wisdom. When I’m not sure what to do, I will always hear Heather’s voice.”

She is survived by her husband, Steve Pleavin, son, Elliot Craig (Krista), and brother, Brian (Lin).

Remembering Russell Joffe

Dr. Russell Joffe, former dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University, is remembered for his intelligence, leadership and larger-than-life presence.

Joffe was chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences at McMaster from 1994 until 1997, and dean and vice-president from 1997 to 2000.

He passed away on Sept. 12 at the age of 63.

Joffe is internationally known for his research on the regulation of mood and the biology of mood disorders. His clinical work focused on the use of thyroid hormones to treat refractory depression.

While at McMaster, Joffe was a member of the McMaster Regional Mood Disorders Program which won the 1998 American Psychiatric Association’s Psychiatric Services Achievement Gold Award.

“Russell was an influential and respected leader, colleague, scientist and mentor, and a major figure in the history of our medical school,” said Nick Kates, chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences.

Graduate of McMaster’s first MD class passes

A member of the inaugural class of McMaster University’s Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine has died. Dr. Philip (Phil) Brian Maurice passed away on April 17 in California.

Maurice was born in Hamilton in 1945 and grew up in Burlington. He earned a BSc at McMaster in 1968 and his medical degree in 1972.

Maurice moved his family to California to complete his residency in neurology and stayed to practice there. He was a dedicated physician who earned the respect of colleagues and patients.

He is survived by Linda Maurice and their three daughters.
Researchers searching the world for solutions to global health problems

Steven Hoffman is speaking over the phone from an Uber ride in Toronto.

He has just returned from a meeting in Delhi, India, with research travel to Ottawa, Montreal, Stockholm and Copenhagen planned for the following week.

Such is the hectic life of this global health expert – a rising star in his thirties who is a product of McMaster University’s Bachelor of Health Sciences program.

Hoffman is the scientific director of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research’s (CIHR’s) Institute of Population and Public Health and CIHR’s scientific lead for global health.

This summer, he was named a full professor at York University’s School of Health Policy and Management, and Osgoode Hall Law School.

“Balancing different roles takes me back to the skills I learned in the Bachelor of Health Sciences program,” he says in a telephone interview during his ride.

“In the BHSc program, problem-based learning and inquiry projects demanded a high level of self-motivation and organization. Managing multiple roles is a challenge I was well trained to handle.”

Raised in Toronto, Hoffman was drawn to nearby McMaster because of the reputation of the Bachelor of Health Sciences program and its focus on inquiry-based learning.

“The Bachelor of Health Sciences program allowed me to study health from an interdisciplinary perspective,” says Hoffman, who graduated from the program in 2007. “It meant that I could learn about the smallest building blocks of a cell to the biggest challenges facing our society.”

It was John Lavis, professor in the Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact, and Canada Research Chair in Evidence-Informed Health Systems, who opened his eyes to research and global health.

Lavis, also director of the McMaster Health Forum, hired Hoffman as a research assistant for most of his time at McMaster. Lavis also helped facilitate an internship at the World Health Organization’s headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, for Hoffman’s undergraduate thesis.

Hoffman notes Lavis was then, and continues to be, his mentor.

“The opportunity to work with John Lavis was the single most important contributor to the launch and trajectory of my research career,” Hoffman says. “Early experiences working at the World Health Organization allowed me to really see how global health works (or doesn’t work) and inspired much of my current research, which is focused on how international institutions can work better to advance everyone’s health.”

Hoffman’s interest in global health motivated him to complete an MA in Political Science and a Juris Doctor from the University of Toronto, a PhD in Health Policy from Harvard University, and Doctorate in Law from Sciences Po Paris.

Before his doctoral studies, Hoffman practised at a Toronto law firm specializing in intellectual property litigation, but realized he was more interested in research related to the policies affecting health around the world.

More recently, Hoffman decided to take what he referred to as a “long shot” and applied for the CIHR opportunity. It turned out not to be a long shot and he started the role on Aug. 1, 2016.

The CIHR job sees Hoffman working with the Canadian public health research community and stakeholders to identify research priorities, develop research funding opportunities, and translate research evidence into policy and practice to improve the health of Canadians and people around the world.

As a member of CIHR’s leadership team, he also participates in setting and implementing CIHR’s strategic directions, particularly in global health research.

“The scientific director position is one of those roles where it requires so much of you, but provides many opportunities for making a positive difference,” he says.

“Over the next few years, the CIHR Institute of Population and Public Health is going to be focused on three new areas where we think we can make a difference. These include understanding how to build healthier cities, investing in artificial intelligence for population health, and fostering evidence-informed policy, the last of which directly links to my time at McMaster.”

Lavis says Hoffman was always thinking one to two years ahead even as an undergraduate student, and is now taking action to improve health in Canada and internationally with a one- to five-decade time horizon.

“Steven’s Tim Hortons-inspired ‘double double’ approach to education – simultaneous law and international relations programs at U of T and then simultaneous PhD programs at Harvard and Sciences Po – gave him an unparalleled set of analytical skills and professional network,” says Lavis.
“His research now tackles the biggest global health governance issues of our time, his teaching and mentorship roles reach a remarkably broad spectrum of lucky students, and his service roles include being by far the youngest-ever director of a CIHR institute.”

Hoffman’s York University appointment came on July 1, 2017, less than a year after his CIHR appointment. At York, he works closely with Dr. James Orbinski, inaugural director of the new Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research.

“Steven is an outstanding scholar and on matters of global health, I see him as one of the brightest strategic thinkers in world,” says Orbinski, who received his MD degree from McMaster in 1990.

“He has a remarkable ability to frame problems in a way that invites genuine enquiry and illumination, and that allows insight into practical ways forward. I am thrilled to be working with him.”

Hoffman says he looks forward to continuing his research from his new academic home, which integrates legal and epidemiologic methods to craft global strategies that better address transnational health threats and social inequalities. Among these are antimicrobial resistance, falsified medicine, health misinformation, pandemics, poverty, tobacco and vaccine hesitancy.

“It is a big opportunity to help lead a new global health research institute from the start,” says Hoffman, who is also a part-time professor in McMaster’s Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact, and an adjunct faculty member with the McMaster Health Forum. “I am also excited that York will be nominating me for a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair.”

As for what’s next, Hoffman says he’s in a good place now. He recently moved back to Toronto, purchased a house, and looks forward to settling down.

“I am committed to working towards figuring out how we can use law, policy and regulation to help make people around the world as healthy as they can be.”

– Steven Hoffman

And there’s always another work trip somewhere in the world just around the corner.

“Being a professor is the best job, and with my role at CIHR, it’s only even better – better than I imagined for myself at this stage of my life,” he says. “I am committed to working towards figuring out how we can use law, policy and regulation to help make people around the world as healthy as they can be.”
FHS alumni: Where are they now?

1970s
JANE GALBRAITH
BScN ‘76
Jane Galbraith, a graduate of McMaster’s School of Nursing, has been appointed a part-time member of the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal of Canada. The two-year appointment came into effect in May. Galbraith has been previously been a full-time member of the Income Security section of the Tribunal’s General Division since its inception in 2013. She has spent more than 30 years as a health-care professional, which included director roles at Halton Community Care Access Centre. She is also the author of Baby Boomers Face Grief – Survival and Recovery and has done speaking engagements on this topic.

1980s
CATHERINE KELLY
BScN ’89
Catherine Kelly was named the vice-president of Home and Community Care for the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network (ESC LHIN) this past spring. Kelly joined the ESC Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) in 2015 and was its senior director of patient services at the time of the appointment. Kelly has spent more than 25 years in leadership roles in both the community and health-care sectors, including several leadership positions at the legacy South West CCAC. She has her Masters Certificate in Health Care Management through York University and most recently completed the Advanced Health Leadership Program through the Rotman School of Management, Executive Programs at the University of Toronto. The Home and Community Care arm of the Erie St. Clair LHIN annually serves more than 39,000 patients across the region.

1990s
MARIA PATRIQUIN
MD ‘96
Maria Patriquin and her team recently celebrated the fifth anniversary of Living Well Integrative Health Centre in Halifax N.S. After graduating from McMaster she received a Women’s Health Fellowship at Women’s College Hospital/University of Toronto and later went on staff. In 2000, the family physician returned to her native Halifax and completed mindfulness training at University of Massachusetts Medical School’s Center for Mindfulness. Patriquin is physician lead in Nova Scotia for group medical visits and group therapy. She is a founding and board member for the Association for Positive Psychiatry of Canada. She acts as Atlantic Canada representative for the Mental Health Committee of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and sits on the Editorial Advisory Board of Canadian Family Physician. Patriquin is an assistant professor at Dalhousie University.

2000s
NIKHIL PAI
MD ‘07
Nikhil Pai has come full circle. After graduating with an MD from McMaster in 2007, he completed his residency training at the University of Toronto and the Hospital for Sick Children. A fellowship in pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition took him to Harvard University and Boston Children’s Hospital. Pai joined McMaster’s Faculty of Health Sciences in 2014 and is an assistant professor through the Division of Gastroenterology and Nutrition of the Department of Pediatrics in the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. He is also a clinician at McMaster Children’s Hospital, where he balances a busy pediatric gastroenterology practice alongside an active research program. Pai recently received an Innovation Fund Award from the Ontario Innovation Fund Provincial Oversight Committee for his clinical trials on fecal microbiota transplantation in children with inflammatory bowel disease.

2010s
JANET McMORDIE
MD ’13
Janet McMordie helped Canadian athletes stay at the top of their games at the FISU (International University Sport Federation) 29th Summer Universiade 2017 in Taipei, Taiwan this past summer. A sport medicine physician, McMordie was part of the team of medical professionals with Team Canada. The Universiade is the second-largest multi-sport games next to the Summer Olympics. “I knew the FISU games would be an incredible experience working with elite athletes, as well as leaders in the field of sport medicine,” she said. McMordie is a sport medicine physician in Orillia, Ont. and consults at a nurse practitioner clinic in Horseshoe Valley. She also volunteered with the medical team for Team Canada at the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games.

CHAD JOHNSTON
BSc ’10 and PhD ’16
Chad Johnston, a PhD graduate in biochemistry and biomedical sciences, is the recipient of the 2017 Council of Graduate Schools ProQuest Dissertation Award in the field of biological sciences. His thesis, New Techniques Facilitate the Discovery and Study of Modular Microbial Natural Products, was selected as the best among 57 nominations from universities throughout North America. His graduate research has been called ‘transformative’ for harnessing the tools of modern genomics to find new antibiotics and re-engaging the sector with practical methods and technology. Johnston is currently a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
Reunions

McMaster’s Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences celebrated its 50th anniversary on October 14/15. Former (and current) chairs of the Department gathered for a photo during the event. Pictured, back row from left are Gerhard Gerber, John Capone, Gerry Wright, Dennis McCalla. Pictured front row, from left are Eric Brown, Hara Ghosh, Karen Mossman, Karl Freeman and current chair Brian Coombes.

The McMaster MD Classes of ’72, ’77, ’82, ’87, ’92, ’97 and ’07 gathered for a reunion on October 21/22 at McMaster University. Pictured is the class of ’77.
Climate Change and Health Innovation Award set up at McMaster

A unique student award has been established at McMaster University to recognize innovative solutions to complex sustainability challenges.

The Climate Change and Health Innovation Award was created through a contribution from two anonymous alumni of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. Their $15,000 gift will be divided into $5,000 awards, one per year for the next three years.

"Climate change is possibly the greatest public health challenge of our time," said one of the donors. "Students at McMaster are working on solutions to mitigate this problem. We wanted McMaster, renowned for innovation and problem-based learning, to have a means of rewarding these students."

The award is open to any group of two or more students from different Faculties who have completed an experiential learning project as part of their participation in a program offered through McMaster’s Academic Sustainability Programs (ASP). The ASP office focuses on providing opportunities for students to work in interdisciplinary teams to tackle real-world sustainability problems, as well as to develop and implement solutions.

The deadlines for award applications is April 30, 2018 at 11:59 p.m.

For more information, visit https://www.facebook.com/events/1919271481658251/ or email whalenk@mcmaster.ca.

McMaster students, left to right, Erin Sinclair, Tyler Marr and Angela Xie were part of a team that worked with the City of Hamilton and SoBi Hamilton to improve on-campus bike share as their project for a third-year sustainability course.