



**INSTITUT DE
CARDIOLOGIE
DE MONTRÉAL**

AFFILIÉ À
Université 
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PRESS RELEASE
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**The Montreal Heart Institute's ÉPIC Centre
encourages hundreds of elementary students to get active
during the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie caravan**

Montreal, March 9, 2009 – Today and tomorrow, the ÉPIC Centre, the Montreal Heart Institute's Centre for Preventive Medicine and Physical Activity, will echo with the applause of children and adults alike, as some 445 elementary school children will pedal aboard stationary bicycles as part of the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie's Tournée le Lait. Members of the ÉPIC Centre will be on-site to encourage them and help them realize the many benefits of putting words into action.

By welcoming the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie caravan, the ÉPIC Centre intends to promote intergenerational ties by staging a common activity for children and adults for the first time. "We're delighted to welcome these children to the Centre and to raise awareness of the importance of staying fit, even if they're still children," said Dr. Martin Juneau, prevention director at the MHI, director of the ÉPIC Centre for Preventive Medicine and Physical Activity, and professor of medicine at Université de Montréal. "We're convinced that our prevention activity, combined with the chance to take part in the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie at the Olympic Stadium next June, will be a lovely gift and a superb source of motivation for these children to take action through simple and concrete gestures that will help them enjoy and maintain improved health," said Dr. Juneau.

The MHI and Pierre Lavoie: Two Hearts Beating as One

For several years now, the Montreal Heart Institute and Pierre Lavoie have been brought together in a special way in the cause of orphan genetic diseases as well as prevention through healthy lifestyle habits. Indeed, it was funds raised during the first years of the Défi Pierre Lavoie that enabled a research group headed by John D. Rioux - today a researcher at the Montreal Heart Institute - to locate the gene in lactic acidosis, a genetic disease that kills a large number of children with it before the age of five. This first giant step led to the creation of a genetic screening test for this disease, which the ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux now offers to the entire Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean population. It also led to the forming of a research consortium composed notably of researchers from the MHI, whose work is directed toward a better understanding of the mechanisms whereby gene mutations cause the disease.

Because Pierre Lavoie and the MHI also shared a common objective to promote healthy lifestyle habits, another tie was quickly forged between them. It is therefore completely natural that the MHI associate itself with the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie, for it has been emphasizing the benefits of physical activity and a healthy diet for several years. It does so in a particular way with the 4,800 members at its ÉPIC Centre for Preventive Medicine and Physical Activity, which last year marked its 40th anniversary. In 2004, the MHI's division on prevention decided to heighten its presence in the community and marked this important turn by sponsoring the *5/30 Health Challenge* and the *Quit to Win! Challenge*, two programs experiencing ever-growing success, as well as other initiatives.

About the Montreal Heart Institute: www.icm-mhi.org

About the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie : www.legrandefipierrelavoie.com

- 30 -

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