16th Annual Bloorview Research Institute Symposium

Building Up and Building Out:
Elevating and Expanding Childhood Disability Research

Monday, November 15, 2021

Sponsored by
For the past 15 years, the Bloorview Research Institute Symposium has led the way in highlighting Canadian advancements in the field of childhood disability. The first symposium was held in 2005 as a small internal event with a few attendees. It has since grown into the largest hospital-based pediatric disability health research conference in the country. Everyone from scientists and scholars to parents and educators take part in this noble cause.

This year’s theme is Building Up and Building Out: Elevating and Expanding Childhood Disability Research. It’s an opportunity to showcase the giant strides your studies have made towards advancements in the field. While pioneering research, discoveries and innovation are the cornerstones, it’s always grounded in working with clients and their families.

For the second year in a row, the event is being held online due to the pandemic. While so many of us have faced challenges during this unprecedented worldwide crisis, your commitment to transforming the lives of children with developmental conditions has not wavered. Your adaptability, devotion and resourcefulness are beyond admirable – you are an absolute champion.

My best wishes for a successful 16th annual Bloorview Research Institute Symposium.

Doug Ford
Premier
October 4, 2021

A MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE RAYMOND CHO
ONTARIO’S MINISTER FOR SENIORS AND ACCESSIBILITY

16th Annual Bloorview Research Institute Symposium

Greetings to everyone attending the 16th Annual Bloorview Research Institute Symposium, Building Up and Building Out: Elevating and Expanding Childhood Disability Research.

This symposium serves as an ideal forum for families, health professionals, scientists, and government to learn about the research and innovations geared to help children with disabilities fully participate in society.

On behalf of our government, I thank you for your commitment and contributions to supporting children with disabilities in Canada and abroad. Your efforts ensure their voices are heard, their needs are met and their potential realized. There will always be more work to do for these children and their families, but I commend you on the tremendous difference you have made in their lives.

Please accept my best wishes for another successful event.

Sincerely,

Hon. Raymond Cho
Minister
October 15, 2021

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
150 Kilgour Road
Toronto, ON
M4G 1R8

16th Annual BRI Symposium – Building Up and Building Out: Elevating and Expanding Childhood Disability Research

As the Member of Parliament for Don Valley West, it is my distinct pleasure to offer greetings to Holland Bloorview on the occasion of the 16th Annual BRI Symposium.

As an international leader in health care dedicated to children with disabilities, Holland Bloorview is a world leader in research in the area of childhood disability. I am very pleased that the focus of this year’s Symposium will be the ground-breaking research done at Holland Bloorview. This Symposium will have a direct impact on the lives of children and youth in Canada, and ultimately around the world who face challenges of inclusion, health and accessibility.

I wish you a successful Symposium and look forward to working with Holland Bloorview in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,

Robert Oliphant, MP
Don Valley West
Message from the Mayor

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and a warm welcome to everyone participating in the 16th annual Bloorview Research Institute Symposium, hosted by the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital.

I am pleased you are continuing to hold your event while carefully following COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

This year’s virtual symposium, Building Up and Building Out: Elevating and Expanding Childhood Disability Research will showcase the leaps and bounds that Canadian research has made in advancing the field of childhood disability. Through groundbreaking research, discovery, innovation, family engagement and action, scientists at Bloorview Research Institute continue to make a difference in the lives of children living with disabilities and their families.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, please accept my best wishes for an informative and enjoyable event.

Yours truly,

John Tory
Mayor of Toronto

November 15, 2021

I am delighted to welcome participants to the 16th Annual Bloorview Research Institute Symposium.

Our government recognizes the important contribution that scientists at the hospital’s Bloorview Research Institute are making to advance groundbreaking research in childhood disability. This year’s theme, Building Up and Building Out: Elevating and Expanding Childhood Disability Research, provides an opportunity for health professionals, families, scientists and governments to work together to support children living with disabilities to succeed and thrive.

It’s no secret that Ontario’s research hospitals, research institutes and postsecondary institutions are a key source of innovation, making them leading contributors to Ontario’s economic growth, and key drivers of improvements to health and well-being.

I am proud of the efforts researchers have made in helping to give children and youth living with disabilities a healthier today and more promising tomorrows.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Jill Dunlop
Minister of Colleges and Universities
Message from the Mayor

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On behalf of Toronto City Council, please accept my best wishes for an informative and enjoyable event.

Yours truly,

John Tory
Mayor of Toronto
As we welcome participants to our second virtual Bloorview Research Institute (BRI) Symposium, I am deeply proud that the BRI continues to push the boundaries and elevate research to new heights through ground-breaking innovations, impactful scientific advancements, thoughtful leadership and cross-disciplinary collaborative partnerships.

Our scientists, researchers and trainees found ways to continue to engage with study participants and research family engagement leaders despite the impact of COVID-19. Aligned to the Holland Bloorview vision of the most meaningful and healthy futures for all children, youth and families, these partnerships lead to new client- and family-focused interventions. Our trainees have also been supported by our scientists to propel the research institute’s innovative work forward while adhering to safety precautions. This is how we are always finding ways to transform the childhood disability research landscape through our three key pillars: exploring human dimensions of care and disability, development and improving interventions, and understanding developmental disability.

Our work with our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Task force continues as part of the hospital’s and research institute’s unwavering and important commitment to anti-racist education and practice. As this ongoing pandemic laid bare the stark inequities that many people with disabilities and members of BIPOC communities face, we too must take up the mantle of ensure no one is left behind when it comes to accessing health care and being equally represented in health research. The challenges of anti-racism, anti-oppression, and anti-ableism have never been as important and urgent as now.

The work on Holland Bloorview’s largest research expansion in its 122-year history continues and with its completion next summer, we will make an even greater impact on the lives of children and youth with disabilities through research and innovation.

Thank you to the many hands that have made this day possible and thank you for participating and sharing your perspectives. I wish you a day full of inspiring discussions and learning.

Julia Hanigsberg  
President and CEO
Elevating and Expanding our Research at Bloorview Research Institute

The 16th annual Bloorview Research Institute Symposium marks a significant milestone at Holland Bloorview. In 2018, the hospital embarked on the largest research expansion in history. Now, thanks to the generosity of our donors and community partners, we are well on our way to completing this expansion next summer.

With the recently renovated space for the research institute, a fully accessible and child-friendly research MRI, acquisition of state-of-the-art research instrumentation and the creation of a new 11,000 square foot addition on the north side of the hospital, Holland Bloorview is poised to generate new knowledge to inform the most meaningful and healthy futures for all children and youth.

The expansion will serve to elevate and expand our research at the Bloorview Research Institute beyond the hospital’s walls. But, as our research capacity continues to grow, we will always remain steadfast in our approach: that is to ground our questions and research studies firmly in client and family engagement. This means consulting with children, youth, parents and caregivers how our research can best reflect their unique needs and personalize interventions to meet them.

As you will see from today’s symposium, many of our speakers and research presentations will reflect on how their research has either been shaped by their lived experiences or driven by family engagement – from Dr. Ron Buliung’s keynote on how his research on accessible cities is guided by his experiences as a parent of a child with a disability, to Elder Little Brown Bear’s insights on the health care system from an Indigenous perspective.

All of the research that you will hear today – from the plethora of research posters to our ever-popular Quick Hits – showcases the impact of family-engaged research and our continued fierce pursuit to discover for action. We are very proud of the work we have achieved together and hope you take away from this day an enhanced perspective of inclusion, compassion and partnership.

Together, we are creating a world of limitless possibilities for kids with disabilities through scientific excellence.

Tom Chau
VP, Research
Event Co-Host

Peter Welsh
Family Leader
Event Co-Host
Event agenda

9:00 – 9:20 a.m.  **Welcoming remarks**
Julia Hanigsberg, President and CEO
Dr. Patricia Houston, Acting Dean, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto
Tom Chau, Vice-President of Research
Peter Welsh, Family Leader and Holland Bloorview parent

9:20 – 10:00 a.m.  **Keynote: Mickey Milner International Professorship Lecture**
*Will This Place Always Be Like This?*
*Presented by:* Dr. Ron Buliung, PhD
Graduate Chair of Geography and Planning,
University of Toronto

10:00 – 10:10 a.m.  **Break**

10:10 – 10:30 a.m.  **Quick hits and Kahoots Quiz**

10:30 – 10:40 a.m.  **Enabling real world impact through community partnerships**
*Presented by* Tom Mikkelsen, President and Scientific Director, and Christa Studzinski, Manager, Partnerships,
Ontario Brain Institute

10:45 – 11:30 a.m.  **Breakout sessions**

- **A Talk From the Heart with Elder Little Brown Bear**
  *Moderated by* Dr. Tim Ross, EPIC Lab, Bloorview Research Institute

- **The Paralympian Experience with Paralympians Mike Whitehead, Richard Peter and Danielle DuPlessis**
  *Moderated by* Dr. Virginia Wright and University of Toronto doctoral student Roxy O’Rourke, SPARK Lab, Bloorview Research Institute

11:30 – 12:30 p.m.  **Virtual Research Poster Session and Partnership Showcase**
12:30–1:10 p.m. **Lived experience keynote address**
‘I Am What I Do and What I Feel’
A conversation with Dr. Temple Grandin, acclaimed scientist, inventor, autism advocate and professor of animal science at Colorado State University, and Dr. Evdokia Anagnostou, Canada Research Chair in Translational Therapeutics in Autism Spectrum Disorder

1:10–1:20 p.m. **BREAK**

1:20–1:40 p.m. **Art Exhibition**
Illuminating a Hidden Narrative
*Presented by* Dr. Amy McPherson, senior scientist, ProFILE Lab, Bloorview Research Institute and guest artist Wesley Magee-Saxton

1:40–2:00 p.m. **Awards ceremony and closing remarks**

#GrowHBResearch
@HBKidsHospital
Transforming the future of childhood disability research

The Bloorview Research Institute (BRI) is internationally recognized for its world-leading applied and client and family-centered research, dedicated to improving the lives of children with disabilities locally and around the globe.

Guiding all of the work within the BRI are three themes that aim to advance our goal of understanding disability, improving the lives of children and youth living with disabilities.

These themes are:

Exploring human dimensions of care and disability
We study the pathways of lived experience of children and youth with disabilities, the social settings important to families, and the perspectives of those who care for them. We examine the origins of stigma and marginalization and shine light on why embracing disability is beneficial to society.

Developing and improving interventions
Working directly with people with lived experiences and their families, clinicians and community partners, we co-create and evaluate interventions – from medical to technological, from educational to vocational, and beyond. These interventions promote the health and wellness of children, youth and families living with disability across the globe.

Understanding developmental diversity
We investigate the interplay of factors contributing to human development and its diversity, from genes to environment. We explore brain and body interactions to understand and support individual trajectories. With this information, we evaluate existing clinical practices and discover novel avenues for supporting the well-being of individuals with disabilities, and their families.

To learn more about the Bloorview Research Institute, visit research.hollandbloorview.ca or email brirequests@hollandbloorview.ca

#GrowHBResearch
Lived experience keynote

‘I am What I Do and What I Feel’

A Conversation with Dr. Temple Grandin, acclaimed scientist, inventor, author and autism advocate and Dr. Evdokia Anagnostou, Canada Research Chair in Translational Therapeutics in Autism Spectrum Disorder

Dr. Temple Grandin is well known to many as a trailblazer in her lifelong commitment to advocating for the autism community and her work in animal sciences. As a professor of animal science at Colorado State University for more than 25 years, she been referred to as the ‘most famous person working at CSU’ by her peers.

Her life’s work has been to understand her own autistic mind and to share that knowledge with others. She has challenged conventional stereotypes of ASD with messages about autism and ‘differently-abled brains’. A prolific author, she has penned best-selling publications on autism such as Emergence: Labeled Autistic.

Her understanding of her own mind has also helped her in her work with animal behaviour. She is one of the most respected experts both autism and in animal behaviour in the world. With her ability to visualize information, she has a successful career designing livestock equipment handling systems that are more humane. Today, have of the cattle in the U.S. are handled in facilities she has designed.

Her keynote, I am What I Do and What I Feel, will take delegates on a journey from her early childhood to illustrious career as an inventor, animal behaviourist, author and advocate.

About Dr. Temple Grandin

Temple Grandin is a professor of animal science at Colorado State University. When she was two and a half years old, she had no speech and all the symptoms of severe autism. Early intensive speech therapy enabled her to speak by age four. Her mother always encouraged her interest in art and urged her to draw many different things. Good teachers and mentors were essential for Temple’s success. Her high school science teacher challenged her with interesting projects where she had to figure out how to make things work. When studying in school became a pathway to becoming a scientist, she was motivated to study.

An HBO movie titled Temple Grandin was made about her life and Temple was inducted into The National Women’s Hall of Fame and The Academy of Arts and Sciences. Facilities she has designed handle over half the cattle in the U.S. Some of her most important books are New York Times Bestseller Animals in Translation, Thinking in Pictures, The Autistic Brain, and The Way I See It. Riding horses and caring for them helped her get through difficult teenage years when she was bullied and teased.
Scientific keynote

“Will this Place Always be Like This?”
Reflections on Disability and Childhood from a Parent-Scholar
Presented by Dr. Ron Buliung,
Graduate Chair of Geography and Planning University of Toronto

Professor Buliung’s lived experience as a parent to a disabled child motivates his commitment to research and advocacy centered on place, childhood disability, and disability justice. In this talk, he uses stories and narratives from his family’s everyday life and his research as evidence of the problematic absence of disability justice; the giant chasm between “human rights” and lived experience. Professor Buliung sheds light on the inner workings of some places that do not make it easy to be a disabled child or a parent to one, places that extract substantial invisible physical and emotional labour to facilitate access to social participation. Indeed, life and research coalesce into a rejection of the status quo and the uneven meeting of minimum requirements. During his talk he shares research about access to education and food insecurity for disabled people. In doing so, he draws attention to elements of research design that centre childhood and disability, and key findings. Professor Buliung calls attention to public criticism (# thankyoutwitter!!!) about disability studies, arguing that such criticism paradoxically supports continued work as an ally-parent-scholar. He concludes with some discussion about future research possibilities.

About Dr. Ron Buliung

Ron Buliung is a Full Professor in the Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment at the University of Toronto Mississauga, and the Graduate Chair of the University of Toronto’s tri-campus Graduate Programs in Geography and Planning. He holds a Ph.D. in Urban Geography from McMaster University. Ron has dedicated his career to studying the experiences of children and youth in cities.

During the past decade, however, he has re-oriented his research program to focus almost exclusively on the various ways in which disability and ableism permeate the institutions that govern and produce the places within cities where we live, work, play, and learn. He can take no credit for this sharp re-orientation in his research program. As the parent of a child with a neuromuscular condition known as spinal muscular atrophy and a direct recipient of care services from Holland Bloorview, Ron acknowledges the critical role that one of his children, who refers to herself as a disabled child, has played in reshaping the way she looks at and experiences almost everything. In this way, Ron occupies an isolated and dual space between academia and the lived experience of parenting a disabled child.

Through his teaching practice, Ron hopes to encourage the next generation of planning practitioners to explicitly consider the problems of ableism in their profession and in the built environment.
Breakout sessions

A Talk from the Heart
A Conversation with Elder Little Brown Bear
Join us for a wide-ranging and interactive discussion with Ernest W. Matton (Athehsa Niohkwa:rita:a, Elder Little Brown Bear) - a highly respected Métis Elder and spiritual ambassador who blends traditional teachings with mainstream information to provide holistic healing approaches for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members.

Topics that may be covered during this session include the Two Row Wampum Belt, the Three C’s of Healthy Relationships, creating welcoming health care environments for Indigenous people, Indigenous peoples’ relationship to research, and enhancing health care equity for Indigenous people.

This talk will be informed by Elder Little Brown Bear’s straightforward guiding philosophy, which is that “people don’t care how much you know, they want to know how much you care.” Attendees are invited to ask questions at any point during this interactive session. The session will be moderated Dr. Tim Ross, scientist at the Bloorview Research Institute’s EPIC Lab and an assistant professor (status only) at University of Toronto’s geography and planning department.

About Elder Little Brown Bear
Ernest W Matton, (Athehsa Niohkwa:rita:a) (Elder Little Brown Bear) – Is a highly respected Métis Elder, and spiritual ambassador who blends Traditional teachings with mainstream information to provide holistic healing approaches for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members and professional disciplines.

He is both a sought-after seminar speaker and effective group facilitator an expert in the areas of Trauma/Addictions/Mental Wellbeing (Health), grief, suicide, conflict resolution, forgiveness, mediation, anger release, and Building Healthy Relationships.

He shares this expertise as a proud member of the Toronto East Health Network family. There, he is the, Director of Aboriginal Education, Programs, Culture and the Founder/Elder of the Accredited Leading Practice Aboriginal Healing Program.

He is a graduate of Canadore College and Brock University. He is a member in good standing with the (CACCF) Canadian Addiction Counsellors Certification Federation and (OAMHP) Ontario Association of Mental Health Professionals.

He wears the YELLOW SASH with pride in Honouring those missing and murdered Aboriginal Women and girls. He speaks to the commitment to breaking the cycle of violence and abuse. Elder Little Brown Bear’s guiding philosophy is simple: “People don’t care how much you know, they want to know how much you care.”
The paralympian experience

Panel with Mike Whitehead, Richard Peter and Danielle DuPlessis
Have you every wondered what it takes to train for and compete in the Paralympics? Join us for an engaging panel discussion with Paralympians Danielle Duplessis, Richard Peter and Mike Whitehead who will share their athletic journey with us and answer our questions on competing at an elite level. The panel will dig deep on the role that research and innovation have played in parasport and how emerging athletes can become a part of the parasport world.

The panel will be moderated by Dr. Virginia Wright, Senior Scientist, SPARK Lab at Bloorview Research Institute, and Bloorview Children’s Hospital Foundation Chair in Pediatric Rehabilitation; and Roxy O’Rourke, a University of Toronto doctoral student studying kinesiology and physical education.

About Mike Whitehead
Before his spinal cord injury, Mike Whitehead was an avid multi-sport athlete who enjoyed basketball, volleyball, hockey, soccer and badminton. He was introduced to wheelchair rugby when his future teammates, including David Willsie, came to visit him at the Parkwood Rehabilitation Hospital in London, Ontario. He quickly became hooked on the level of competition and made the national team, just one year after his injury.

Mike has been a mainstay in Team Canada, having competed in four Paralympic games (2 silvers & 1 bronze), five World Championships (1 gold, 1 silver & 2 bronze) and two Parapan Am Games (1 gold & 1 silver). He has taken on a mentorship role with his younger teammates in recent years, by his sharing his experiences and knowledge of the sport. Most recently, Mike coached Canada’s wheelchair rugby team at the Toronto Invictus Games and was a guest speaker at a TEDxBeaconStreet event in Boston.

About Danielle DuPlessis
Danielle was an accomplished multi-sport athlete in her home province of New Brunswick, competing on provincial and high-school basketball, soccer, and volleyball teams. Unfortunately, a series of injuries to her left knee that began at the age of 16 would eventually force her retirement from stand-up sports due to chronic pain and instability.

In 2017, shortly after her last knee injury, Danielle reached out to ParaSport New Brunswick to learn more about participating in wheelchair sports. She was welcomed into the adaptive sport world with open arms, and has been playing wheelchair basketball ever since.
Her career kicked off quickly, as she won Gold with the Canadian Women’s team at the 2019 Para Pan Am games in Lima, Peru, two years after beginning to play wheelchair basketball. Most recently, Danielle travelled to Tokyo to play in the 2021 Paralympic Games, where she and team Canada finished 5th. She is looking forward to playing in the upcoming wheelchair basketball world championships in Dubai, 2022.

Outside of her participation in para-sport, Danielle is also an active learner. She recently completed her MSc in Rehabilitation Science from the University of Toronto, where she was supervised by Dr. Shannon Scratch and Dr. Elaine Biddiss, and carried out her research at the Bloorview Research Institute. The enthusiasm and support of her supervisors allowed her to pursue her education while balancing the commitment of training as a high-performance athlete. Since defending her master's, Danielle has moved on to study at York University, where she is pursuing a degree in clinical developmental neuropsychology.

**About Richard Peter**

Richard “Bear” Peter began playing wheelchair basketball at age 15 after a team came to his school and introduced him to wheelchair sports. He has been using a wheelchair since being injured in a bus accident at four years old.


After leading the Canadian wheelchair basketball team to Gold at the 2012 Paralympics in London, Richard retired from international competition and took up Para badminton becoming so proficient that he soon earned a place on Canada’s national team. In 2019, he won a bronze medal in Para badminton men’s doubles WH1-WH2 at the Parapan American Games in Lima, Peru.

Richard has been recognized widely for his contributions on and off the court. Twice named winner of the Tom Longboat Award as Canada’s Male Aboriginal Athlete of the Year, he was also a two-time Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association Male Athlete of the Year, and the 2008 Canadian Wheelchair Basketball Athlete of the Year.
Enabling real world impact through community partnerships

**Presented by** Tom Mikkelsen, MD, and Christa Studzinski, PhD

The Ontario Brain Institute (OBI) is advancing brain health solutions, from lab to life. As we embark on our next 10 years of existence, we continue our commitment to breaking down barriers for getting evidence-based technologies and practices into the community. An integral part of this process is to foster partnerships between community partners and companies to ensure the solution is impactful for the patient and their care partner. We will showcase of our ongoing activities in this space and how we are creating shared wins for both the community and the company.

**Speakers**

**Tom Mikkelsen, MD**
Tom Mikkelsen is the President and Scientific Director of the Ontario Brain Institute (OBI), a provincially funded, not-for-profit research centre that aims to establish Ontario as a world leader in brain research commercialization and care. Tom has had an impressive career in neurobiology, spearheading the Brain Tumor Program at Henry Ford Hospital, where he was key in building both the clinical trials program and laboratory of tumour biology. In his work with OBI, he advocates for a collaborative approach to science that engages both patients and industry in the process.

**Christa Studzinski, PhD**
Christa Studzinski is the Manager of Partnerships at the Ontario Brain Institute where she helps companies partner with clinicians, researchers, and patient groups, to clinically validate their technologies. Prior to joining OBI, she completed post-doctoral fellowships at the University of Kentucky and the University of Toronto. While completing her PhD in Pharmacology from the University of Toronto, she also co-founded a contract research organization and participated in research that led to the FDA approval of a medical food for Alzheimer’s disease.
Art Panel: Illuminating a Hidden Narrative

Exploring how youth with disabilities navigate sexuality in health-care settings

Why is it so hard for us to talk about sexual health with our young adults? A new digital art exhibition hosted at Holland Bloorview sheds new light on this big question. Led by Dr. Amy McPherson, a senior scientist in the Bloorview Research Institute, the exhibit illuminates a hidden narrative: how Canadian youth living with disabilities are sharing how they’ve navigated their sexuality in health-care settings through art.

The exhibit, on display in the Bloorview Research Institute and online, features artwork by various artists using different mediums to confront gaps in sexuality, ableism and disability. The young adults involved, ages ranging from 18 to 25, identified as living with a visible or invisible disability.

Dr. McPherson will discuss the aim of the exhibit – to reduce stigmas surrounding sexuality for youth with disabilities and creating safe spaces in health care where these discussions can happen more often.

This digital exhibit is part of a broader series of activities including research talks and a series of workshops with various groups including young adults with disabilities, caregivers and health-care professionals to share their knowledge and lived experiences. Through these activities, the team identified important gaps order to create education resources and conduct further research studies around disability and sexuality.

Visit the virtual poster and exhibitor booth lunch session to watch a video about the exhibit.

Illuminating is generously funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada’s Connection Program and the Kimel Family Opportunities Found through the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Foundation.

Curator’s note: All of the exhibition’s artists gave permission to share their images and volunteered their time to be artists. While some people have chosen to remain anonymous, other youth wished to be recognized and known as the artist of their work. We have respected each young person’s choice on how they wish to showcase their art.

About Dr. Amy McPherson, Senior Scientist, ProFILE Lab
Dr. Amy McPherson is a senior scientist at Holland Bloorview's Bloorview Research Institute and an associate professor at the University of Toronto. Her research work in her ProFILE lab addresses timely and relevant questions around the promotion of health and wellness of children with disabilities and long-term conditions, and is co-created with clients and families throughout the research process. Learn more
Partnership showcase

Holland Bloorview enjoys strong collaborative relationships with industry and other external partners, in efforts to advance scientific, commercial and social impact. Visit our Virtual Partnership Showcase to see and experience some examples of successful collaborations, foster new partnerships and explore the potential impact of research here at the Bloorview Research Institute!

The Showcase will be held virtually during the lunch break from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Featured exhibitors:**

**Connect2Research, Bloorview Research Institute**
Connect2Research helps increase awareness of new research at Holland Bloorview and provides equal access for all clients and families interested in learning more or participating. Learn more

**Research Family Engagement Committee, Holland Bloorview**
The Research Family Engagement Committee works in partnership with the Bloorview Research Institute to fully engage families in research from concept to completion – hand-in-hand as equal partners. Learn more

**Hummingbird**
Developed by the Bloorview Research Institute’s PRISM Lab, the Hummingbird is a wearable technology that converts vocal cord vibrations into switch outputs that can ‘talk’ to different interfaces such as computers, communication devices and more. For children and their families, it opens newfound options and opportunities for learning and participation in their daily lives. Learn more

**Komodo Open Lab**
We use the power of businesses to solve a social problem, digital inclusion. Our product line, Tecla, is assistive technology that gives people with upper-body mobility impairments the ability to fully access mobile and smart home devices – at a fraction of the cost of traditional assistive devices. Learn more about Tecla

**Quillsoft**
are the creators WordQ, a software that makes reading, writing, and communication easier and more accessible for students at home and school. Learn more

**Pearl Interactives**
A start up from Holland Bloorview, Pearl Interactives creates video games and apps that make wellness and learning fun for kids of all abilities. We make it easy for clinicians and parents to provide wellness and learning solutions so that their kids can make progress and have fun playing with their friends. Learn more

**LegWorks**
Developed in partnership with the Bloorview Research Institute’s PROPEL Lab, LegWorks is a social enterprise that has developed a next-generation prosthetic knee, the All-Terrain Knee to help amputees move with confidence. Learn more

**Awake Labs**
Improving wellbeing for people with cognitive disabilities. A wearable-enabled solution for stress and strong emotions. Learn more
Elevating the family voice in research

The impact of client and family engagement in research

At the heart of all research studies and projects at the Bloorview Research Institute lies our clients and families. From the initial research concept to the completion of a study, scientists and researchers work hand-in-hand with their clients and families every step of the way.

Here is what some of our families and researchers had to say:

“ I would never do a project now without them [Family Leaders]. It’s been the best thing ever.
– BRI researcher

“ If I can be a player in making system change and more opportunities exist for the kids in healthcare, then I think I’m getting a lot out of it.
– Family leader

“ As a family member who has been engaged in research, I’m learning about the world that my daughter is in – it’s a huge benefit.
– Family leader

“ I will say that external to Holland Bloorview, it’s a rare moment when a colleague really gets it (family engagement in research), and sees the value. They are willing, and they think it’s important, but they don’t take that next step.
– BRI researcher

“ [The family leader] changed our entire research question. We would never have thought of that.
– BRI researcher

“ Research for families represents HOPE.
– Family leader
Quick hits

Each year, the Bloorview Research Institute welcomes over 100 graduate and doctoral students, otherwise known as trainees, from universities across Canada and beyond to study alongside some of the world’s leading scientists and gain first-hand knowledge on the latest advancements in childhood disability research. The BRI symposium is one of several events where these trainees can showcase their research to a broad audience. This year, a committee comprising family leaders, scientists and staff chose the top five student ‘quick hit’-style research presentations from over 22 submissions. These students will present their compelling research in three minutes as a research pitch. Audience members, pay attention! You’ll have a chance to test your memory with a fun pop quiz!

1. **Efficacy of Non-Pharmacological Persistent Pain Treatments for Youth with Mental Health Comorbidities (Systematic Review)**
   Presenter: Ronessa Dass, Ardith Baerveldt
   Authors: Dass R., Tendera A., Baerveldt A., Lewis I., Beal D

2. **“They Assume That You’re Not Having Sex”: A Qualitative Exploration of How Paediatric Healthcare Providers Can Have Positive Sexuality-Related Conversations with Youth with Disabilities**
   Presenter: Revi Bonder
   Authors: Bonder R., Wincentak J., Gan C., Kingsnorth S., Provvidenza C., McPherson A

3. **Gait Analysis Algorithms using Wearable Sensors to Inform Monitoring and Decision-Making in Amputee Rehabilitation**
   Presenter: Gabriel Ng
   Authors: Ng G., Andrysek J.

4. **Identifying short-term pain intensity trajectories in children and youth with cerebral palsy**
   Presenter: Heather Shearer
   Authors: Shearer H., Côté P., Hogg-Johnson S., McKeever P., Fehlings D.

5. **Rethinking brain-computer interface design: Towards user-centric performance evaluation, algorithm development, and training methods to reduce barriers to aided communication technologies**
   Presenter: Nicolas Ivanov
   Authors: Chau T., Ivanov N.
Poster sessions

At the Bloorview Research Institute, scientists, researchers and trainees are co-creating innovative research with clients and families to unlock a world of possibilities and creating healthier and meaningful futures for families.

Here are this year’s research poster presentations featured during the symposium from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Please have a virtual chat with our presenters to learn more about their incredible research.

1. A qualitative analysis of the recommendations from Project ECHO Ontario Autism.
   Presenter: Alanna Jane
   Authors: Alanna Jane, Lisa Kanigsberg, Anmol Patel, & Dr. Melanie Penner.

2. A Scoping Review on Structural and Functional MRI Modalities Used in Diagnostics of Persistent Post-Concussive Symptoms (PPCS) in Pediatric Populations
   Presenter: Elena Sheldrake
   Authors: Elena Sheldrake, Mr. Brendan Lam, Hiba AlHakeem, Dr. Nick Reed, & Dr. Shannon Scratch

3. Adapting the Teach-ABI eLearning Module for High School Educators
   Presenter: Sara Marshall
   Authors: Sara Marshall, Rick Rusyn, Elizabeth Ramirez, Brendan Lam, Lauren Saly, Dr. Shannon Scratch

4. Analyzing high-engagement therapy sessions to explore how youth and service providers co-construct engagement
   Presenter: Kate Einarson
   Authors: Kate M. Einarson, Gillian King, Lisa A. Chiarello, Michelle Phoenix, Rachel D’Arrigo, Madhu Pinto

5. Barriers to school and work transitions for youth with and without a disability during the COVID-19 pandemic.
   Presenter: Hiba Ahmed
   Authors: Sally Lindsay, Hiba Ahmed

6. Caregivers Connecting after ABI (CCABI): Expanding Caregiver Support, Coping, and Knowledge
   Presenter: Mary Stewart
   Authors: Sara Stevens, Mary Stewart, Shannon Scratch, Hiba AlHakeem, Caron Gan, Lies Ferriman, Melissa Ngo

7. Challenges, Facilitators and Opportunities Associated with the Implementation of Digital Workflows in Orthotic & Prosthetic Practice: Practitioner Perspectives
   Presenter: Calvin Ngan
   Authors: Calvin Ngan, Harry Sivasambu, Kerri Kelland, Sandra Ramdial, Jan Andrysek

8. Change in gross motor function with intensive rehabilitation for children and youth with acquired brain injury: A 10-year retrospective review
   Presenter: Jennifer Ryan
   Authors: Jennifer Ryan, Chuanlin Zhou, Ryan Hung, Virginia Wright
Poster sessions

9. **Children and Teens in Charge of their Health (CATCH): Measure responsiveness to a healthy lifestyle solution-focused coaching intervention**
   Presenter: Amy C McPherson

10. **Coping Mechanisms Among Youth and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Competitive Employment**
    Presenter: Abirami Vijayakumar
    Authors: Abirami Vijayakumar, Dr. Melanie Penner, Dr. Shannon Scratch, Dr. Sally Lindsay.

11. **Development of a Wearable Biofeedback System for Lower Limb Amputee Gait Training**
    Presenter: Aliaa Gouda
    Authors: Aliaa Gouda, Dr. Jan Andrysek.

12. **Disability and Sexuality: More conversations more often!**
    Presenter: Amy C McPherson
    Authors: Amy C McPherson, Christine Provvidenza, Kathryn Parker, Celeste Lumia, Madison Giles, Revi Bonder

13. **Early Identification and Intervention (Baby Constraint Induced Movement Therapy) for Children with Hemiplegic Cerebral Palsy: A Knowledge Implementation Project**
    Presenter: Rachel Willis
    Authors: R. Willis, N. Kapil, S. Aimola, S. Lam-Damji, A. Makino, the Baby-CIMT Implementation Group, D. Fehlings

14. **Efficacy of Non-Pharmacological Persistent Pain Treatments for Youth with Mental Health Comorbidities (Systematic Review)**
    Presenter: Ronessa Dass, Ardith Baerveldt
    Authors: Dass R., Tendera A., Baerveldt A., Lewis I., Beal D

15. **Examining the role of emotion regulation and physiological arousal in autism spectrum disorder**
    Presenter: Bilal Syed
    Authors: Bilal Syed, Robyn Cardy, Jenny Nguyen, Suneea Monga, Jessica Brian, Brendan Andrade, Evdokia Anagnostou, Eric Duku, Annie Dupuis, Azadeh Kushki

16. **Exploration of gender sensitive care in vocational rehabilitation providers working with youth with disabilities: Co-development of an educational simulation**
    Presenter: Sally Lindsay
    Authors: Sally Lindsay, Kendall Kolne Donna Barker, Angela Colantonio, Jennifer Stinson, Sandra Moll, Nicole Thomson

17. **Facilitators for coping with the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study comparing youth with and without disabilities**
    Presenter: Demitra Apostolopoulos
    Authors: Sally Lindsay, Hiba Ahmed, Demitra Apostolopoulos

18. **Gait Analysis Algorithms using Wearable Sensors to Inform Monitoring and Decision-Making in Amputee Rehabilitation**
    Presenter: Gabriel Ng
    Authors: Gabriel Ng, Jan Andrysek
19. **Housing Design Interventions and their Impacts on Quality of Life for Youth and Adults with Developmental Disabilities: A Scoping Review**  
Presenter: Sarah Qureshi  
Authors: Sarah Qureshi, Emily Builing, Téa Christopoulos, Meaghan Walker, Timothy Ross

20. **Key Elements of Interventions for Siblings of Children and Youth With Disabilities: A Scoping Review**  
Presenter: Hiba Al Hakeem, Anna Kiriakidis  
Authors: Hiba Al Hakeem, Anna Kiriakidis, Marie Hooper, Shannon Scratch

21. **Let’s talk disability and sex: A Connection Day to discuss sexuality and young people with disabilities**  
Presenter: Amy C McPherson  
Authors: Amy C McPherson, Celeste Lumia, Madison Giles, Revi Bonder, Dionne Gesink, Keisha Goberdhan, Marie Hooper, Dilshad Kassam Lallani, Patricia McKeever, Fiona Moola, Christine Provvidenza, Louise Rudden, Meenu Sikand, Joanne Wincentak

22. **Perceptions of Bodyweight and Weight-Management Supports: Exploring the Experiences of Children with Spina Bifida and their Parent**  
Presenter: Madison Giles  
Authors: Madison Giles, Revi Bonder, Geoff Ball, Annick Buchholz, Armando Perez Garcia, Jan Willem Gorter, Katherine Morrison and Amy C McPherson

23. **Reducing barriers to communication technologies: New performance metrics and training methods for brain-computer interfaces**  
Presenter: Nicolas Ivanov  
Authors: Nicolas Ivanov, Tom Chau

24. **Testing the Feasibility of Using the Ignite Coach with the Body Language Coding Scale in Children with ASD**  
Presenter: Greg MacPhee  
Authors: Greg MacPhee, Virginia Wright, and Ilana D. Naiman

25. **The Brain during Movement Execution and Movement Observation in Children**  
Presenter: Niloufaralsadat Hashemi  
Authors: Niloufaralsadat Hashemi, Deryk Beal, Si Tou, Kristen Wong, Feny Pandya, Anna Tendera, Tom Chau

26. **The Design and Experience of Play Spaces in Pediatric Healthcare Environments**  
Presenter: Sophie Weaver  
Authors: Sophie Weaver, Julia Hess, Amanda Mac, Meaghan Walker, Timothy Ross

27. **The feasibility of transcranial direct current stimulation as an adjunct to inpatient physiotherapy in pediatric acquired brain injury: Challenges with eligibility and retention**  
Presenter: Jennifer Ryan  
Authors: Jennifer Ryan, Deryk Beal, Darcy Fehlings, Virginia Wright
28. The impact of race and ethnicity on school and work outcomes among youth and young adults with disabilities
Presenter: Mara Primucci & Karen Wong
Authors: Sally Lindsay, Azar Varahra, Hiba Ahmed, Sara Abrahamson, Sierra Pulver, Mara Primucci, Karen Wong

29. The Reliability of the Body Language Coding Scale (BLCS) for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Presenter: Ilana D. Naiman
Authors: ID Naiman, L Black, S Martin, N Di Franco, M Dusseault, K Harvey, C Kierulf-Monaghan, and FV Wright

30. The Socio-Cognitive Underpinnings of Resiliency: The role of self-regulation
Presenter: Diana Tajik-Parvinchi
Authors: Diana Tajik-Parvinchi, Emily Nalder, Kate Einarson, Peter Rosenbaum, Kinga Pozniak, Madhu Pinto, Gillian King

31. Towards a Digitally-Made Paediatric Transradial Prosthetic Socket
Presenter: Calvin Ngan
Authors: Calvin Ngan, Harry Sivasambu, Elaine Ouellette, Neil Ready, Kerri Kelland, Sandra Ramdial, Jan Andrysek

32. Transitions Theatre: An Arts-informed Interprofessional Education on Transition Support
Presenter: Yukari Seko
Authors: Yukari Seko, Anna Oh, Keisha Goberdhan, Laura Hartman, Darlene Hubley, Payal Khazanchi, Nadine Vermeulen, and C.J. Curran

33. Using Artificial Intelligence to Assess Brain Injury Patterns in Neuroimaging for Children with Cerebral Palsy
Presenter: Flora Wan
Authors: Flora Wan, Pradeep Krishnan, Nomazulu Dlamini, Trish Domi, Sabrina Aimola, Darcy Fehlings

34. Using the COM-B Model and Theoretical Domains Framework to understand the workplace disclosure experiences, influencers, and needs of autistic youth and young adults
Presenter: Ms. Vanessa Tomas
Authors: Ms. Vanessa Tomas, Dr. Shauna Kingsnorth, Dr. Bonnie Kirsh, Dr. Evdokia Anagnostou, Dr. Sally Lindsay

35. Virtual friendships and online social engagement to combat isolation in youth with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic
Presenter: Eric Smart
Authors: Eric Smart, Ying Xu, Anna Oh, Dolly Menna-Dack, Carolyn McDougall, C.J. Curran, Laura Hartman

36. Weight management for children with disabilities: Exploring the perspectives of healthcare professionals working in paediatric weight management clinics in Canada
Presenter: Revi Bonder
Authors: Revi Bonder, Madison Giles, Amy C McPherson
37. Why do young people and their parents engage in a solution-focused health promotion feasibility trial?
Presenter: Katie Shum
Authors: McPherson, A.C., Lui, T., Shum, K.

38. “I was surprised to see how little I listened where I was thinking myself a good listener”: Perceived Impact of a Clinical Listening Measure (ELICS) on Novice Clinicians’ Listening Skill Development
Presenter: Michelle Servais and Kate Einarson
Authors: Michelle Servais (TVCC), Gillian King (BRI), Sheila Moodie (UWO), Tracy Shepherd (TVCC), Colleen Willoughby (TVCC), Linda Bolack (Independent), Deb Strachan (Independent), Megan Nichols (TVCC), Kate Einarson (BRI).

39. “Lost in time”: Updating the content and clinical accessibility of the Prosthetic Upper Limb Functional Index (the PUFI-2).
Presenter: Lisa Artero
Authors: Jessica Wilk, Viktoriya Dyubanova, Ashley Ogilvie, Carleen Ginter, Gloria Lee, Sandra Ramdial, Virginia Wright, Lisa Artero.

40. “They Assume That You’re Not Having Sex”: A Qualitative Exploration of How Paediatric Healthcare Providers Can Have Positive Sexuality-Related Conversations with Youth with Disabilities
Presenter: Revi Bonder
Authors: Revi Bonder, Joanne Wincentak, Caron Gan, Shauna Kingsnorth, Christine F. Provvidenza, Amy C. McPherson

41. Evidence-Informed implementation practice. Helping newer practitioners plan their next implementation project for success
Presenter: Ashleigh Townley
Authors: Ashleigh Townley, Joanne Wincentak, Shauna Kingsnorth
Notable awards

Dr. John Whittaker Memorial Cerebral Palsy Award

The Dr. John Whittaker Memorial Cerebral Palsy Award rewards outstanding contributions in research, service, or product development that improve the quality of life of children and youth with cerebral palsy or other developmental disabilities.

The award was created by Dr. Whittaker’s family and friends in recognition of his dedication to improving the quality of life of children with cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities.

This year’s Whittaker Award is Dr. Elaine Biddiss, a senior scientist and the director of the PEARL Lab. She is also an investigator with CP-NET, a research-based initiative in Ontario designed to improve the lives of children with, or at risk of cerebral palsy.

Dr. Biddiss is a dedicated professional, with a true passion for making a positive impact on children living with disabilities and their families. She not only has proven herself a leader in the development of innovative technology to improve quality of life for children and youth with disabilities, but also accessibility, inclusivity and collaboration are at the foundation of her creations, most prominently illustrated in her Botley’s BootleBlast game.

Congratulations Dr. Biddiss!

Academic Accolades

Dr. Shannon Scratch has been named the Holland Family Professorship in Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) for a five-year term. This is a joint hospital-university named chair between the University of Toronto, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation.

As an early career researcher, this new professorship will enable Dr. Scratch and her research team at the NOvEL Lab bring personalized interventions such as the CIHR-funded Move&Connect project to even more families with acquired brain injury (ABI) and concussion as well as to clinicians who are part of their health-care teams.

Congratulations Dr. Scratch!

Dr. Gillian King, a distinguished senior scientist at the Bloorview Research Institute has been renewed for another seven years as the chair holder of the Canada Research Chair in Optimal Care for Children with Disabilities (Tier 1). Dr. King is an international leader in family-centred and optimal care for children with disabilities and has developed measures and service delivery models used on a global scale.

Congratulations Dr. King!
Notable awards

This chair renewal will enable Dr. King the capacity to conduct research on the resiliency of young people with disabilities, the measurement of family-centred service delivery, and the listening and coaching skills of healthcare providers and students. The chair will support trainees, engagement with family members, and contribute to knowledge translation initiatives. The research has the potential to increase our understanding of how to build youth resiliency, promote family strengths and capacities through Family-Centred Service, and enhance service providers’ listening and coaching skills.

Congratulations Dr. King!

Graduate student awards

The BRI congratulates the 2021-2022 Graduate Student Scholarship Award recipients:

The **Kimel Family Graduate Student Scholarships in Pediatric Rehabilitation** winners are:

**Aliaa Gouda**, third-year PhD student in Biomedical Engineering, University of Toronto

*Project (under supervision of Dr. Jan Andrysek): Development of a Wearable Biofeedback System for Lower Limb Amputee Gait Training*

**Nicolas Ivanov**, second-year PhD student in Biomedical Engineering, University of Toronto

*Project (under supervision of Dr. Tom Chau): Reducing Barriers to Communication: Effective User Training to Improve BCI Viability*

The **Kimel Family Graduate Student Scholarships in Pediatric Disability Research** winners are:

**Elyse Comeau**, first-year PhD student in Planning, University of Toronto

*Project (under supervision of Dr. Tim Ross): Enabling Environments: A Study of Public Transit Accessibility Policy and Experiences*

**Isabelle Caven**, second-year Masters of Science student in Medical Science, University of Toronto

*Project (under supervision of Dr. Melanie Penner): Multi-stakeholder Perspectives on Acceptability of Autism Therapies*

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Academic Promotions

Congratulations to **Dr. Melanie Penner** who has received an academic promotion for her well-deserved promotion to Associate Professor within the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Toronto’s Temerty Faculty of Medicine.

Congratulations Dr. Penner!
Notable awards

The Whipper Watson Graduate Research Scholarship winner is: 
**Jae Moon**, third-year PhD student in Biomedical Engineering, University of Toronto

*Project (under supervision of Dr. Tom Chau): Training a thought-decoding brain-computer-interface through passive listening*

BRI Trainee Awards for Excellence

The Bloorview Research Institute Trainee Executive’s (BRITE) notable awards highlight trainees and supervisors who go above and beyond to shape the next generation of researchers, scientists and clinicians:

**Excellence in Trainee Supervision** awarded to **Dr. Jessica Brian**

**Excellence in Trainee Support** awarded to **Joanne Wincentak**

**Excellence in Research Collaborations** awarded to **Daniela Chan-Viquez**

**Excellence in Peer Mentorship** awarded to **Brandon Rufino**
Thank you for supporting BRI

- Alayatec
- Alberta Innovates Health Solutions
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Autism Speaks
- Autism Speaks Canada
- Brain Canada
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$32 million goal achieved for Bloorview Research Institute expansion

Three years since the Grow Holland Bloorview Research Institute campaign launched, the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital (Holland Bloorview) Foundation has achieved its $32-million fundraising goal.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the teams at the Bloorview Research Institute -- embedded within Holland Bloorview -- can continue to make transformational discoveries in childhood disability research, including developing and evaluating innovative interventions, understanding developmental diversity and exploring dimensions of disability and care. Holland Bloorview thanks all the donors who have contributed to this impactful campaign to support the following:

- Canada’s first fully accessible pediatric research MRI
- New internationally-recognized scientists
- New discovery hubs to house shared, state-of-the-art research equipment
- An 11,000 square foot addition to accommodate the growth
- Acceleration of commercialization activity so that children with disabilities and their families can enjoy healthy and meaningful lives
Research, for us, represents hope… the hope that something can change in our kid’s life, that something can be possible in the future.

– Manuela Comito, Parent

Thank you to all of the incredible donors who are helping to grow BRI research, including transformational gifts from:

**$5,000,000 - $14,999,999**
Jason Smith  
Heather Smith  
FDC Foundation

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To learn more and to donate visit: [www.growhbresearch.ca](http://www.growhbresearch.ca)
Bloorview Research Institute

Unlocking the potential of the Bloorview Research Institute (2018-2022)

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital (Holland Bloorview)’s scientists are world-renowned leaders in childhood disability research. Thanks to a bold campaign to grow the Bloorview Research Institute (BRI), we will continue to make transformational discoveries that will have a global impact in the lives of children and families across the world.

The growth includes expanding the infrastructure and research capacity of Holland Bloorview’s research institute, bringing new and state-of-the-art equipment including Canada’s first, fully-accessible, customizable, immersive, child-friendly research MRI, and catalyzing researchers from across the world. It marks the largest research expansion in the hospital’s history.
About Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital creates a world of possibility by supporting children and youth living with disability, medical complexity, illness and injury. Holland Bloorview is a top 40 Canadian research hospital that is fully affiliated with the University of Toronto and serves over 7,500 families annually.

Providing both inpatient and outpatient services, Holland Bloorview is renowned for its expertise in partnering with clients and families to provide exceptional care and is the only organization to ever achieve 100 per cent in two successive quality surveys by Accreditation Canada.

Holland Bloorview is a founding member of Kids Health Alliance, a network of partners working to create a high quality, consistent and coordinated approach to pediatric health care that is centred around children, youth and their families.

For more information or to donate, please visit hollandbloorview.ca or connect on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and parent-blog BLOOM.