

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate distribution

Winter is once again upon us—and so are winter accidents... Help spread the word about the risks of head trauma by sharing brain cells on BrainPuzzleChallenge.ca

Montreal, November 9, 2010 – Drivers are preparing their cars for the menace of icy roads. Our kids have already started the new hockey season. And skiers and snowboarders everywhere cannot wait for the slopes to open. As winter approaches, it's the ideal time to raise the public's awareness about the serious risks of head trauma. The brain contains almost 100 billion brain cells that if damaged, cannot be recovered. This leads to loss of memories, as well as the ability to speak, comprehend, read, move, recognize friends and orient one's self... You need your brain cells! That's why everyone is invited to visit BrainPuzzleChallenge.ca and share virtual brain cells with friends and family for only \$3 each! By sending brain cells to a loved one, you can share a laugh about their unique personality, all the while helping to increase awareness about head trauma and supporting important research being conducted by university health centres in Montreal and Quebec City.

We hear about cases of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) in the news every day—but they are only the tip of the iceberg. In Quebec alone, every year there are 13,000 reported victims of TBI, of which 5,000 require hospitalization. Of these victims, 500 suffer a moderate or severe case of head trauma, which could lead to brain lesions, cerebral oedema, water on the brain or even a deep coma. Each year, 200 hospitalized cases die, more than 100 victims remain in a vegetative state, while another 400 live on with permanent—and often crippling—side effects. Victims of severe TBI will see profound changes in their lives and in the lives of family and friends, who are often called upon to support victims. They are often the ones who will provide care that will help victims regain autonomy, meet their basic needs and improve the quality of daily life.

Today, we still know so little about what causes brain injuries to cascade in the first 15 days after impact. That's why the Marie-Robert NeuroTrauma Foundation raises funds—to support their mission to discover the best treatments to improve the quality of life of persons suffering from traumatic brain injuries. To this end, the Foundation has launched the “Share brain cells on BrainPuzzleChallenge.ca” campaign. This initiative will contribute funding to research projects seeking the best clinical practices to apply in the first 15 days following head trauma. These measures could provide the brain with the optimal conditions for recovery, thus improving the survivor's quality of life and making it easier for them to re-enter society.

In Quebec, thanks to an active neurological sciences community, funds raised in support of research are advancing at a spectacular pace. For example, patients suffering from severe brain injuries are already benefiting from new brain monitoring methods such as the cerebral oxygenation measurement system at Montreal's Sacré-Cœur Hospital and microdialysis to measure brain metabolism at the Montréal General Hospital. Furthermore, for many years, McGill University researchers have also been studying the effects of concussions with athletes.



About the “Share brain cells on BrainPuzzleChallenge.ca” campaign

Organized by the Marie-Robert NeuroTrauma Foundation, the “Share brain cells on BrainPuzzleChallenge.ca” campaign is a fun way to purchase “virtual brain cells” and send them to loved ones via an email greeting card, all the while making a donation in support of head trauma research. BrainPuzzleChallenge.ca also helps to raise awareness and educate by sharing information about brain functions and the causes and consequences of traumatic brain injuries. The site also allows victims, their loved ones and attending health professionals to share their experiences.

The campaign spokesperson is Élianne Parent, victim of a TBI in 2007. After her accident, Élianne had to say goodbye to her memories, her studies in bioecology, competing in mountain biking competitions and travelling. Although she has known much grief, Élianne continues to choose life. Every day, she strives to live as normal a life as possible and to build new memories. Élianne doesn't believe in “irreparable”, neither for herself nor for other victims. Research offers hope for a future with a better quality of life—and that's why Élianne is so committed to the Brain Puzzle Challenge. For more information, visit www.BrainPuzzleChallenge.ca.

About the Marie-Robert NeuroTrauma Foundation

Established in 1993, the Marie-Robert NeuroTrauma Foundation raises the awareness of the medical and scientific community, as well as other concerned parties, about the seriousness of injuries caused by head trauma. The Foundation focuses its efforts on raising and distributing funds to support medical advancements in the treatment of brain injuries. Specifically, it targets the discovery of new treatments for the first 15 days following the accident. In fact, the future of those suffering from head trauma is determined in those first days, regardless of whether they have a simple concussion or are in a deep coma.

For more information, please visit www.fondationneurotrauma.ca.

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