

Health Care is Not All Clinical

July 2009

There are people-friendly changes being made in the lobby of the Ste. Agathe hospital. Since June 4, 2009, there is a new food service facility called the *Café Gourmet Santé des Sommets*. It is operated by the proprietors of La Gourmandine, Eugénie Lee and Nicolas Texier, and is jointly owned by them and the hospital. Those of you in and around Ste. Agathe who have had the pleasure of trying out La Gourmandine will certainly welcome the news, and those who haven't yet experienced the quality of their offerings and the warm and courteous way they are presented will be pleasantly surprised on their first encounter.

The aim is to banish the image of hospital cafeteria food as bland and unappealing by providing healthy and interesting meals and snacks to patients, visitors and staff. Look for balanced, varied offerings prepared without trans fats or added sugar, running the gamut from salads to sushi. The café is set up in three parts, including the Boutique, where you can buy the meal of your choice, the Promenade, with tables by the art wall, and the quiet and intimate Détente space furnished with comfortable banquettes. In all, there is room for 50 people to sit at any time. Ms. Lee and Mr. Texier designed and built it themselves.

Carrying this makeover even farther, the café will be able to provide you with food prepared for take-out, and will also be responsible for the offerings available in the vending machines, so look for a big improvement there, too.

In addition to providing healthy food in a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere, the *Café Gourmet Santé des Sommets* is also directing a portion of its receipts directly to the *Fondation médicale des Laurentides et des Pays d'en Haut*. In this way, they are leading the way in giving to the community both through encouraging healthy eating and by providing funds to the foundation to continue its work of supplying equipment and material necessary to meet the needs of the whole Laurentian community.

But the café is not the only new installation contemplated for the main entrance lobby of the hospital. Come the spring of 2010, look for a small museum to be set up honouring the late Dr. Albert Joannette, for whom the building is named. His family has preserved the equipment used by Dr. Joannette, who was a pioneer in the treatment of tuberculosis and had his practice in Ste. Agathe for most of 50 years. Some of it will be displayed, along with period photos, in large glass cases. The evolution of the practice of medicine will be clearly visible when these are compared with the ultra-modern equipment and facilities that now surround us in the hospital. Alain Paquette, the Director of Communications and Community Relations at the CSSS des Sommets, underlines that it is important to showcase the people who have made significant contributions to the rich medical history of the region. He says that while this is the first such project to be planned, more will follow in the coming years, especially as several of the other buildings that are owned by the institution are renovated, such as to Grignon building next to Trinity Church, the old Foyer building on Godon Street, and the original building of the Laurentian Sanitarium which currently serves as the administrative centre for the CSSS des Sommets.

While being in the hospital is not a holiday, if you find yourself there, either as a patient or as a visitor, these initiatives will help to lighten your burden and allow you to appreciate the enormous efforts that go into our health and social services.

Sheila Eskenazi, President, English Communities Committee of the CSSS des Sommets