

# active

## Volume 2 ■ Issue 1

A new friend online in Rheumatology

How a Newfoundland nurse went to great distances for her patients

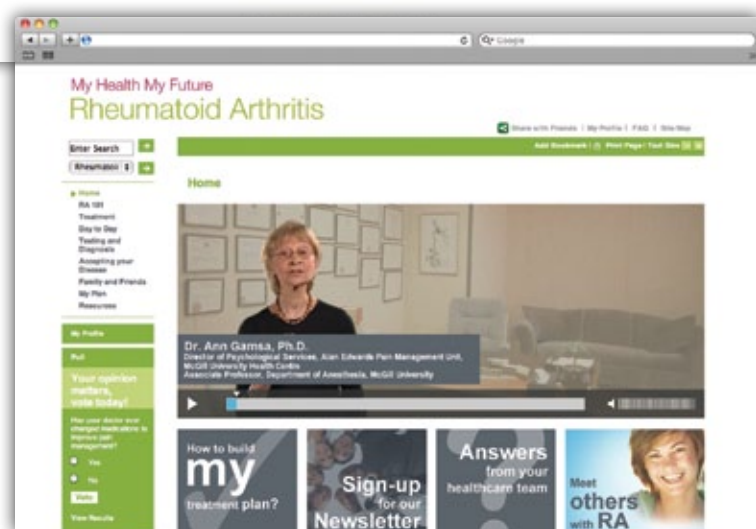
Abbott wraps up the holidays with Moisson Montréal

In this issue of **ACTIVE**, your rheumatology newsletter, you'll meet a Newfoundland nurse who went the extra mile for her patients by participating in The Arthritis Society's Joints in Motion marathon. You'll also be given an in depth view of My Health My Future, a new disease awareness website launched by Abbott. And finally, we'll introduce you to Moisson Montréal, an organization helping less fortunate Montrealers put food on their tables.



# MyHealthMyFuture.ca

A new friend  
online in  
rheumatic  
disease



Living with a chronic illness can be a challenge – patients with rheumatic diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis and psoriatic arthritis live the physical symptoms of their disease every day. But these physical symptoms also take a mental and emotional toll on their lives. Enter **MyHealthMyFuture.ca**, a new online resource that seeks to help patients deal with the emotional, as well as physical, aspects of their disease.

## A panel of experts

In order to help patients deal with the emotional and physical aspects of their diseases, MyHealthMyFuture.ca features the expert advice of four health care professionals, each specializing in their own areas.

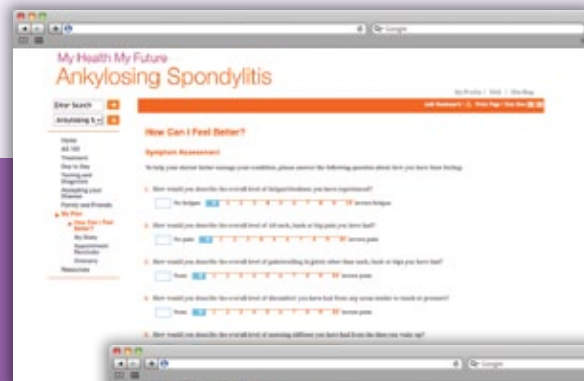
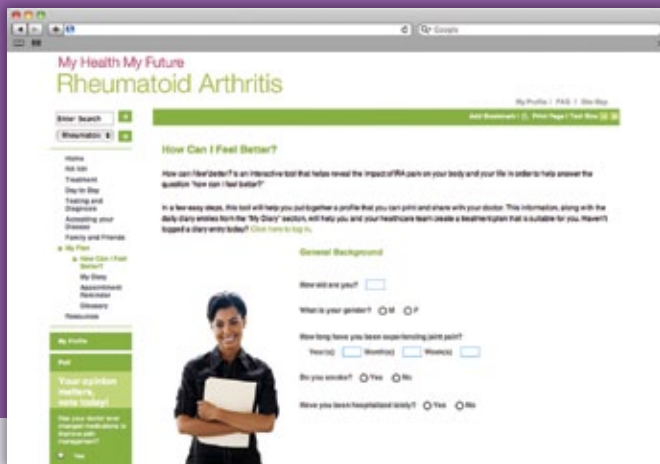
**Dr. Ann Gamsa, Ph.D.**, director of psychological services at the Alan Edwards Pain Management Unit of the McGill University Health Centre guides patients through the website. She focuses on the emotional side, helping patients come to terms with their chronic disease. Then, when patients are ready, Dr. Gamsa dispenses helpful advice on how to move forward and become a more active player in their own disease management.

When it comes to information about RA, AS and PsA, look no further than the expert advice of rheumatologist **Dr. Michel Zummer**, head of Rheumatology at the Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital in Montreal. Dr. Zummer

handles all subject matter related to the physical aspects of rheumatic disease, including a thorough overview of RA, AS and PsA. Dr. Zummer also reviews the types of tests ordered for the diagnosis and monitoring of the disease, as well as the benefits and risks of many treatment options available to patients.

Rheumatology nurses **Kathy Drouin** and **Jolaine L'Archeveque** handle the day to day aspects of RA, AS and PsA, offering helpful tips on how to help protect joints both at work and at home as well as advice on what activities patients can do help ease their pain and manage their stress.

# A wealth of information



**MyHealthMyFuture.ca's** aim is to provide patients with the right information at the right time. At the end of the introductory video, patients are asked to prioritize what information is most important to them and the website automatically rearranges itself according to their priorities. Here's a quick summary of the type of information you can find on the site:

**RA / AS / PsA 101:** A thorough overview of each of the rheumatic diseases RA, AS and PsA, this section introduces the disease as well as its signs and symptoms.

**Testing and Diagnosis:** To help prepare patients, this section contains information on many of the types of tests patients might undergo for the diagnosis and monitoring of their condition over time.

**Treatment:** This section gives an overview of the risks and benefits of the many treatments available for RA, AS and PsA and discusses the possibility of surgery.

**Accepting your disease:** Friendly advice on accepting their disease is complemented by helpful tips on how to take a more active role in their disease management once they are ready to move ahead.

**Day to Day:** Living day to day with a chronic disease can be a challenge. This section seeks to give patients the tools they need to help manage their disease on a daily basis.

**Family and Friends:** In this section, patients find advice on how to break down barriers to good communications so that they can have more honest conversations with their family and friends.

**My Plan:** Moving forward in managing RA, AS and PsA takes a plan. In this section patients will find three interactive tools to help set up this plan:

- A profile of the patient's state of disease at any given time, which can be printed and shared with their rheumatologist
- An online diary of symptoms, to help patients become more aware of any worsening of symptoms and inform their doctor
- An appointment reminder: patients can set up reminders for their next visit to their rheumatologist

# Joints in Motion:

## Historic strides in arthritis fundraising

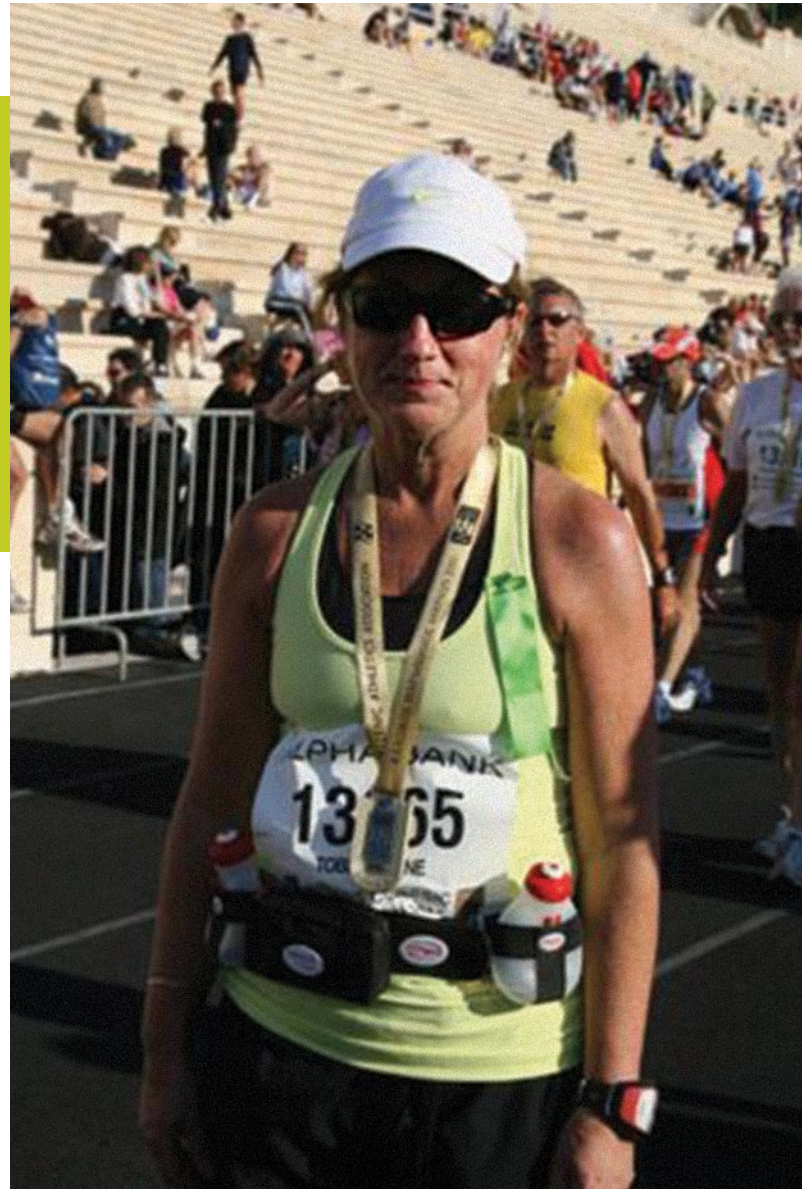
### Nfld. nurse helps raise \$38k for arthritis research

**W**hen it comes to her arthritis patients, research nurse **Yvonne Tobin** is always ready to help. But she never thought that would mean participating in a fundraising run halfway around the world.

Yvonne is the rheumatology research coordinator at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, part of the Eastern Health network, in St. John's, Newfoundland. As a member of the research team headed by Dr. Proton Rahman, professor of medicine at Memorial University, her work includes genetic research and clinical trials, often involving difficult to treat cases.

Yvonne's desire to improve the lives of patients suffering from its debilitating effects led her to volunteer with The Arthritis Society of Canada. To help raise money for the cause, she hoped to run in one of The Arthritis Society's Joints in Motion fundraising marathons.

Last year, the original marathon – the ancient Olympic race commemorating a messenger's fabled run to Athens, announcing victory in the Battle of Marathon – celebrated its 2500th anniversary. To mark the event, Joints in Motion

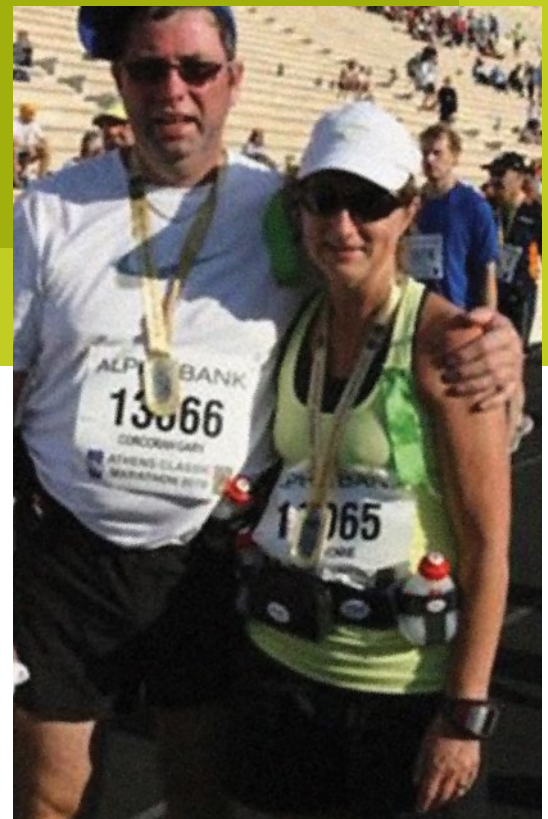
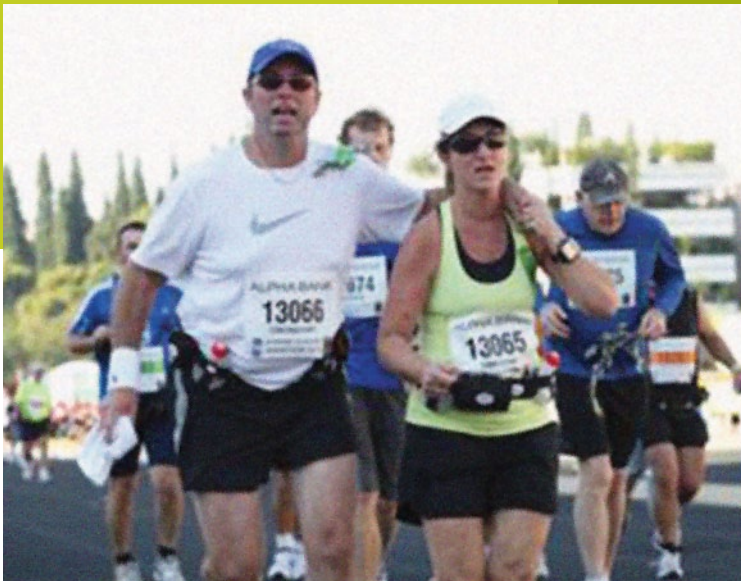


participated in a marathon in Athens, following the historic race course, with the finish line in the city's modern Olympic Stadium. Yvonne was facing her own personal milestone of turning 50, so when a colleague in Halifax suggested they train and participate, she decided that the time had come to pound the pavement in support of arthritis research.

"I wanted to give it a try before I got too old," she jokes. Because of other commitments, her friend from Halifax had



*"I've run in charity races before, but never a marathon. I just didn't think I was up to it. And I certainly didn't think I could ever raise enough money to qualify," she says.*



to withdraw from the marathon, so she enlisted her older brother instead. "He was slightly overweight and had never run a marathon either. We had our misgivings, but we pushed ourselves to train for a whole year, with the encouragement of our friends and families," she says.

To her pleasant surprise, meeting the minimum of \$6,000 in pledges was the easiest part. "As soon as people found out what we were doing, the donations started coming in," she says. "When I raised the required amount, I just kept going, taking in a total of \$11,000. My brother actually outdid me by cooking up a few charity dinners, raising \$27,000." Although her focus was on collecting as much money as possible, she turned down offers of donations from her patients. "It was really touching, but I told them 'I'm doing this for you'."

On October 31, 2010, they joined hundreds of runners, including almost 150 Canadians, being cheered by well-wishers all along the 42.2 kilometre route.

"The most amazing thing was that many of the runners were arthritis sufferers themselves. I saw several people wearing leg braces who eventually crossed the finish line. That sight alone was more encouraging than all the cheering from the sidelines," she says.

Since she completed the race, she has encouraged others to take part in their own Joints in Motion marathon. "The feeling of crossing that finish line and supporting such an important cause is an experience you'll never forget. Hopefully, it will inspire other people that they can do it too."

# Lending a helping hand in our own backyard



Volunteers  
prepare food  
baskets for  
5,000 needy  
Montrealers



At Abbott, there is a long standing tradition of giving back to the community – from volunteering at The Old Brewery Mission to fundraising for Centraide/United Way, organizing teams for the Farha Foundation’s HIV/AIDS fundraiser walk, and providing help to Haiti.

This past December, in the spirit of holiday giving, almost a dozen Abbott International employees and partners spent the day at Moisson Montréal, where they helped fill orders for various community outlets. As Canada’s largest food bank, it supplies almost 8 million kilograms of food annually to over 200 organizations across Montreal – a number that continues to grow as more and more families find themselves unable to fill their cupboards.

“There is truth in the old saying: ‘Tis better to give than to receive’. And this is exactly what we experienced at Moisson Montréal,” says Kim Gariepy, Marketing Manager for HUMIRA Rheumatology. “As the year was winding down, I was looking more than just a team-building activity – something that would uplift our spirits.”

Moisson, which is French for “harvest”, depends not only on volunteers but also on food and monetary donations. Their buying power is such that a donation of just \$60 is enough to provide one family with a month’s worth of groceries.

As they packed delivery orders – heaving, wrapping and moving an impressive 25 palettes during the eight hours they were on the job – she and her colleagues were able to witness first-hand the sheer magnitude of need that Moisson fills each day.

“Giving has become an integral part of our corporate culture and because of our efforts, 5,000 people who would have gone hungry brought home food to feed their families. It’s

*“Giving has become an integral part of our corporate culture...”*

an amazing feeling, but at the same time, it makes you think about how many people, especially children, need our help,” says Kim, adding that “Everyone left exhausted, but happy. We will never forget this experience, which we hope to replicate this coming year.”

For more information on Moisson Montréal, visit [www.moissonmontreal.org](http://www.moissonmontreal.org)

**We hope you have enjoyed this edition of ACTIVE,** Abbott’s newsletter dedicated to the Canadian rheumatology community.

If you would like more information on any of the topics discussed, wish to contribute to a future issue, or simply want to give us your feedback, please contact [muriel.haraoui@abbott.com](mailto:muriel.haraoui@abbott.com).