

Bereaved Families of Leucan are Especially Impacted by the Pandemic
September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

MONTREAL, September 1, 2020 – For more than 40 years, Leucan has been supporting the families of cancer-stricken children through every stage of childhood cancer and its effects. While the end of treatment is a happy moment for most families, it takes on a whole other meaning for others. To mark the beginning of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, Leucan wants to pay homage to deceased children and increase the population's awareness of the needs of bereaved families during the pandemic.

Over the past few decades, the recovery rate of childhood cancer patients has jumped from 15% to 82%. **Despite this major breakthrough, nearly one in every five diagnosed children dies.** To help families through one of the most difficult times of their lives, Leucan supports them during the palliative care stage and several years after their child's death. Leucan provides them with psychological support, financial assistance to cover funeral costs, and a bereavement toolkit containing several books and tools for the entire family. Additionally, the Association hosts a series of annual events to break families out of their isolation.

New Challenges for Leucan and Bereaved Families

Since the beginning of the pandemic in March, 19 children have died from pediatric cancer. **The lockdown restrictions have thwarted the bereavement process for those families:**

- Visitors are restricted during the palliative care and end-of-life stage
- Physical contact is not allowed between mourners at the funeral—a time when human warmth is more important than ever for bereaved families
- In addition to social distancing rules, the number of visitors allowed in funeral homes is drastically reduced, meaning that members of the extended community (for instance, the child's classmates or teammates) cannot offer their condolences in person
- With many parents working from home full time due to the pandemic, the typical coping mechanisms used by families after the death (going to work, avoiding their child's room, etc.) all but disappear

Under those unique circumstances, Leucan had to adapt its service offer to focus all efforts on remote psychological assistance. The activities we normally host to break families out of their isolation had to be transformed into virtual events.

Childhood Cancer in 2020

- In Quebec, nearly one family receives a childhood cancer or recurrence diagnosis every day
- There has been a 0.4% increase in the annual number of diagnoses in children aged 0-14
- A third of cancer patients aged 0-14 in Canada are diagnosed with leukemia
- 70% of childhood cancer survivors will develop sequelae and in 30% of those cases, the sequela will be severe
- In Canada, childhood cancer kills more children between infancy and adolescence than any other disease

Support Available across Quebec

Once more this year, several preeminent buildings in Quebec will be lit up in gold— the official colour of the fight against childhood cancer. The Hôtel Château Laurier Québec, the Sherbrooke City Hall, the Society for Arts and Technology (SAT), and the Rialto Theatre will take part in this initiative.

Leucan also invites people to show their support by applying the special Childhood Cancer Awareness Month frame to their profile picture on Facebook.

About Leucan

For more than 40 years, [Leucan](#) has been supporting cancer-stricken children and their families, from the day of diagnosis and through every stage of cancer and its effects. As a loyal ally of hundreds of families and thousands of members across the province, the Association provides distinctive and tailored services, delivered by a qualified team with cutting-edge expertise. Leucan also funds clinical research and the Leucan Information Centre. With its nine regional offices, Leucan is available to families across Quebec.

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