

Dear [FIRST NAME],

I've always associated September with renewal. In my household, I remember the sense of excitement as all the children got ready to go back to school. At the foundation, we're ramping up to return to the office – safely, and in stages. And we're gearing up for in-person events. First up is the Urban Angel Golf Classic, after our safe and successful Providence Golf Classic, presented by Ellis Don.

But this September, excitement is tempered by uncertainty around COVID. For those returning to school, the workplace or social events, things will look a little different. In this month's newsletter, we'll talk about the reasons for both optimism and caution, and address concerns to help everyone get off to a great start.

Sincerely,

Lili Litwin, CFRE
President, St. Michael's Foundation

PROVIDENCE GOLF CLASSIC: BACK IN THE SWING OF THINGS



The smiles of this foursome (Mike Bowering, Jay Murray, Ralph Noble and George Macri) at this year's Providence Golf Classic, presented by Ellis Don, tell it all. We're deeply grateful to all our sponsors for their support of this wonderful event, which drew 84 golfers and raised over \$100,000 for Providence Healthcare. It was a thrill for us to see 20 volunteers from both our hospitals – all Foundation Staff and Providence Golf Classic Committee Members – come together for the cause.

Photo credit: Alexander Mavian Photography

PODCAST FOR ANXIOUS PARENTS

If you or anyone you know is anxious about a return to in-class learning, you'll want to [listen](#) to the latest edition of the St. Michael's Foundation **Facts from the Frontline** podcast series. Sabina Vohra-Miller, pediatrician Dr. Ripu Minhas, and physician Dr. Seema Marwaha talk about the risks and realities of everything from COVID in schools to vaccines for kids.

Bonus: A list of helpful mental health resources for kids and their parents [here](#). Please consider a [donation](#) to St. Michael's Courage and Power Funds to support our hospital's COVID efforts.

ARE THE KIDS (AND PARENTS) ALRIGHT?

BACK-TO-SCHOOL ANXIETY



Dr. Ripudaman S. Minhas
Developmental Paediatrician,
St. Michael's Hospital



Sabina Vohra-Miller
Co-Founder, Vohra-Miller Foundation
and Founder, Unambiguous Science



Dr. Seema Marwaha
Internal Medicine Physician,
St. Michael's Hospital

KNOW YOUR BOUNDARIES



Dr. Tom Ungar, Chief of Psychiatry at St. Michael's Hospital, says that after a long time in lockdown, it's understandable if people want to avoid physical contact – whether it's hugging friends or touching things.

[Read up](#) on his insights on the difference between healthy risk avoidance and the anxiety-induced risk aversion that may require professional help.

COVID-19 VACCINES: THE CASE FOR CONFIDENCE AND VIGILANCE



St. Michael's internist and epidemiologist Dr. Fahad Razak tracks the pandemic daily as part of Ontario's COVID-19 Science Advisory Council, a body of scientific experts that provides guidance to government and the public. He offers three reasons to be confident about COVID-19 vaccines, and three reasons to remain vigilant.

THREE REASONS TO BE CONFIDENT

The COVID-19 vaccines are a scientific miracle. Ontario data shows the vaccines reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection by more than 80% and the risk of hospitalization by more than 95%. “There are few things in life or medicine that have that much benefit,” says Dr. Razak. “To have vaccines this effective against a new virus, developed in the time period they were, is truly a miracle.”

There is abundant and growing evidence that the vaccines are safe. Dr. Razak says that most vaccine side effects tend to occur in the short-term, over days to weeks, not years. COVID vaccines have been administered more than 5 billion times in the past nine months, with relatively few adverse side effects. Not only are the vaccines overwhelmingly beneficial, but they are overwhelmingly safe as well.

The evidence is in at St. Michael's Hospital. Dr. Razak has cared for COVID-19 patients through three waves of the pandemic. In the third wave, when vaccines became available, he did not see a single COVID-19 patient who had been vaccinated; only unvaccinated patients. The bottom line? Vaccines work.

THREE REASONS TO REMAIN VIGILANT

Unvaccinated people pose a risk to vaccinated people. Dr. Razak says unvaccinated people who are infected with COVID-19 pose a risk to vaccinated people in indoor settings. To protect yourself, he advises following public health guidelines: maintain physical distancing, wear masks and wash your hands regularly.

Vaccinated people who get COVID-19 can still have health issues. Vaccinated people are less likely to get COVID-19, but it can happen – and even if the disease doesn't require hospitalization, it can take a toll. This is especially important for strong immune response to vaccines – for example, the elderly or people with suppressed immune systems.

The Delta variant is more infectious. As we return to indoor settings, the Delta variant poses a greater risk. If vaccinations are not mandated in your workplace, Dr. Razak suggests talking to your employer about your concerns and ways you might feel more comfortable – sitting farther away from colleagues, for example, or limiting the number of people in a room.

FALL EVENTS

We have an action-packed fall in store, starting with a premier event this month:

- **Urban Angel Golf Classic**, Tuesday, September 21. We're thrilled to be welcoming players back to the greens for Canada's longest-running hospital golf event.
- **Angel Ball 2021**, Saturday, October 2. This year's Angel Ball will be a series of intimate gatherings featuring delicious food, great entertainment and fantastic company. The theme is 'Together At Last' – a nod to The Schroeder BRAIN&HEART Centre, Canada's first centre joining brain and heart care; a wonderful get-together uniting our supporters after a long time; and the amalgamation of the foundations of St. Michael's and Providence. Want to be part of it? Contact [Margaret](#) to learn more.
- **BARLO MS CENTRE Opening**, Thursday, October 7. We'll be sharing news about our brand new, state-of-the-art facility in our October eNewsletter.
- **Angels Den**, airing Thursday, November 18. Six teams of St. Michael's top scientists are battling it out for \$500,000 in research funding at the 7th annual Angels Den. Watch as they pitch their groundbreaking ideas to celebrity judges and an esteemed jury. Contact [Farrah](#) to learn more about sponsorship and jury opportunities.

STAY CONNECTED

Visit our [COVID-19 information page](#) for regular updates on how St. Michael's is responding to COVID-19, and follow our social channels below.



Inspired by the work at St. Michael's Hospital and Providence Healthcare? [Please donate](#) and help us take on the toughest challenges of our times.



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