



**IRCM** MONTREAL CLINICAL  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**20**

**21**

ANNUAL REPORT





A YEAR MARKED BY  
RESILIENCE: THE IRCM  
COMMUNITY SHARES  
ITS STORIES . . .



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## THE IRCM AT A GLANCE

AFFILIATED WITH

Université de Montréal

CLINIC AFFILIATED WITH

CHUM

ASSOCIATE WITH

McGill

RECIPIENT OF BUDGET

Économie, Science et Innovation Québec

54

YEARS OF BASIC AND CLINICAL BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH in addition to training high calibre scientists in an innovative technological environment in the heart of downtown Montreal.

425

EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

34

LABORATORIES

4

4 RESEARCH CLINICS SPECIALIZED IN: • hypertension • lipids • diabetes as well as a research centre on rare and genetic diseases in adults and a Post-COVID-19 Clinic.



THIS PAST YEAR HAS SHOWN HOW WELLBEING AND READY WE ARE TO TAKE OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE AMONG THE WORLD'S RESEARCH CENTRES THAT MAKE A HIGH-QUALITY CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

More than ever before, the events of the past year have put the functioning of our Institute to the test. Indeed, we have never before been faced with a pandemic of such magnitude and all that it can entail for a research institution like ours: how can we maintain our traditional research activities while proposing solutions to the fight against COVID-19?

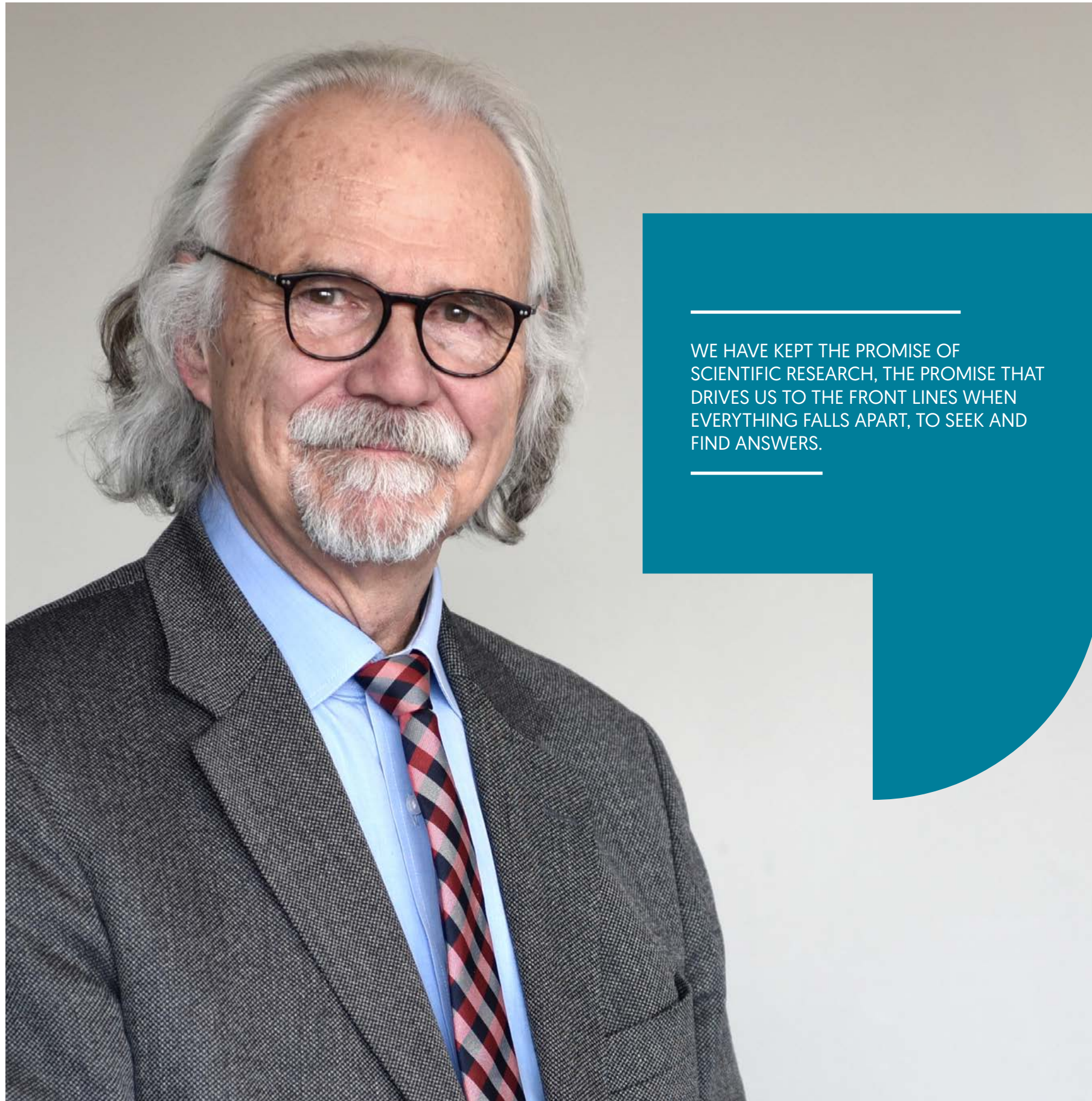
In light of the results produced, the IRCM has proven itself. Grounded in the solid foundations of its culture of excellence, the quality of its Montréal network, and the liveliness of its community, the IRCM has been able to stay the course and put Quebec's scientific community on the map. This past year has shown how wellbeing and ready we are to take our rightful place among the world's research centres that make a high-quality contribution to scientific knowledge, guaranteeing the well-being of future generations. Thus, well beyond the current pandemic, it is with great confidence and serenity that we look to the future.

We owe all of this to the people who, year after year and generation after generation, continue to adhere deeply to this vision. Among those, we salute the memory of Mr. Jacques Gauthier and Mr. Emmanuel Triassi, who passed away this year, leaving empty spaces that will be difficult to fill. Through their commitment and loyalty to the Institute and its Foundation, they

have entered the pantheon of giants who have made the IRCM the Quebec jewel of which we are so proud. I would also like to thank all our collaborators, partners, volunteers, and benefactors who follow in their footsteps.

A special thank you to everyone for your immeasurable support.

**PIERRE DUPLESSIS**



WE HAVE KEPT THE PROMISE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, THE PROMISE THAT DRIVES US TO THE FRONT LINES WHEN EVERYTHING FALLS APART, TO SEEK AND FIND ANSWERS.

## MESSAGE FROM OUR OUTGOING PRESIDENT & SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

At this time a year ago, we were faced with deep uncertainty. Uncertainty about the months to come, about our current projects, but also concern for our world, our loved ones, our students, our employees...

Today, we finally see a light at the end of the tunnel with the arrival of vaccines. Beyond the obvious relief that this brings, it is with pride that I present this unprecedented annual report. Pride because, together, through these troubled waters, we have accomplished great things. We have kept the promise of scientific research, the promise that drives us to the front lines when everything falls apart, to seek and find answers.

This year of pandemic has turned into a year of accomplishment, thanks to the dynamism, vitality, resilience, and scientific excellence of our community. In addition to an impressive virtual shift which allowed us to pursue our main activities, such as the Scientific Forum, various conferences, and the Foundation's fundraising events, the Institute has stood out on the scientific scene.

Indeed, beyond a tremendous mobilization to contribute to the global efforts against COVID-19, we have continued to advance scientific knowledge around several other health issues, despite the adversity we faced.

I would therefore like to express my gratitude to the members of the IRCM's internal community, our employees, our researchers, our students, our patients, our volunteers, our specialists, and the members of our Board of Directors, for their remarkable work despite the circumstances. It is through their efforts that we have been able to hold the line so far.

To salute their resilience, we dedicate this special annual report to them, letting them tell their stories of a year that we will not soon forget.

**MAX FEHLMANN**

# THE CHALLENGE OF SECURITY DURING A PANDEMIC

*Michel Charest is Head of Security at the IRCM. From the earliest days of the pandemic, he and his team made sure that the IRCM's premises were safe in order to allow the research work to continue; A huge responsibility that they took on with rigour, tenacity, and perseverance.*

**Michel, thanks to the incredible work of your team, research was able to continue at the Institute. What did this entail?**

From the onset of the pandemic, I knew that our department would have an important role to play in keeping our community safe. So, we had to quickly channel our concerns into actions. Our first big task was to implement the measures and instructions in record time to allow operations to be maintained without compromising the safety and health of the staff. This involved a lot of complex logistics. We acquired astronomical quantities of sanitizer and masks, and we put up signs to remind everyone of the instructions to follow. At the same time, our maintenance staff conducted daily rounds of surface disinfection, and we established circulation corridors to minimize contact. Today, we can be proud of what we achieved!

**What was your biggest concern?**

My biggest concern was to not do enough to prevent the virus from spreading throughout the Institute. We knew that, next to nursing homes and retirement homes, workplaces were the source of many outbreaks.

**How did the community react to these instructions?**

The community was very accepting of our measures. We received many words of encouragement. It helped us get through the most difficult months.

**What will you remember about this first year of the pandemic?**

It's a year we don't want to relive, and we hope we won't have to deal with another pandemic anytime soon. However, what I'll remember most is the fact that, thanks to everyone's sustained efforts, it was possible to get through this first year of a global pandemic relatively unscathed. Of course, we had to reinvent ourselves to change our work methods and routines, but it was all done in harmony and with the understanding that we were in an extraordinary situation.

# Q&A

THANKS TO EVERYONE'S SUSTAINED EFFORTS, IT WAS POSSIBLE TO GET THROUGH THIS FIRST YEAR OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC RELATIVELY UNSCATHED.

**MICHEL CHAREST**  
Head of Security

500

LITRES OF HAND SANITIZER

45,000

MASKS DISTRIBUTED AS OF MARCH 31, 2021

# DISCOVERY

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Health measures, including physical distancing and teleworking, disrupted our routines overnight. Despite the uncertainty, our administrative and scientific teams were nonetheless able to adapt in order to uphold the tradition of research excellence that the IRCM is known for. The Institute thus became the scene of an unprecedented mobilization of our community's strengths and resources to contribute to research efforts made all around the world to counter COVID-19.

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CANCER  
AND GENETIC  
DISEASES



**JEAN-FRANÇOIS CÔTÉ\***  
Cytoskeletal Organization  
and Cell Migration



**TARIK MÖRÖY**  
Hematopoiesis and Cancer



**MARTIN SAUVAGEAU**  
Functional Genomics  
and Noncoding RNAs



**MARIE TRUDEL**  
Molecular Genetics  
and Development



**JEAN VACHER**  
Cellular Interactions  
and Development

CARDIOVASCULAR  
AND METABOLIC  
DISEASES



**JENNIFER ESTALL\***  
Molecular Mechanisms  
of Diabetes



**BENOIT COULOMBE**  
Translational Proteomics



**CHRISTIAN DESCHEPPER**  
Experimental Cardiovascular  
Biology



**MAY FARAJ**  
Nutrition, Lipoproteins and  
Cardiometabolic Diseases



**MATHIEU FERRON**  
Integrative and Molecular  
Physiology



**RÉMI RABASA-LHORET**  
Metabolic Diseases



**NABIL G. SEIDAH**  
Biochimie neuroendocrinienne

IMMUNITY  
AND VIRAL  
INFECTIONS



**WOONG-KYUNG SUH\***  
Immune Regulation



**ÉRIC A. COHEN**  
Human Retrovirology



**JAVIER DI NOIA**  
Mechanisms of Genetic  
Diversity



**ÉMILIANA LIANA FALCONE**  
Microbiome and Mucosal  
Defense



**HUA GU**  
Molecular Immunology



**PAUL JOLICOEUR**  
Molecular Biology



**ANDRÉ VEILLETTE**  
Molecular Oncology

NEUROBIOLOGY  
AND DEVELOPMENT



**MARIE KMITA\***  
Génétique et développement



**MICHEL CAYOUCETTE**  
Cellular Neurobiology



**FRÉDÉRIC CHARRON**  
Molecular Biology of Neural  
Development



**JACQUES DROUIN**  
Molecular Genetics



**DAVID R. HIPFNER**  
Epithelial Cell Biology



**ARTUR KANIA**  
Neural Circuit Development



**ERIC RACINE**  
Pragmatic Health Ethics



**HIDETO TAKAHASHI**  
Synapse Development  
and Plasticity

SYSTEM BIOLOGY  
AND MEDICAL  
CHEMISTRY



**NICOLE J. FRANCIS\***  
Biochemistry of Epigenetic  
Inheritance



**YVAN GUINDON**  
Bioorganic Chemistry



**ÉRIC LÉCUYER**  
RNA Biology



**MOHAN MALLESHAIAH**  
Stem Cells and Cell  
Reprogramming



**MARLENE OEFFINGER**  
Ribonucleoprotein Biochemistry



**FRANÇOIS ROBERT**  
Chromatin and Genomic  
Expression



**PETER W. SCHILLER**  
Chemical Biology and Peptide  
Research

\*Axes Directors

# SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

## The IRCM at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19: Research initiatives against COVID-19



**Michel Chrétien and Majambu Mbikay** in partnership with the International Consortium on Anti-Virals, and in collaboration with colleagues from the CR-CHUM and of the IRCM, launched a clinical project to test the effectiveness of isoquercetin as an antiviral against COVID-19. After an initial attempt in China, Health Canada granted authorization for trials in Canada. If proven effective, isoquercetin could be an interesting curative option.



To help address the need for screening tests early in the pandemic, **Martin Sauvageau** and his team set up a COVID-19 screening platform by transforming certain areas of the Institute that already met the safety standards necessary for such a project.



Under the initiative of **Nabil Seidah** and **Éric Cohen**, the IRCM upgraded and certified its level 3 containment laboratory (NC3) to allow researchers to evaluate agents with therapeutic potential against dangerous pathogens such as SARS-CoV-2. The NC3 laboratory now offers a safe infrastructure for in vitro and in vivo experimentation, as well as access to a world-class array of expertise in both cellular and molecular biology.



**Benoit Coulombe** used his expertise to develop assays to test for inhibitors of SARS-CoV-2 polymerase.



**André Veillette** joined the Canadian government's COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force. The Task Force, made up of 18 experts, advises the federal government on issues pertaining to vaccine development including priorities, partnerships, research and development, as well as supply chain management, local manufacturing opportunities, and market access.

### THE POST-COVID-19 RESEARCH CLINIC

Emilia Liana Falcone set up the Post-COVID-19 Research Clinic to evaluate the long-term effects of the virus in order to improve knowledge that will allow better clinical management of survivors.

**\$1.1M** GRANTED BY THE MEI, THE MSSS AND THE FRQ-S



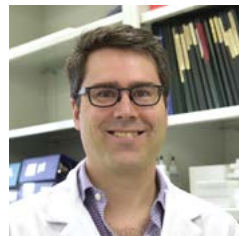
**DR. EMILIA LIANA FALCONE**  
Director of the Post-COVID-19 Research Clinic (IPCO)

By late spring 2020, the notion of long COVID had emerged, as more and more survivors of the disease were reporting the aftereffects they were facing. So, I knew immediately that we needed to prepare ourselves to be able to provide concrete solutions in the near future. This is where the idea of a Post-COVID-19 Research Clinic came from. It was quickly welcomed as part of the Institute's Clinic, and submitted to the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation, and the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé (FRQS).

The launch, in February, generated a lot of attention and hope. We were inundated with calls from the public, especially from COVID-19 long haulers who didn't know where to turn. I salute the incredible courage of our multidisciplinary team, in both the clinic and the lab, who did an absolutely fantastic job under enormous pressure and a heavy workload, despite reduced staffing.

In just a few months, the Post-COVID-19 Research Clinic has enrolled over 100 participants in the study. We hope to soon have preliminary results of data analyses that will help our physician colleagues better manage these patients.

# THE HIGH-IMPACT RESEARCH CONTINUES



In a paper published in the journal *Nature Cancer*, **Frédéric Charron**'s team unveils a triggering mechanism for medulloblastoma, the most common brain cancer in children.



In a paper published in the journal *Nature Communications*, **Jean-François Côté** collaborated with the eminent David Barford of the University of Cambridge to shed light on the 3D structure of the ELMO/DOCK2 complex, which contributes to the formation of metastases, the leading cause of death in cancer patients.



**Michel Chrétien**, in collaboration with a team from McMaster University, uncovered a rare genetic mutation that may protect against certain diseases. Unique to a few French-Canadian families, this mutation is a sort of fountain of youth, since the members of these families tend to live to an advanced age.



In a paper published in *Scientific Reports*, an online journal of *Nature Research*, **Christian Deschepper** drew attention to a little-known role of Y chromosome genes that could help to explain why certain diseases manifest differently in men. This discovery crowned Christian Deschepper's career, since he retired during the year.



In 3 studies published in the *Nature* journal, **Eric Lécuyer** and his team helped elucidate the function of more than 300 RNA-binding proteins that had, to this date, escaped the radar of biologists. This research, carried out in the context of the international ENCODE consortium aimed at characterizing the regulatory elements of the human genome, offers the most detailed mapping of molecular pathways for RNA regulation produced to date.

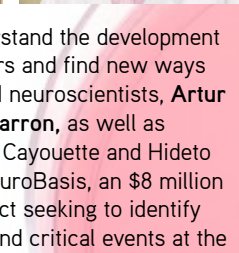
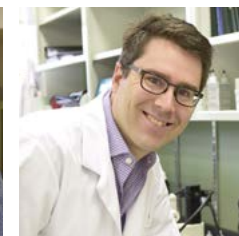
Jean-François Côté also collaborated with Mike Sapieha's team of the CR – HMR, on a new study published in the journal *Science*, highlighting the discovery of a cellular process in the retina that could lead to the development of a treatment for people suffering with diabetic retinopathy, a diabetes-related complication that can cause blindness.



In a study recently published in the journal *eLife*, **Mathieu Ferron**'s team discovered that by adding sugar to a bone hormone called osteocalcin, it is possible to help the metabolism. This optimized version of the hormone could be the basis for innovative therapies, especially for issues such as diabetes, muscle weakness, or cognitive decline.



In order to better understand the development of neurological disorders and find new ways to treat them, two IRCM neuroscientists, **Artur Kania** and **Frédéric Charron**, as well as their colleagues Michel Cayouette and Hideto Takahashi, launched NeuroBasis, an \$8 million multi-institutional project seeking to identify the genetic mutations and critical events at the origin of these disorders.



Alongside the mobilization against COVID-19, the IRCM's usual research activities continued, resulting in important breakthroughs. These exceptional results are a testament to our research teams' resilience and, above all, to our passion when it comes to high-impact research. So, despite this difficult year, our researchers have unveiled spectacular advances, published in some of the world's most prestigious journals.

164

PEER-REVIEWED SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

72

PUBLICATIONS WITH IMPACT FACTOR OVER 5

# RUNNING A LAB WHILE PHYSICAL DISTANCING

*The mandatory lockdowns required an obvious physical and mental adaptation of our lab directors in order to support their teams and continue their work. Jennifer Estall, Director of the Diabetes Molecular Mechanisms Research Unit, tells us about it.*

## What were the most important challenges for your lab?

The biggest challenge at the beginning was to deal with the interruption of ongoing experiments. Months of research had to be thrown away, which was heartbreaking, especially to graduating students who were about to move on to the next stage of their career. Three of my students graduated successfully during the initial six months of the pandemic in a stressful and uncertain context. New trainees from abroad who were supposed to join our lab were delayed indefinitely, some even had to give up due to endless Visa delays. Later, my biggest challenge was to remain positive in our new virtual world, only getting to interact over screens and emails.

## How did the sanitary measures impact your team and their work?

The team was divided into bubbles and shift work was implemented. While in the lab, we had to spread out to allow for physical distancing and my office was adapted into extra space for lab members. Teamwork and collaboration became more challenging. But we all understood the importance of protecting one another and this strategy allowed our research to go on.

## What did you miss the most? What made you proud?

I missed chatting in the halls and coffee times with colleagues. Despite all of that, I am most proud of the way we managed everything in solidarity. Together we came up with creative solutions for the constant adaptation without complaining. The team remained motivated the whole year, which definitely inspired me.

## Any key learning or other relevant aspect you'd like to share?

We learned how resilient we can be. I am convinced we will come out of this knowing that we can deal with anything that comes our way. I also recognized the importance of in-person conferences, meetings and seminars for innovation and progress in science. In-person interactions foster so much creativity and collaboration, which is very difficult in the virtual realm. These interactions are also important for the trainees, as they provide an environment for network building and career advancement.

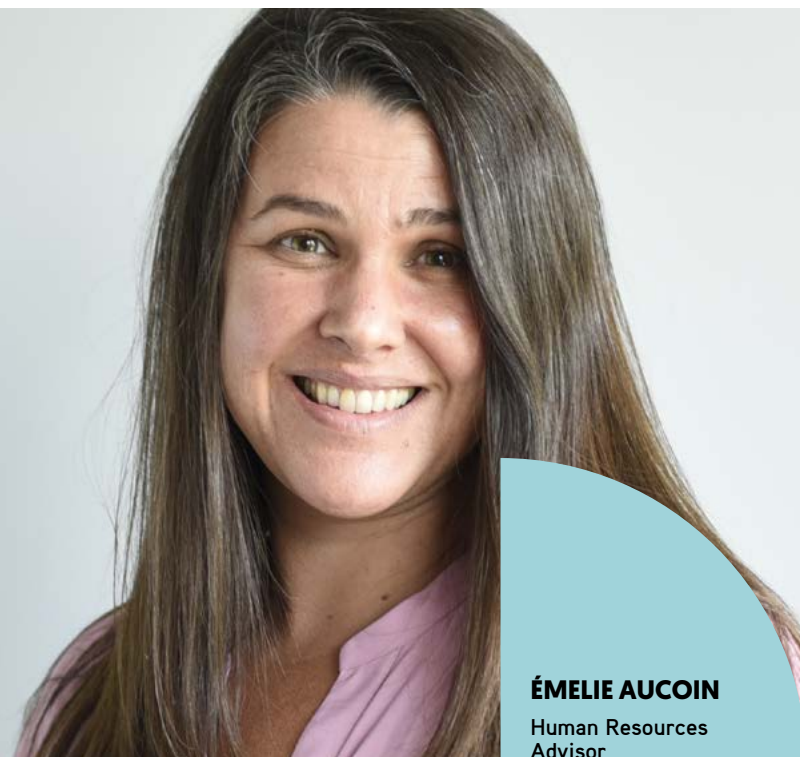
# Q&A

WE LEARNED HOW RESILIENT WE CAN BE. I AM CONVINCED WE WILL COME OUT OF THIS KNOWING THAT WE CAN DEAL WITH ANYTHING THAT COMES OUR WAY

**JENNIFER ESTALL**  
Director of the Molecular Mechanisms of Diabetes Research Unit



**THE HUMAN RESOURCES:  
KEEPING MORALE OF  
OUR TROOPS UP!**



**ÉMELIE AUCOIN**  
Human Resources  
Advisor

From the beginning of the lockdown, we knew that our community was going through a major upheaval, as it was forced to reconcile the realities of working remotely and in person. It was important for us to survey the members of our community in order to assess the difficulties they experienced and the needs arising from the situation we were all going through. As a result of this survey, we established a permanent human resources team at the Institute to offer an enhanced level of listening and support to the members of the community. We also organized recognition activities as a form of encouragement. The pandemic has been difficult, but it has also created an opportunity for us to focus even more on the well-being of our employees, students, and professionals. This has spawned several projects to help our community thrive.



We have had the immense responsibility of ensuring that everyone can continue to work efficiently and safely from home. We had to strengthen our IT system and offer support to a community of several hundred people.

**MARTIN BERNARD**  
IT Technician

# TREATMENT

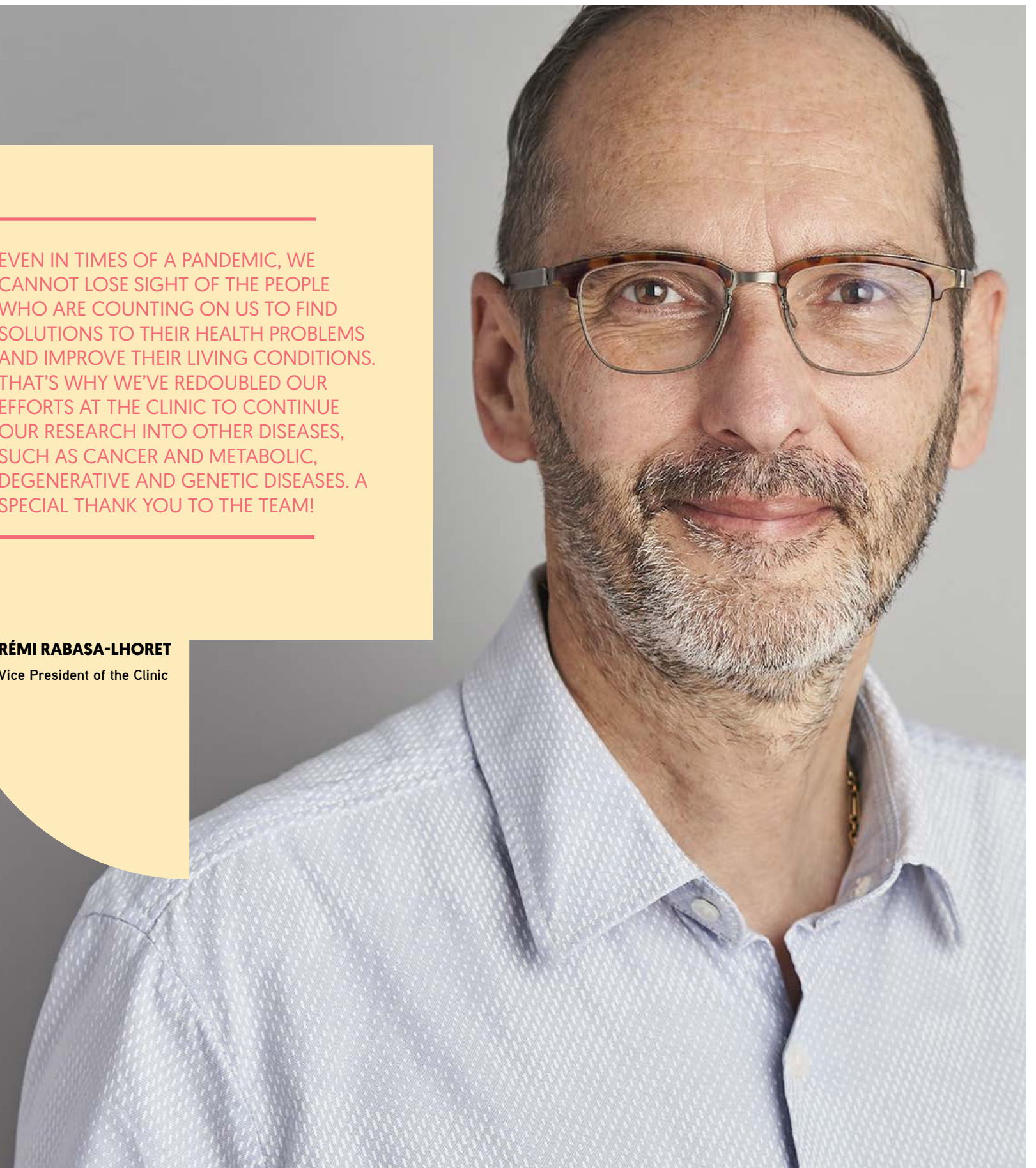
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While the COVID-19 pandemic has brought its share of uncertainty for the general population, the concern it created for those living with pre-existing health conditions is even more profound. This year, the team at the IRCM Clinic witnessed this reality firsthand, as evidenced by the great many questions from the patients and the public. To continue to serve and reassure patients, the team quickly adjusted its way of doing things.

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EVEN IN TIMES OF A PANDEMIC, WE CANNOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE COUNTING ON US TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THEIR HEALTH PROBLEMS AND IMPROVE THEIR LIVING CONDITIONS. THAT'S WHY WE'VE REDOUBLED OUR EFFORTS AT THE CLINIC TO CONTINUE OUR RESEARCH INTO OTHER DISEASES, SUCH AS CANCER AND METABOLIC, DEGENERATIVE AND GENETIC DISEASES. A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE TEAM!

**RÉMI RABASA-LHORET**  
Vice President of the Clinic



# TELEMEDICINE AND TELEWORKING

*Martine Gauthier has acted as a nurse at the Clinic for 20 years, and as head nurse for 13 years. In this capacity, she played a central role to support the reorganization of care in the context of the pandemic. The team quickly set up a telemedicine system as well as a series of initiatives aimed at supporting patients.*

*This exceptional work, which earned Martine the Vincent-Castellucci Excellence Award given to the employees who stood out the most in 2020, has been fraught with challenges. She tells us about it.*

**How did you live the emergence of COVID-19?** Is it enough? That was the big question on my mind as we implemented the health measures and ministerial recommendations to deal with COVID-19. Then, before we could really think it through, we were side by side, giving it all for the patients. We were making decisions, texting and calling one another, burdened by worry in the solitude of our homes, and in my case, in the silence of the deserted hallways of the Clinic.

**How did the team face the situation?**

It is thanks to teamwork that our patients were able to continue to benefit from our support. The establishment of an efficient telemedicine service has allowed for the uninterrupted continuation of high-quality care. This was a great comfort to our patients, many of whom were struggling with isolation. Their recognition and encouragement have been a profound source of motivation for our team.

**What did you learn from that experience**

One thing is certain: to me, the pandemic has confirmed the dynamism, the solidarity, the resilience, the generosity, and the altruism of the Clinic's staff. We all came out stronger and certainly more united. I am proud to be part of this exceptional team, which has made the IRCM Clinic shine by taking up this challenge brilliantly

# Q&A

IT IS THANKS TO TEAMWORK THAT OUR PATIENTS WERE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO BENEFIT FROM OUR SUPPORT. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EFFICIENT TELEMEDICINE SERVICE HAS ALLOWED FOR THE UNINTERRUPTED CONTINUATION OF HIGH-QUALITY CARE.

**MARTINE GAUTHIER**  
Head Nurse at the IRCM Clinic



# OUR PATIENTS TESTIFY

I was really impressed by the kindness of the entire team. During the pandemic, they did everything possible so I could continue to make progress and receive care. There were several exchanges and telephone meetings that proved to be very effective. I called the people at the Clinic *my fire team*.

**CAROLE  
BRAIS**  
Clinic's patient

I can't wait to see the team again, although I cannot say I felt abandoned at any time, thanks to an effective telecare system: telephone appointments and e-mails, online logistical and clinical consultations with the nurse and the nutritionist, and so on... I greatly appreciate the competence and availability of my healthcare team, and despite the kilometers that separate us, it is out of the question that I choose another!

**MICHEL  
DOSTIE**  
Clinic's patient

At the beginning of the pandemic, I was really worried about COVID-19 and the possible complications if I were to catch it, considering my condition. Fortunately, the clinic was quick to offer a video conference on the subject, and that was very reassuring. The IRCM's strategy has been to be even more accessible by email, and in my opinion, the phone meetings should be maintained even after the pandemic. Thank you for your support, your accessibility, and for listening.

**LISA  
FISET**  
Clinic's patient

During the pandemic, my follow-up was ensured by telephone appointments with my doctor and professionals from the Clinic. There were also email exchanges. It was reassuring to know that I could always count on the Clinic's team. I thank them for their good care, their professionalism, and their empathy. With them, I feel safe and well taken care of!

**PASCALE  
MCNICOLL**  
Clinic's patient

# OUR RESEARCH CLINICS



**REMI RABASA-LHORET**  
Director

## DIABETES

The IRCM Diabetes Clinic treats patients with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. It offers specialized care, conducts teaching tasks for patients and health professionals, and carries out research projects.



**MAXIME LAMARRE-CLICHE**  
Director

## HYPERTENSION

The IRCM Hypertension Clinic assesses and treats patients who have rare disorders of blood pressure regulation. A pioneer in Canada in this field of expertise, the clinic teaches and conducts research efforts focused on new methods of diagnosis, monitoring and treatment, aiming to improve hypertensive patient care.



**SOPHIE BERNARD**  
Director

## LIPIDS, NUTRITION AND CARDIOVASCULAR PREVENTION CLINIC

The Lipids, Nutrition and Cardiovascular Prevention Clinic assesses and treats patients with high cholesterol and/or triglyceride levels, and who are at risk of developing cardiovascular or metabolic diseases. To better understand the origin of these lipid disorders and their complications, the team is studying nutritional, biochemical, genetic, molecular and pharmacological aspects of these issues to offer more effective treatments and to reduce complications.



**SOPHIE BERNARD**  
Director

## GENETIC DYSLIPIDEMIAS

The Genetic Dyslipidemias Clinic assesses and treats individuals with rare and severe cases that lead to a significant increase in blood cholesterol and/or triglyceride levels, which can cause cardiovascular or pancreatic complications. In addition, the team carries out research projects to improve screening, diagnosis and treatments of genetic dyslipidemias to provide personalized care and to reduce complications.



**HUGO CHAPDELAIN**  
Director

## PRIMARY IMMUNODEFICIENCY

The Primary Immunodeficiency Clinic assesses and treats patients who, due to a dysfunctional immune system, are at risk of frequent, long-term, severe or atypical autoimmune manifestations and infections. There are an estimated 13,000 such patients in Canada. The clinic's staff also collaborates with researchers of the IRCM's Immunity and Viral Infections Research Division to better understand the evolution of primary immunodeficiency in order to identify appropriate treatments.



**GUILLAUME BOLLÉE**  
Director

## RARE KIDNEY DISEASES

The Rare Kidney Diseases Clinic assesses and treats patients with various kidney diseases including: polycystic kidney disease, thrombotic microangiopathies, tubulopathies, tubulointerstitial kidney diseases and hereditary glomerulopathies. The research protocols that are carried out mainly focus on new methods of diagnosis, monitoring and treatment in order to define a better approach for patient management.

# TRAINING

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Training the next generation of scientists is one of the pillars of the IRCM's mission. For our hundreds of students, the pandemic has brought its share of anxieties. Through these difficulties, we have seen the genius of our students, their commitment to science, their great adaptability, and their resilience.

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# STUDYING WHILE IN CONFINEMENT

## OUR STUDENTS STAND OUT IN SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITIONS

In May 2020, in the midst of a lockdown, the IRCM's next generation of scientists stood out in the national scholarship competitions.

11 of our graduate students and postdoctoral fellows won FRQS scholarships, 3 students won CIHR scholarships, and 1 student won an NSERC scholarship.

Based on the quality of each student's academic record and the potential impact of the research projects presented, these scholarships attest to the excellence of the next generation of students trained at the IRCM.

## VIRTUAL THESIS DEFENCES

In the face of the pandemic, thesis defences required an immediate adjustment. For the first time in the Institute's history, they were held virtually, via the Zoom platform.

Many of the Institute's students had to deal with this radical change to a format that had remained unchanged for centuries all over the world.



**OMAR AL RIFAI**  
Ph.D. Graduate  
Lab of Mathieu Ferron

I defended my thesis as Quebec was entering the lockdown. I felt fortunate to be able to count on the support of both the Institute and my research director Mathieu Ferron. Despite the difficulties, I passed this major milestone brilliantly, although there were only a few of us, and that under the circumstances, it was impossible to bring my family and colleagues together to celebrate as I would have liked. This is only a postponement!

Subsequently, with the slowdown of activities in many research institutions, my options to immediately start a postdoctoral fellowship were quite limited. But I had the chance to do an internship in the industry with the Gordon Shore Prize Award. In the meantime, thanks to the support of my research director, I completed two more articles, which allows me to be even more competitive for the future. I am optimistic.

218

**STUDENTS AND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS**  
57 master's students  
87 Ph.D. students  
36 postdoctoral fellowships  
38 interns

37

**COMPLETED TRAININGS**  
at the Master's and Ph.D. levels and 10 postdoctoral fellowships

122

**SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED**

957

**TEACHING HOURS BY OUR RESEARCHERS**  
at Université de Montréal and McGill University

# OUR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS TEAM: AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE FOR SOLIDARITY

*Traditionally, the Academic Affairs Department has played an important role in bridging the gap between members of our internal community and other institutions, especially universities, granting agencies, governments, and the Public Health Agency. But during the pandemic, the importance and essence of the role of Academic Affairs have taken on another dimension.*

*Myrna Khuon, Academic Affairs Advisor at the Institute, received the Vincent-Castellucci Excellence Award in recognition of her exceptional support to the community during this unusual year. She tells us about it.*

## How did this pandemic year reveal the importance of the Academic Affairs Department?

Our role was to make sure that this year was not lost for the members of our internal community. So, we did a tremendous amount of work to ensure that our students were able to continue their studies, get their scholarships, and get through the important stages of their career without being penalized by the circumstances.

## How did the department react to support the IRCM community?

We reacted quickly, and the teamwork was incredible. I saw that we all had the well-

being of the students and postdoctoral fellows at heart. We faced a widespread virtual shift, resulting in new directives from partner institutions, departments, faculties, or authorities. In this context, our students needed support for thesis defences, exams, supervisory committee meetings, scholarship competitions, courses, etc.

We took the necessary measures to clarify, collect, and disseminate relevant information. We also supported our international students, for whom travel constraints have been a real headache. Furthermore, in order to preserve our usual academic vitality, we have worked hard to maintain our main internal scientific events, such as the Scientific Forum, which became a Research week, and the IRCM Conference Series.

## What were the main challenges?

The main challenges we faced were the need to quickly reorganize ourselves and our work virtually because, despite the pandemic, life had to go on. And we had to do so in record time, through generalized upheaval. We had to be creative, to think outside the box and to muddle through unprecedented situations. For instance, I found myself grocery shopping for an international student who arrived in Montreal during the holiday break. He

Q&R

NOUS AVONS FAIT UN TRAVAIL COLOSSAL POUR QUE NOS ÉTUDIANTS PUISSENT CONTINUER LEURS TRAVAUX, OBTENIR LEURS BOURSES ET FRANCHIR LES ÉTAPES IMPORTANTES DE LEUR PARCOURS SANS ÊTRE PÉNALISÉS PAR LES CIRCONSTANCES.

### MYRNA KHUON

Conseillère aux affaires académiques



## FORMER

didn't know anyone in town and had to go through the mandatory 14 days of quarantine, so we were his only recourse. I brought him food and essentials, and I helped him to get a cellular phone. It was indeed a particular situation.

### What impressed you?

I was pleasantly impressed with the responsiveness of our department. From the first days of confinement, with the team, we organized a weekly crisis unit to carry out regular assessments of the issues and required actions. We worked extensively with the ASSO to stay abreast of the realities affecting our students during this difficult time. I also really appreciated the support from our supervisors, who were very sensitive to the way this situation affected us personally. As parents, we often had to work from home with our young children.

### What lessons have emerged from this pandemic year?

This first year of the pandemic was an opportunity to test our resilience and our proactivity. We worked as a team and we were successful in providing support to students and researchers, proactively and effectively.

### What are your hopes for the coming months?

The pandemic has brought to the forefront new realities and priorities, such as well-being and mental health. I hope that this situation will have enabled us to understand the importance of finding concrete solutions to support everyone - students, postdocs, researchers, young and not so young, men and women, etc. The pandemic has acted as a magnifying glass on these issues, which were present before but have been exacerbated in the past year. Great efforts have been made to provide support and I strongly hope this will go on.



**VIVIAN HYUNH**  
Master's student

The most difficult change to cope with during the last year was the minimal physical interaction with our course instructors. I also got to experience the "virtual" learning style in all forms: I even wrote an exam once while connected to Zoom, which was certainly an uncommon experience!

However, knowing that I was not alone really helped me push through. I am so grateful to have had wonderful peers that I could lean on for mutual support during these difficult times but also for encouragement and celebrating achievements.

I would like to thank all those involved in delivering courses. I think that the IRCM did a wonderful job at ensuring that we were well trained and still in a collaborative learning environment.

I will be proud to say that I have obtained my degree during a pandemic, which will definitely be one for the books!



**PATRICK PENNDORF**  
Student of the MCM Program

It was in December 2020 that I finally set foot on Montreal soil, after several months of travel restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Settling in was a real challenge, as only the essential stores were open. I am deeply grateful to Myrna Khuon of Academic Affairs, without whom I certainly would not have made it! It was difficult not being able to interact with many people. It was even more challenging during a lockdown in the middle of winter; Montreal was a deserted city. But, although the pandemic deprived me of the vitality of the city, Mount Royal remained unchanged. This is the first place I went to and the panoramic view of the city made me feel welcomed!

I am currently doing internships in two laboratories. I am eager to learn more about the various subjects and research methods underway at the Institute. From my university in Germany to the IRCM and the University of Montreal, I am fascinated to see how the research carried out in different places and in various fields comes together. This experience strengthened my determination and my resilience. After all, I believe that the best way to progress is to broaden one's horizons, and that every challenge is an opportunity to learn.

16

UNIVERSITY COURSES ORGANIZED  
BY IRCM RESEARCHERS

151

MASTER'S AND PH.D.  
COMMITTEES

# THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION HAS A NEW COMMITTEE

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: Ashley Chin

VICE PRESIDENT: Thomas Brown

TREASURER: Lucia Gabrielli

COMMUNICATION / Vincent Penneton, Joanna Li, Antoine Bouchard, Elie Lambert

SCIENTIFIC LIFE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES / Sophie Ehresmann, Marion Lacroix, Sarah Nahle

SCIENTIFIC LIFE / Sophie Ehresmann, Marion Lacroix, Sarah Nahle

EVENTS / Antoine Bouchard, Alehandra Desjardins, Laura Quirion, Emma Darbinian

HAPPY HOUR / Sophie Ehresmann, Jean-François Laurendeau, Marion Lacroix

CAREER DAY / Elie Lambert, Vatsal Sachan

STUDENT WELL-BEING / Thomas Brown, Priyanka Prabhala, Virginie Bascunana

FOUNDATION LIAISON / Celine Schott

THIS PAST ACADEMIC YEAR WAS NOT AN EASY ONE FOR STUDENTS. MANY STUDENTS HAD TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THEIR DAILY LIVES, LAB AND WORK ROUTINES. IN THE MIDST OF TRAVEL BANS, AND WITH MANY OF OUR STUDENTS COMING FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, ISOLATION AND CONCERN FOR LOVED ONES HAVE BEEN FELT BY MANY. AS A RESULT, THE IRCM STUDENT ASSOCIATION ORGANIZED NUMEROUS EVENTS IN A NEW FORMAT, INCLUDING TAKE-HOME HOLIDAY MEAL, VIRTUAL SOCIAL GATHERING, WELLNESS WORKSHOP, AND A SERIES OF CAREER WORKSHOPS, AS A WAY TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN DIVERSE WAYS.

## ASHLEY CHIN

Student Association President  
IRCM student



122  
STUDENTS

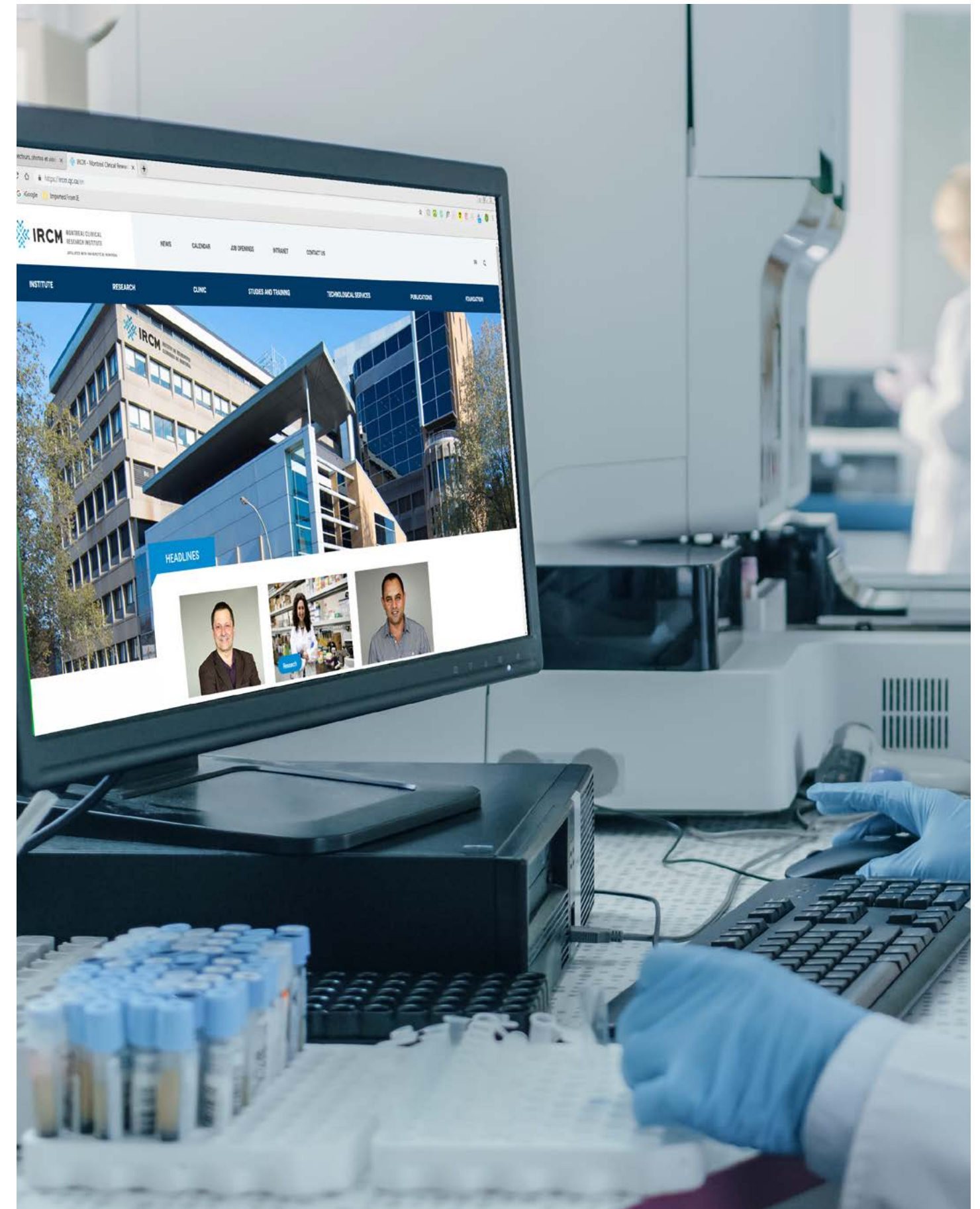
FROM

27  
COUNTRIES



# OUTREACH

Whether through the many conferences organized by its teams, the recognition of the work of its seasoned scientists or students, or simply by its contribution to the public conversation on science, the IRCM's influence crosses borders. Hence, the Institute fully plays its role as a scientific hub of Quebec.



# AWARDS AND RECOGNITION FOR OUR RESEARCHERS



**Mohan Malleshaiah** was awarded a CIHR Project Grant worth over \$800,000 as an Early Career Investigator. Ranked first by the review committee, he was also awarded the CIHR Institute of Genetics Maud Menten New Principal Investigator Prize.



**Rémi Rabasa-Lhoret** obtained a grant of 300,000 euros from the Francophone Foundation for Diabetes Research, a support that will allow a better understanding of dysglycemia and the clinical evolution to cystic fibrosis.



**Sophie Bernard** received the 2020 Clinician Scientist Award at the Canadian Vascular and Lipid Summit of the Canadian Lipoprotein Conference (CLC).



**Mathieu Ferron** received a CIHR grant of almost \$800,000 to study the role of K Vitamin in diabetes, a promising project for a better prevention of the disease.



**Jennifer Estall** received a Senior Research Scholarship from the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé in recognition of her excellent research work. She also received the Young Scientist Award from Diabetes Canada, and a full CIHR grant totaling nearly \$900,000.



**Jacques Drouin** received a \$300,000 grant from Génome Québec, Oncopole and IVADO for his project on decoding the cancer epigenome with Artificial Intelligence. This project will be led in collaboration with Marc G. Bellemare, an expert in the field.



**Éric Cohen** was appointed Vice-Dean for Faculty Affairs and Academic Development at the Faculty of Medicine of the Université de Montréal.



**Marie Kmita** received a CIHR grant of \$700,000 to study the molecular mechanisms involving Hox13 genes, by which digits are formed.

6

CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS

11

OF OUR RESEARCHERS RECEIVED A SCIENTIFIC AWARD

5

NEW CIHR GRANTS

In 2020, our researchers continued to make the Institute shine by winning several awards and honours in recognition of their exceptional work.



**Marlène Oeffinger** and **Yvan Guindon** have each received a Discovery Grant of \$330,000 and \$180,000, respectively, from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada to develop cutting-edge research projects in the area of Integrative Systems Biology and Medicinal Chemistry.



**Éric Cohen** and **Émilie Liana Falcone** were selected by the Canada Foundation for Innovation's Infrastructure Operating Fund to receive more than \$320,000 aimed at providing researchers with highly specialized infrastructure and attracting talent from all over the world.



**Émilie Liana Falcone** also received a major grant of \$1.1M from the MEI, the MSSS and the FRQ-S to support the launch of the Post-Covid-19 Research Clinic.



**Jacques Drouin** and **Eric Racine** were elected to the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, one of three national academies in Canada to honour scientists in recognition of excellence in health sciences. Its elected officials are called upon to speak out on important issues concerning the health of Canadians.



**Peter Schiller**, professor emeritus at the IRCM, received the Career Medal of the Université de Montréal in recognition of his 45 years of exceptional work in support of the development and the sustainability of his discipline as a professor-researcher within the Institute.

# IN THE MEDIAS

*André Veillette, a member of the Canadian government's COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, did not expect the much larger role he would be brought to play. He shares his experience.*

When I was approached to be a part of the Canadian Vaccine Task Force, I didn't hesitate. At that time, the public's dismay over the pandemic was palpable. No one knew how long the lockdown would last or what solutions were available to us.

On the Task Force, we considered all options to quickly obtain safe and effective vaccines for Canada. When it became very clear that Canada did not have the capacity to rapidly develop these vaccines, we advised the Government of Canada to focus on a portfolio of internationally available vaccines.

The subsequent success of the phase 3 studies and the use of new technologies to produce the vaccines gave rise to many questions from the public, and from the media in particular. Giving the public the means to understand the new technologies and the importance of vaccines became essential in order to help them make informed decisions.

Many media outlets turned to me because of my expertise in immunology. I made a point of responding to all relevant interview requests aimed at informing the public in the most objective possible manner possible, based on the available scientific data. I must have done nearly 200 interviews and sometimes as many as six or seven in a single day!

As a Canadian, I consider myself privileged to have benefited from a high-quality education as a physician and as a scientist. For me, it was an opportunity to give back

to as many people as possible, especially since this health crisis has shown us how the lack of information can give free rein to misconceptions that are sometimes dangerous for health.

It wasn't always easy, because I was in the spotlight and was sometimes criticized for positions that didn't suit everyone. One is never quite prepared for that kind of attention. But at the end of the day, by sticking to the science, I think that we, along with other colleagues, have helped people to trust the science. Today, Canada is a world champion of vaccination with a majority of the population vaccinated. This is a great victory!

Although it is far from over, I feel I've learned a lot from this experience, as I've improved my outreach skills to make science more accessible to the public. I have been communicating with the public through the media on an almost daily basis for a year now, and I intend to continue to do so for as long as necessary. The pandemic has increased the public's understanding of the importance of basic research when it comes to dealing with COVID-19 as well as other diseases. Basic research is now an integral part of the public discourse and it absolutely must remain there in order to mobilize the various stakeholders and accelerate the fight against diseases.

THE PANDEMIC HAS INCREASED THE PUBLIC'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BASIC RESEARCH WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING WITH COVID-19 AS WELL AS OTHER DISEASES.

**ANDRÉ VEILLETTE**

Member of the Canadian government's COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force

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MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE IRCM AND ITS RESEARCHERS, 65% OF WHICH FOCUSED ON COVID-19

19

RESEARCHERS MENTIONNED IN THE MEDIA

33%

OF THE COVERAGE WAS INTERNATIONAL

# IRCM RESEARCH WEEK: TURNING A CHALLENGE INTO A SUCCESS STORY

*Last March, Eric Racine completed his term as Associate Vice-President, Academic Affairs, after more than seven years organizing the scientific life at the IRCM. During his tenure, he was able to instill his rich vision of a vibrant and thriving internal community, making room for creativity and exchange. The COVID-19 lockdown measures in 2020 made it impossible to hold traditional activities, such as the Scientific Forum. Eric Racine and his team managed to turn this challenge into a success story with a Research Week in November 2020.*

## Why was it important to organize this event under the circumstances?

Our research community had endured many difficult months, even though research activities never stopped. We felt it was important to send a positive signal to our troops by giving them the opportunity to present their work, meet the community, and showcase their talents. We had to innovate to find the right formula. A virtual "Research week" seemed like a good option.

## What did you take away from this 2020 edition? What were the highlights?

We were convinced the community needed to gather around science, but we had

doubts about the success of this new formula. In the end, we were impressed by the response, with over a hundred participants. We had more than sixty poster presentations, and at the end of the three days, more than thirty prizes were awarded to students who stood out for the excellence of their presentation. This is a testament not only to the vitality, talent, and resilience of our students, but also to the unwavering commitment of the Academic Affairs' staff to our students' cause. We refused to be defined by the rigours of the pandemic, and our community proved us right.

## What lessons should we take away from this experience?

This experience reminded us of the importance of keeping our eyes on the goals, while remaining flexible about how to achieve them. Beyond the format, our activities allow us to come together, to share, collaborate and learn from each other. That is the most important thing. The virtual world has its limitations, but it has allowed us to continue much of our work and our exchanges.

# Q&A

WE REFUSED TO BE DEFINED BY THE RIGOURS OF THE PANDEMIC, AND OUR COMMUNITY PROVED US RIGHT.

### ERIC RACINE

Associate Vice-President,  
Academic Affairs

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PRIZES AWARDED TO STUDENTS  
FOR THE QUALITY OF THEIR  
PRESENTATION

# CONFERENCES ACCESSIBLE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD

## IRCM CONFERENCES CONTINUE ON SCREEN

Thanks to the virtual shift imposed by the pandemic, the IRCM Conference Series continued its activities and welcomed renowned speakers who presented the latest advances in biomedical research and other varied topics, such as entrepreneurship in science.

A series of not-to-be-missed gatherings and learning moments for the Institute's scientific community.

## AN ETHICS CONFERENCE SERIES ON WELLNESS

During the winter, the Pragmatic Health Ethics Conference Series launched its new programming under the theme of wellness, a notion that has come to the forefront of concerns with the lockdown. The series featured a number of prominent speakers, including Rose-Marie Charest, Psychologist, and Joanne Castonguay, Health and Welfare Commissioner for the Government of Quebec, to reflect on various aspects of the issue.



WEBINAR MEETINGS



ATTENDANCES  
OF COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS



MINUTES

WE HAD TO FIND A WAY TO ALLOW ACTIVITIES TO CONTINUE. PRACTICALLY OVERNIGHT, AV BECAME A KEY COMPONENT FOR TELEWORKING TEAMS AND FOR HOLDING CONFERENCES. WITH THE WEBINAR FORMAT, WE WONDERED IF THE AUDIENCE WOULD BE THERE. WE WERE VERY PLEASANTLY SURPRISED TO SEE THAT MORE PEOPLE ATTENDED THE VIRTUAL CONFERENCES!

**PAUL-ÉMILE  
ARMANDO**  
Audiovisuel Technician



# TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

The technology transfer service ensures the optimal exploitation of discoveries. As such, it supports the development of partnerships between researchers, research institutions and the industry in order to promote the maturation of research results and propel innovation from the bench to bedside. The IRCM technology transfer service has undergone a year of significant restructuring with the arrival of a new management, and its distinction from legal affairs. This new breath favours a synergistic and proactive approach for the benefit of highly promising projects currently in maturation.



3

INVENTION DECLARATIONS

4

ACTIVE OPTION AGREEMENTS

14

ACTIVE LICENCES

2

COMPANIES DERIVED FROM IRCM TECHNOLOGIES

# CORE FACILITIES

.....

The core facilities are a great asset for the IRCM scientific community. They allow our internal community to pool its resources and equipment to give everyone access to a greater variety of tools and technologies. These facilities cover the area of two National Hockey League rinks and represent an undeniable learning platform for the next generation.

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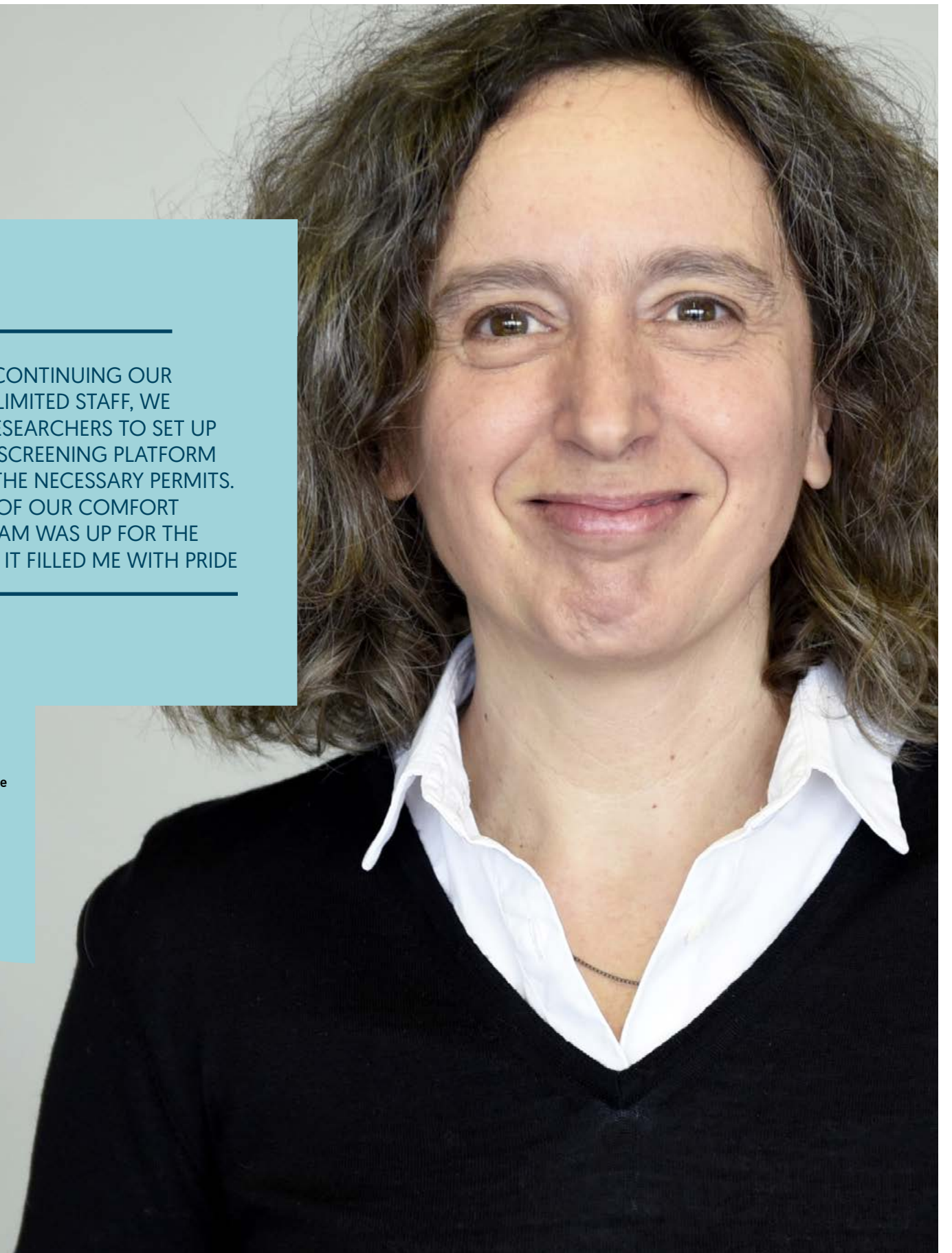
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IN ADDITION TO CONTINUING OUR ACTIVITIES WITH LIMITED STAFF, WE WORKED WITH RESEARCHERS TO SET UP THE SARS-COV-2 SCREENING PLATFORM AND TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY PERMITS. IT TOOK US OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE, BUT MY TEAM WAS UP FOR THE CHALLENGE, AND IT FILLED ME WITH PRIDE

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**JUDITH COTTON-MONTPETIT**

Director of Core Facilities  
and Research Infrastructure



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## CORE FACILITIES

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### ANIMAL HEALTH

Promote and ensure the application of animal care and protection principles in accordance with the Canadian Council on Animal Care's standards and guidelines and provides technical assistance to researchers for experimental research programs.



### BIOINFORMATICS

Supports researchers in the analysis of biological data, particularly high-throughput genomic data.



### MOLECULAR BIOLOGY AND FUNCTIONAL GENOMICS

Provides a range of services combining advice and access to state-of-the-art technology to meet the needs of genetic analysis and gene expression, with new high-throughput sequencing technique, which is now a standard technique in biomedical and enables a large amount of data acquisition in one experiment.



### FLOW CYTOMETRY

Provides characterization services of a large number of cells simultaneously as well as cell sorting using flow cytometry as a multiparametric analysis tool.



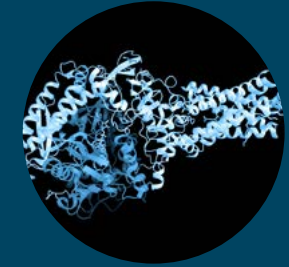
### MICROINJECTION AND TRANSGENESIS

Allows the production of experimental models of human diseases to accelerate the understanding of their causes and progression.



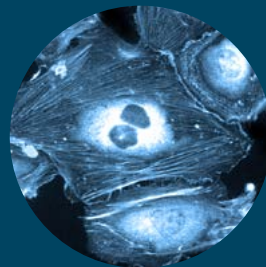
### MICROSCOPY AND IMAGING

Provides state-of-the-art fluorescence microscopes for observation of cells and tissues at different magnification and accuracy, as well as equipment for high-throughput microscopy and videomicroscopy.



### MASS SPECTROMETRY AND PROTEOMICS

Offers state-of-the-art mass spectrometry services for the identification, characterization and quantification of proteins and small molecules.



### HISTOLOGY

Provides expertise in tissue sections and staining for optical microscopy and analysis.

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## RESEARCH PLATFORM

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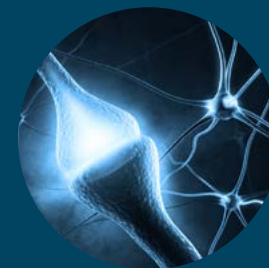


### RESEARCH PLATFORM ON OBESITY, METABOLISM AND DIABETES

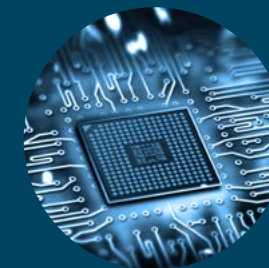
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## SPECIALIZED SERVICES

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### ELECTROPHYSIOLOGY



### SPECIALIZED EQUIPEMENTS



### MAGNETIC RESONANCE

# GOVERNANCE

The IRCM is privileged to be able to count on the dedicated men and women serving on its governing bodies. As seasoned professionals, they contribute their expertise and perspective to help make sure that the Institute runs smoothly.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANAGEMENT AS AT MARCH 31 2021

**Pierre Duplessis**  
*Chair*

Management and Public Health Consultant

**Michel Décary**  
*Vice Chair*

Consulting partner, BCF law firm

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**Luc Boileau**

President and Chief Executive Officer, Institut national d'excellence en santé et services sociaux (INESSS)

**André Couillard**

*President, IRCM Foundation*  
Vice President, Executive Search & Recruitment Solutions, Optimum Talent

**Véronique Boileau**

Vice President, Communications and Branding, Pomerleau

**Philippe Crine**

President, Crine Consultant

**Marinella Ermacora**

Corporate Director

**Max Fehlmann**

*President and Scientific Director, IRCM*

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Corporate Director

**Richard Payette**  
Corporate Director

**Martin P. Rosenthal**

Managing Partner, Transaction Advisory Services - Québec, EY

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Vice President, Legal Affairs, Corporate Affairs, and Head of Human Resources

### OBSERVER

**Denise Moranville**

Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation

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**Max Fehlmann**, **Michel Lespérance**, **Marinella Ermacora**

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**Brian Gelfand**, **Michel Lespérance**, **Richard Mayrand**

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**André Couillard**, **Philippe Crine**, **Marinella Ermacora**

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Vice President, Research and Academic Affairs

**Carolyn Lord**

Vice President, Communications and Public Relations

**Rémi Rabasa-Lhoret**

Vice President, Clinic and Clinical Research

**Gilbert Tordjman**

Vice President, Administration and Finance

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President and Scientific Director

**Jean-François Côté**

Vice President, Research and Academic Affairs

**Michel Cayouette**

Director, Cellular Neurobiology Research Division

**Frédéric Charron**

Director, Molecular Biology of Neural Development Research Division

**Jennifer Estall**

Director, Cardiovascular and Metabolic Diseases Research Division

**Marie Kmita**

Director, Neurobiology and Development Research Division

**Rémi Rabasa-Lhoret**

Vice President, Clinic and Clinical Research

**André Veillette**

Directeur, Molecular Oncology Research Division

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AS OF MARCH 31, 2021

### SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Operating Funds		Research Funds		Restricted Funds Capital Asset Funds	
	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Revenues</b>						
Peer review grant program	—	—	18,994,127	16,483,908	—	—
Grant from ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation (MEI)	—	—	—	12,000,000	—	—
Grants - Research infrastructure	—	—	799,999	1,178,175	—	—
Grants - Interest portion	—	—	—	—	232,228	402,767
Other research grants	—	—	1,805,756	2,465,845	—	—
Restricted donations	15,842,313	15,842,313	261,990	100,995	—	—
MEI grant - First agreement	2,000,000	2,700,000	600,000	600,000	—	—
MEI grant - Second agreement	1,405,279	1,543,917	—	—	—	—
Federal grant from the Research Support Fund	—	—	284,711	228,179	—	—
Supplementary project grant arising from Research Support Fund	220,779	267,993	—	—	—	—
Grant from peer committee organizations for indirect costs	—	—	2,204,139	2,594,188	—	—
Donation from the Fondation de l'IRCM	858,232	784,112	—	—	—	—
Management fee revenues from the Fondation de l'IRCM	332,000	329,000	—	—	—	—
Investment income	512,487	197,852	19,710	163,950	—	—
Change in unrealized fair value of investments	173,209	(53,795)	—	—	—	—
	<b>21,344,299</b>	<b>21,611,392</b>	<b>24,970,432</b>	<b>35,815,240</b>	<b>232,228</b>	<b>402,767</b>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Research Fund expenses for the year	—	—	25,582,869	20,940,900	—	—
Operating Fund expenses for the year	20,869,060	20,780,638	—	—	—	—
Donations to the Fondation de l'IRCM	—	—	—	—	5,304,565	5,754,978
Amortization of capital assets	—	—	—	—	232,228	402,767
Interest on notes payable	—	—	—	—	88	6,782
Loss on sale of capital assets	—	—	220,157	222,577	—	—
Share in the loss of the subsidiary	—	—	—	—	—	—
	<b>20,869,060</b>	<b>20,780,638</b>	<b>25,803,026</b>	<b>21,163,477</b>	<b>5,536,881</b>	<b>6,164,527</b>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	<b>475,239</b>	<b>830,754</b>	<b>(832,594)</b>	<b>14,651,763</b>	<b>(5,304,653)</b>	<b>(5,761,760)</b>

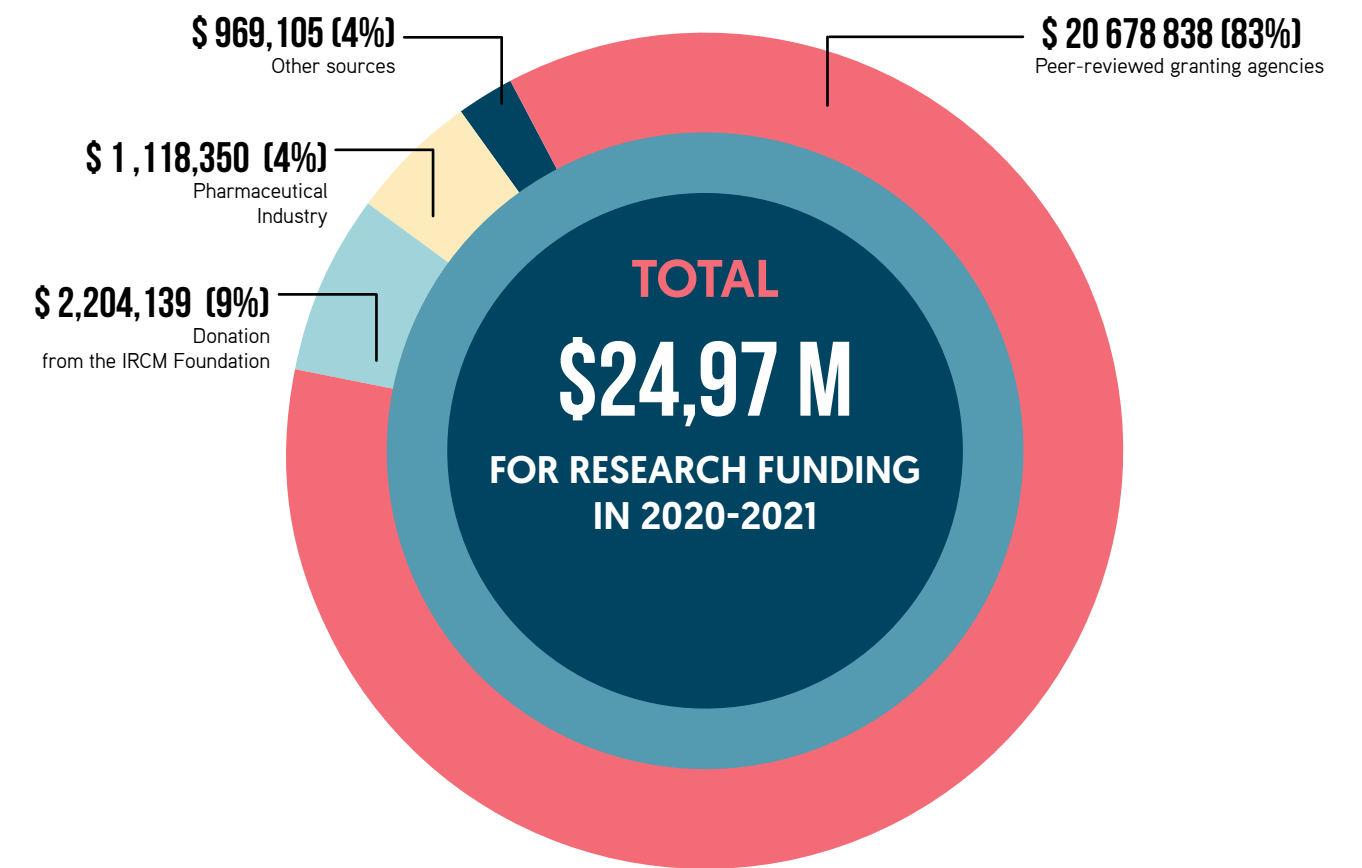
### SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

	Operating Funds		Research Funds		Restricted Funds Capital Asset Funds	
	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Fund balances, beginning of year	—	—	23,143,822	8,516,236	33,225,092	38,392,121
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	475,239	830,754	(832,594)	14,651,763	(5,304,653)	(5,761,760)
Change in remeasurements and other recognized items	(66,383)	(260,200)	—	—	—	—
Interfund transfers	(408,856)	(570,554)	(903,843)	(24,177)	1,312,699	594,731
Fund balances, end of year	—	—	21,407,385	23,143,822	29,233,138	33,225,092

SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash	20,106,525	61,836,356
Investments	30,081,626	3,055,724
Grants receivable and other receivables	3,864,249	2,138,170
Donation receivable from the Fondation de l'IRCM	113,061	1,899,243
Advances from the Fondation de l'IRCM, non-interest-bearing	288,273	39,429
Grants receivable	3,821,192	5,049,804
Prepaid expenses	242,218	243,104
	<b>58,517,144</b>	<b>74,261,830</b>
<b>Investments</b>	<b>977,304</b>	<b>780,738</b>
Investment in a subsidiary	270,823	311,053
Grants receivable	2,191,588	5,967,958
Capital assets	29,233,138	33,225,092
	<b>91,189,997</b>	<b>114,546,671</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Line of credit</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	6,990,789	1,621,293
Accrued interest payable	44,821	72,463
Salaries and wages payable	3,756,433	4,012,917
Notes payable	3,776,371	4,977,341
	<b>14,568,414</b>	<b>10,684,014</b>
<b>Notes payable</b>	<b>2,191,588</b>	<b>5,967,958</b>
Defined benefit obligation of the supplemental pension plan	999,000	893,000
Deferred grants	22,790,472	40,632,785
	<b>40,549,474</b>	<b>58,177,757</b>
<b>Fund Balances</b>		
Invested in capital assets	29,233,138	33,225,092
Externally imposed restrictions	22,862,841	25,396,675
Internally imposed restrictions (deficit)	(1,128,873)	(1,992,653)
Remeasurments and other recognized items related to the supplemental pension plan	(326,583)	(260,200)
	<b>50,640,523</b>	<b>56,368,914</b>
	<b>91,189,997</b>	<b>114,546,671</b>

# RESEARCH FUNDING



**PEER-REVIEWED GRANTING AGENCIES**

Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
 Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada  
 Social Sciences and Humanities Research  
 Canada Research Chairs International  
 Development Research Centre  
 Canada Foundation for Innovation  
 Research Support Fund  
 Canada Research

Continuity Emergency Fund  
 Canada First  
 Fonds de recherche du Québec - santé  
 Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation  
 Genome Québec  
 Fonds de recherche du Québec - nature et technologie  
 Fonds de recherche du Québec - société et culture  
 Allen Foundation Trust  
 Brain Canada  
 Diabetes Canada

Canadian Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology Foundation  
 Aclon Foundation  
 Canadian Liver Foundation  
 Francophone Foundation for Diabetes Research  
 Leukodystrophy Foundation  
 Fighting Blindness Canada  
 Institut Mérieux  
 Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

International Krembil Foundation  
 Mitacs  
 Oncopole  
 National Institute of Health  
 Canadian Glycomics Network  
 Quebec Pain Research Network  
 ALS Canada  
 Parkinson Canada  
 Cancer Research Society  
 Université de Montréal  
 Université Laval - FCI project

University of Ottawa  
 Weston Brain

**PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY**

Akcea  
 Amgen  
 Amorchem  
 Arrowhead  
 Eli Lilly  
 Feldan bio  
 Isispharma  
 JSS Medical Research  
 Liphorus  
 Lonza  
 Orion  
 Novo Nordisk  
 Pfizer  
 Sanofi Aventis

# FOUNDATION

Year in and year out, the IRCM Foundation works tirelessly to support IRCM's researchers and students. Through its various fundraising events, it brings philanthropists, individuals, institutions, and corporations together around the unifying goal of funding research excellence.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANAGEMENT AS OF MARCH 31, 2021

**André Couillard**  
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Couillard, Louise Ann Maziak,  
Guy Saint-Jacques**

### AMBASSADORS COMMITTEE

#### IRCM Challenge

**Isabelle Cantin (Chair),  
Thierry Drouin-Paquette,  
Mélanie Fontaine, Lyne  
Gagné, Sébastien Sabbagh,  
Djamouna Sihou, Corinne  
Suppère**

#### Annual Dinner

**Ginette Paquin (Chair),  
Jérôme Allaire, Pierre  
Bedikian, Robert Dupont,  
Brian Gelfand, Michel  
Lespérance, Carolyne Lord,  
Marie-Ève Roy, Michel Roy,  
Céline Schott, Pierre Séguin,  
Gilbert Tordjman**

#### Golf Tournament – Parcours santé

**Éric Léveillé (Honorary Chair),  
Wilfredo Banegas, Steve  
Bastien, Serge Boileau,  
Bradley Boulton, Yves Carlos,  
Robert Dupont, Stéphane  
Fortin, Nadine Laplante,  
Katrine Lavigne, Martin  
Piette, Étienne Rivard**



**PASSING OF JACQUES GAUTHIER AND EMMANUEL TRIASSI**

The IRCM Foundation lost 2 important allies this year.

**Jacques Gauthier** will be remembered at the Institute as the driving force behind the IRCM Foundation's traditional golf tournament. Having joined the ranks of the IRCM in 1995, he contributed to the success of many fundraising campaigns, helping to raise \$28 million for health research. He had served on the Foundation's board of directors since 2010, and a doctoral scholarship bearing his name was created two years later in his honour.

**Emmanuel Triassi** was a seasoned manager who joined the ranks of the Institute in 2011. Upon his arrival, he became involved in the major Give For Life campaign as co-chair, helping to raise \$15 million. Instigator of a doctoral scholarship bearing his name, and unconditional supporter of the Annual Dinner of the Foundation, his attachment to the Institute was evident to all.



The year 2020 was full of challenges and uncertainties with the arrival of COVID-19 and physical distancing measures that limited the gatherings that are so dear to foundations such as ours. Nevertheless, the past year also stood out in terms of creativity.

Faced with the challenges imposed by the pandemic, our team did not give up. On the contrary, we adapted and embraced the options offered by technology to pursue our mission of funding cutting-edge research on all diseases. And this was all possible thanks to our loyal allies.

We have been inspired along the way by patients, parents, donors, collaborators, and researchers who, instead of giving up, have risen to the occasion. We have seen their tenacity through their loyalty to our virtual events, their trust in new funding formulas, and their great generosity.

Thus, despite the constraints, our traditional golf tournament was held in compliance with health measures. Our virtual Annual Dinner featuring women in science was a resounding success. Likewise, by completing their own itinerary during the IRCM Challenge, our participants were able to show, even remotely, just how united they are in their commitment to high-impact research.

Thanks to everyone, research excellence was able to continue at the IRCM and we were able to set up an emergency fund to support our students affected by the pandemic.

**ANDRÉ COUILLARD, President**

**ISABELLE BARIL, Executive Director**

# A SUCCESSFUL ANNUAL DINNER WITH EVERYONE AT HOME

*Le traditionnel Dîner annuel de la Fondation a eu lieu le 26 novembre dernier. Réinventé en mode virtuel en raison des contraintes sanitaires liées à la COVID-19, l'événement a connu un succès retentissant. Sur la thématique Chercheuses d'espoir, cette édition a permis d'amasser plus de 370 000 \$, avec la participation de près de 300 personnes.*

*Marie-Bénédicte, conseillère au développement philanthropique à la Fondation nous partage son expérience.*

## **For the first time, the Annual Dinner was held in virtual mode. What were the challenges encountered?**

The IRCM's Annual Dinner is traditionally an opportunity to come together to raise funds for the excellent research conducted at the Institute. However, the pandemic-related bans on gatherings were a major obstacle. We had to get creative to come up with a virtual event that would be highly professional, both in terms of technology and content. Like many people, we learned as the project progressed and as the virtual tools became available.

## **What kept you motivated?**

We quickly realized that this new format offered opportunities to present the work of our researchers in greater details, and in a very dynamic way.

The Annual Dinner in virtual mode was a unique chance to devote a full hour to showcasing what is happening at the IRCM. It was like having an entire television show focused solely on the IRCM!

## **How did the public respond to this revamped format?**

Our participants really appreciated discovering our researchers in a more personal way, which host Catherine Perrin helped to bring out brilliantly. From the comfort of their living rooms, they were able to hear the very personal reasons that keep our scientists motivated on a daily basis.

## **What are your takeaways from this experience?**

The collaboration of the various teams involved was exceptional. With the virtual format, we quickly discovered new possibilities that would have been impossible if the Dinner had been held in person. For example, in addition to our usual Montreal audience, for the first time we had participants from across the country.

Should our future in-person editions include a virtual component? This is a question that we will certainly have to consider...

# Q&A

WE QUICKLY REALIZED THAT THIS NEW FORMAT OFFERED OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESENT THE WORK OF OUR RESEARCHERS IN GREATER DETAILS

## **MARIE-BÉNÉDICTE PRETTY**

Philanthropic Development Advisor



# EVENTS MADE DIFFERENT

## THE GOLF TOURNAMENT: AN INDISPENSABLE EVENT

The IRCM Foundation's traditional Parcours-Santé Golf Tournament took place on September 14 at the Summerlea Golf Club in Vaudreuil-Dorion, under the honorary presidency of Etienne Rivard, President of Infrastructel. With the participation of over 100 players, more than \$116,000 were raised to help acquire new cutting-edge research equipment for the Institute. Despite physical distancing, golfers enjoyed the magnificent course and a delicious dinner in a relaxed atmosphere. They also benefited from a silent and live auction masterfully led by Yvon Lambert, where 21 interesting items were offered.

## WHEN GASTRONOMY MIXES WITH SCIENCE

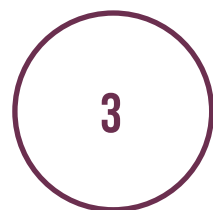
When gastronomy mixes with science Initiated by Sylvain Corbeil, patient and ally of the IRCM who was diagnosed with a primary immunodeficiency (PID) at the age of 6, the campaign to raise funds for research on PIDs launched in the summer of 2020, combining philanthropy and gastronomy thanks to a successful collaboration between the Foundation and renowned Montreal chef Jérôme Ferrer. Even in the midst of a pandemic, many Montrealers responded with a tremendous outpouring of generosity, by ordering a gourmet box or making a donation to raise the required funds to start the project. The more than \$1 million research project is led by researcher Emilia Liana Falcone and will begin in spring 2021.

## AN EMERGENCY FUNDS FOR STUDENTS

The pandemic had a financial impact on several IRCM students, particularly with the closure of some university residences and the decrease of family income for many. As a sign of solidarity, the IRCM Foundation set up an emergency fund to support the next generation of scientists by providing them with relief and essential assistance. More than 10 students thus benefited from a total of \$11,000 to help them stay focused on their academic career.



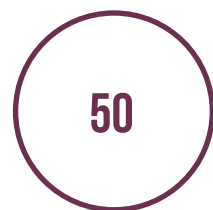
TOTAL OF DONATIONS OF THE YEAR



FUNDRAISING EVENTS



DONORS

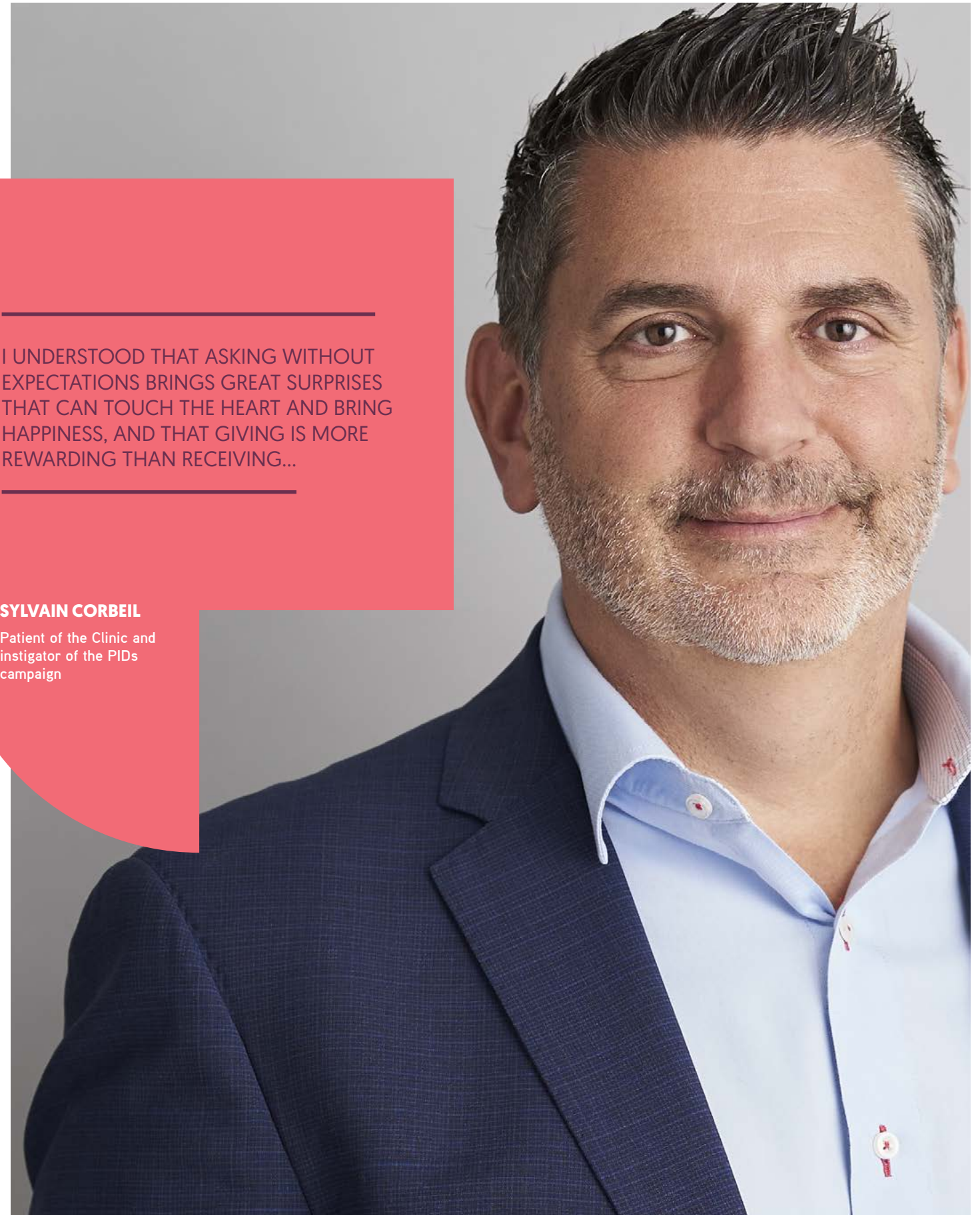


VOLUNTEERS

I UNDERSTOOD THAT ASKING WITHOUT EXPECTATIONS BRINGS GREAT SURPRISES THAT CAN TOUCH THE HEART AND BRING HAPPINESS, AND THAT GIVING IS MORE REWARDING THAN RECEIVING...

### SYLVAIN CORBEIL

Patient of the Clinic and instigator of the PIDs campaign



# IRCM CHALLENGE: FROM A DISTANCE, BUT WITH THE SAME HEART

*For the first time, the IRCM Challenge, which traditionally brings together hundreds of runners and walkers on Mount Royal, had to proceed remotely. Nearly 350 participants took part in the 2020 edition of the event. The idea: define your own challenge and raise funds for research at the Institute. Together, they raised \$116,000 for the cause. Marie Genest, a faithful ally of the IRCM, took part. She tells us about it.*

**Tell us about your connection to the Institute.**

I am the daughter of Jacques Genest, founder of the IRCM. When we were young, our family of five children participated in all the sports and social activities organized on weekends by the Institute's former carpenter, the late Gaétan Blanchard. He had an extraordinary sense of humour, which Dr. Jolicoeur and Dr. Chrétien can undoubtedly attest to. These playful, fun activities brought people together at the Institute, where I also worked for several summers, in the kitchen, the photocopy room, the mail room, and the clinic. I also had the chance to create a few works of art that were displayed on the premises, including the DNA Molecule and the bronze bust of my father. The Institute was like a second family to me.

**Why was it important for you to participate in the 2020 Challenge?**

Beyond my affinity for group activities, it was important for me to participate in memory of my father, whom I loved deeply. He established this incredible institution that continues to shine beyond our borders after so many years. When the lockdown came, the chance to gather together with my husband and our four children to share this experience was a true gift, especially since the money raised would go to help others.

**How did you experience the remote format of the 2020 IRCM Challenge?**

We defined our own 5- and 10-km routes. Julie, my eldest, had injured her leg and couldn't run or walk for a while. My two other daughters, Valérie and Sophie, had to work that day but were able to run their route the next day. So, as there are six of us in the family, we did our best with the means at hand. Running with our racing bibs, we had a blast when curious people asked what cause we were running for... We answered with a smile: "for the IRCM, of course!"

# Q&A



**What did you take away from this experience, and what touched you the most?**

My takeaway is that the next time I run 10 km, I will definitely train more diligently... The last kilometre wasn't easy — I thought I was in good shape! At kilometre 5, as I was focused on my run, I heard someone shout, "Hey, Mom!" It was my son Louis coming back on the loop to cheer me on with a beautiful smile and a high five... What a delight! My husband Serge also came back to see if I was still alive, after finishing his 10 km run. It's a bit of the spirit of solidarity that defines the IRCM Challenge.

**Anything else you would like to share with us?**

My father used to say: "Alone, we go fast. But together, we go further." This is true in scientific research, as in life... You don't achieve much without a little help from others. He also liked to say, at the end of a day full of physical activity: "Those who sweat together, stick together." Ultimately, this is the symbolism of participating in a great project like the 2020 IRCM Challenge: walking together with the people we hold in high esteem and giving the best of ourselves.



# SCHOLARSHIPS, CHAIRS AND FUNDS

\$284,000

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY THE FOUNDATION

**SUMMER INTERNSHIPS**

**IRCM Scholarships for young researchers:** Paul Donnelly, Lucia Paola Gabrielli Tabarez, Justina Chu, Emma Rousseau, Florian Gioanni, Martin Resua Rojas, Stephanie Zhou, Anne-Sophie Eymard

**MASTER'S SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Michel-Bélanger Scholarship:** Michael Gong  
**TD Scholarship:** Cindy Bergeron  
**Challenge IRCM Scholarship:** Marjorie Andrea Aleman Alvarado  
**Manuvie Scholarship:** Jana Ridani  
**IRCM Challenge Scholarship:** Kavindu Laksarana Puwakdandawa, Loku Acharige  
**Bombardier-Molson in Molecular and Cellular Medecine Scholarships:** Benjamin Ouimet, Victoria Veas Roy, Andréane Lalonde, Patrick Penndorf, Jérémie Gagnon, Vivian Hyunh

**DOCTORAL SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Louis-Gilles Durand Scholarship:** Kiersten Dionne  
**IRCM Challenge Scholarships:** Mohammad Lamees, Husam Khaled  
**Transat Scholarship:** Shima Rastegarpouyani  
**CAL Construction Scholarship:** Sepideh Mikaeeli  
**Guépards et Gazelles Gourmands Scholarship:** Kevin Guo  
**Jacques-Gauthier Scholarship:** Thulaj Meharwade  
**Emmanuel-Triassi Scholarship:** Cristian Galindo

**POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Jean-Coutu Scholarship:** Sabrina Schlienger, Vanesa Jimemez Amilburu, Esen Sokullu, Farin Bourojeni, Silvana Ferreira

**Angelo-Pizzagalli Scholarship:** Robert Brian Roome

**2020 IN-HOUSE FUND FOR EXCELLENCE AWARDEES**

**André-Barbeau Excellence Award:** Céline Schott  
**Pierre-Bois Excellence Award:** Julie Ross  
**Vincent-Castellucci Excellence Awards:** Martine Gauthier, Michel Charest, Myrna Khuon

**IRCM FOUNDATION'S ACTIVE RESEARCH CHAIRS AND FUNDS**

**Bell-Bombardier Chair in Cardiovascular Disease:** Benoit Coulombe  
**Gosselin-Lamarre Chair of Excellence in Clinical Research:** Rémi Rabasa-Lhoret  
**Gaëtane and Roland Pillenière Research Chair in Retina:** Michel Cayouette  
**Michel F. Belanger Research Chair in Cancer:** Jean-François Côté and Mohan Malleshaiah  
**Dr. Roch Despatis Chair in Rare Diseases:** Martin Sauvageau  
**J-Louis Lévesque Foundation Chair in Rare Diseases:** Emilia Liana Falcone  
**J.A. DeSève Chair in Clinical Research:** Rémi Rabasa-Lhoret  
**Jacques Genest Chair - Royal Bank**  
**John Low Beer Chair:** Marie Kmita  
**Transat Chair in Breast Cancer Research:** Jean-François Côté  
**Internal Community Excellence Fund \***

**Angelo-Pizzagalli Postdoctoral Scholarship Fund\***  
**Emmanuel-Triassi Fund for cancer research\***  
**Fondation J.-Louis Lévesque Fund\*\***  
**IRCM In-House Fund for Excellence\***  
**J.A. DeSève Fund for diabetes research and the artificial pancreas**  
**J. Armand Bombardier Foundation and Molson Foundation Fund for molecular and cellular medicine**  
**Jacques-Genest Scholarship Fund\***  
**Jean-Coutu Postdoctoral Scholarship Fund\***  
**Jean-Davignon and Pierre-Larochelle Fund**  
**Jean-Guy-Desjardins Fund for priority research\***  
**Marcel and Béatrice Piché Fund\***  
**Marie and Willie Chrétien Fund\***  
**Michel-Saucier Fund for priority research**  
**National Bank Fund for cancer research**  
**Rosario and Annette Genest Fund\***  
**Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus Fund in memory of Mable and Lucien Toupin\***  
**TD Fund for excellence in the medical field**  
**UAP-NAPA Fund**

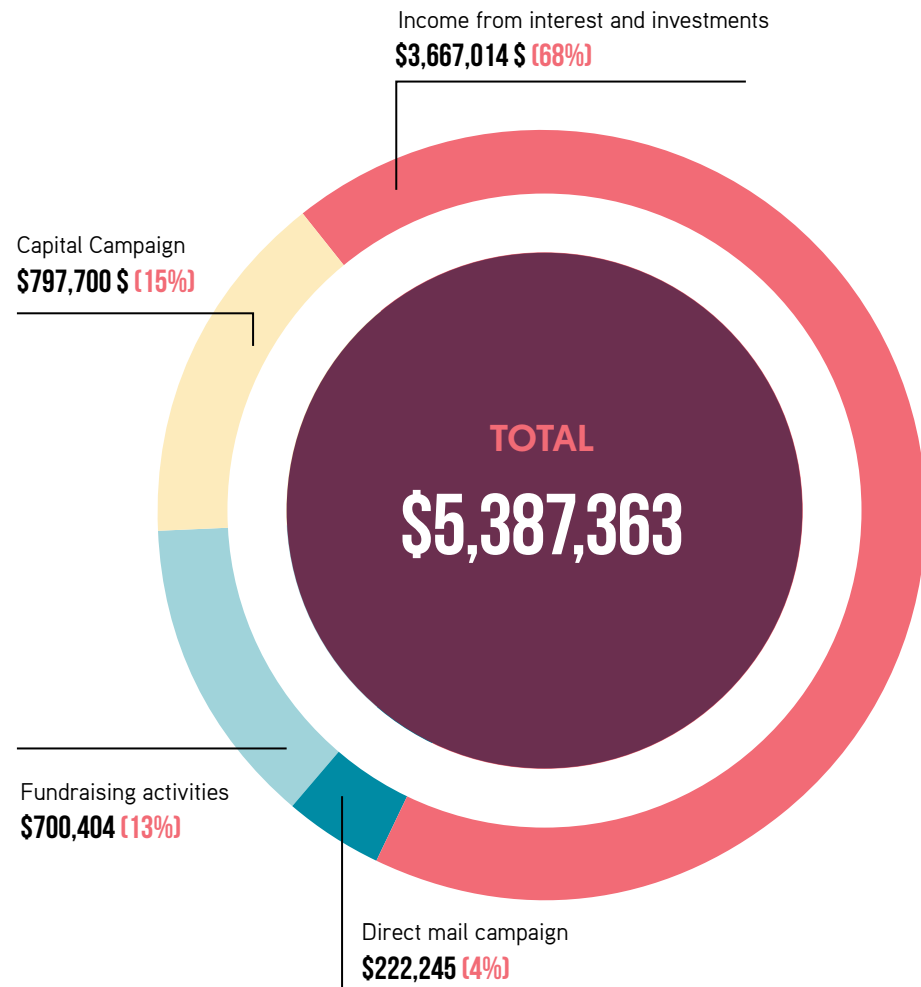
\* Capitalized funds

10

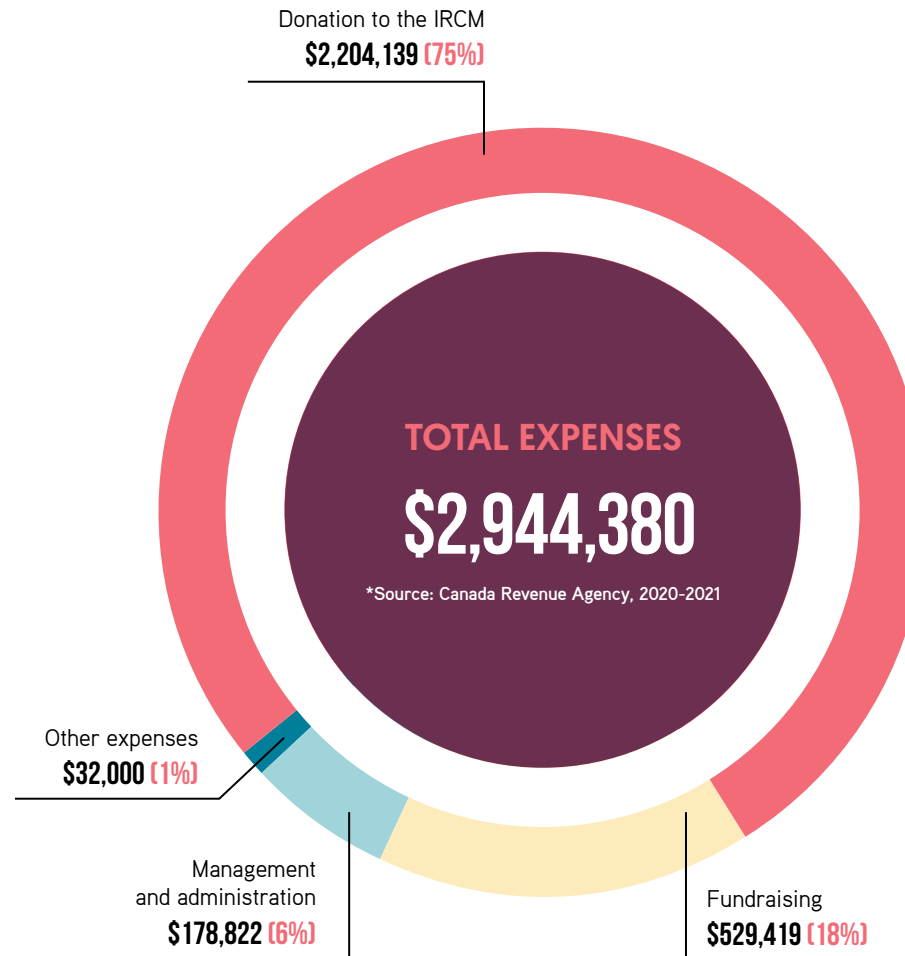
PHILANTHROPIC CHAIRS

# FINANCIAL DATA

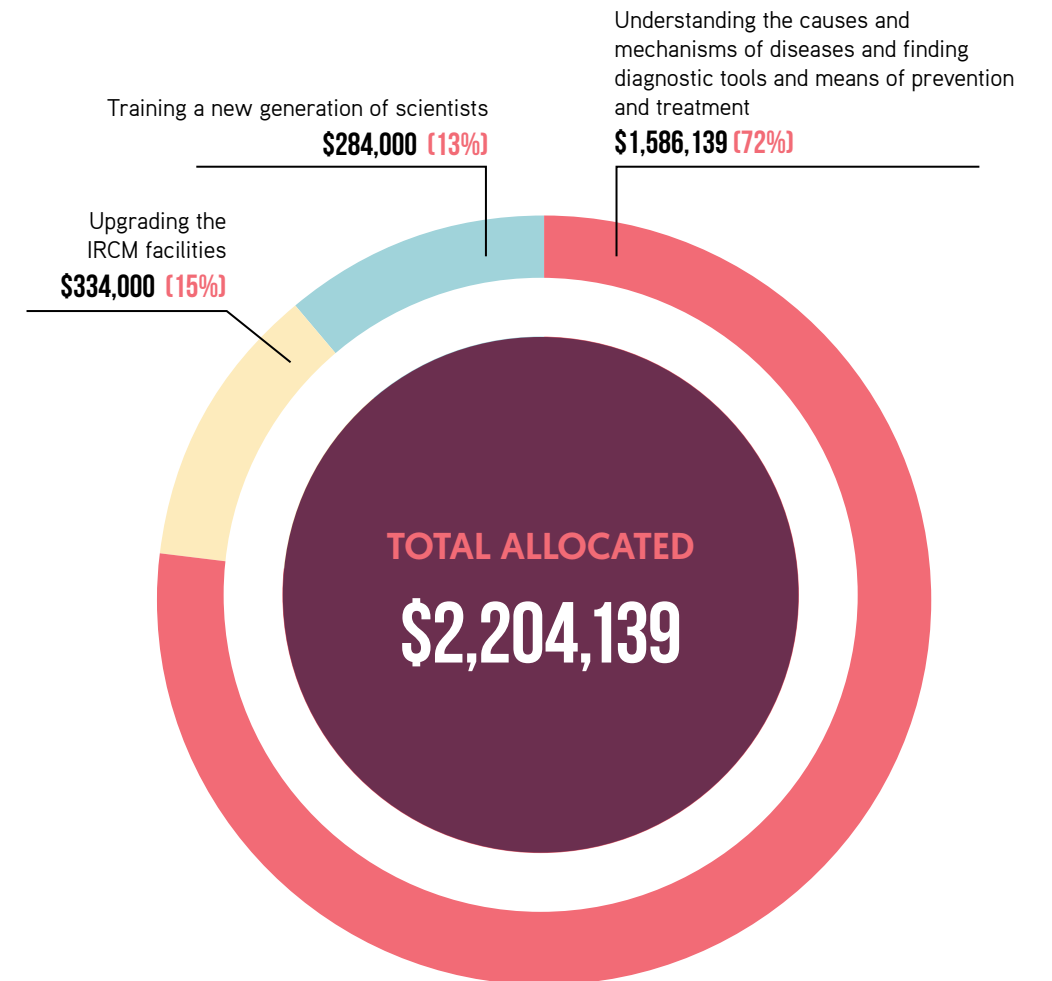
## ALLOCATION OF DONATION



## EXPENSES



## ALLOCATION OF DONATIONS TO THE IRCM



Montreal Clinical Research  
Institute's 2020-2021 Annual Report  
Published by the Communication  
and Public Relations Department

**COORDINATION, RESEARCH,  
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**TRANSLATION**

Services linguistiques Annie Talbot

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Hélène Lambin

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

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Pascale Méthot, Adobe Stock

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The IRCM 2020-2021 annual  
report summarizes the highlights  
and financial data for the period  
beginning on April 1, 2020, and  
ending on March 31, 2021.



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