

Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute is experiencing an influx of graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral students

By Kim Latimer

Over the past three months, more than 10 new graduate and PhD level students have joined Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute (TBRRI). What's the main attraction? To work directly with leading scientists in their field.

A few of the students who have recently joined TBRRI have come to work with Scientist Dr. Mitchell Albert. Dr. Albert is the first Lakehead University-TBRRI Research Chair, and he is in the process of starting-up his new lab, as well as building the necessary equipment to support his research program on advanced Magnetic Resonance (MR) imaging.

"We have attracted some of the brightest young minds in the field to TBRRI. My team aims to make strong improvements in MR imaging of the lungs and brain. This will benefit patients not only with chronic lung diseases, but also those with stroke and cancer - all conditions that affect people here in Northwestern Ontario."

PhD student Marcus Couch is one

of Dr. Albert's new team members. Coming from the University of Western Ontario in London, he relocated to Thunder Bay to join Dr. Albert's team in September. His main roles are to help Dr. Albert set up his lab and to begin his doctoral research experiments. The focus of Couch's research will be the use of "inert fluorinated gas MRI", an innovative, relatively new and unexplored technique being developed to provide high-resolution, non-invasive MR imaging of lung function.

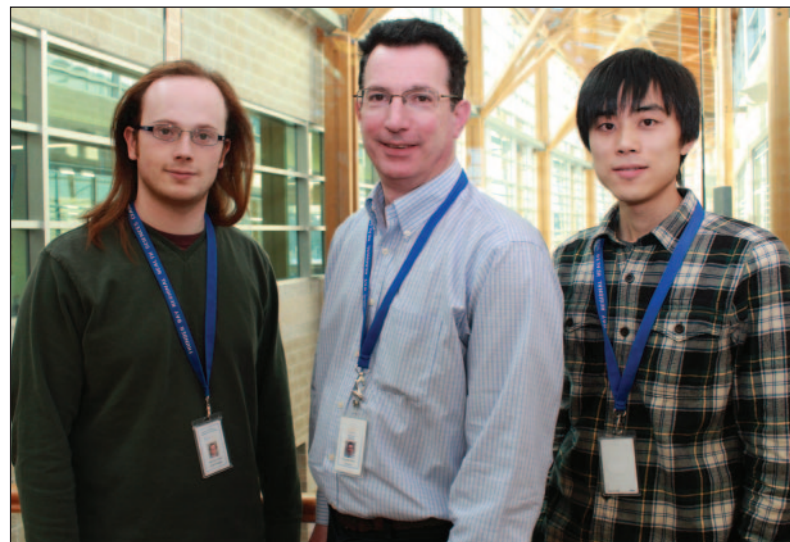
Couch says he was attracted to Dr. Albert's team and to TBRRI because he was impressed by the innovative research happening in Thunder Bay: "Dr. Albert is very well known in the MR community for having invented the field of hyperpolarized noble gas MRI," Couch explains. "And when I came to Thunder Bay, I was also surprised by the number of other scientists here and the quality of the research actually being conducted."

"Physics is my focus," Couch says. "I like to get under the hood of the MRI scanner to understand how we

get images, and to work on the interesting things we can do with the images and invent new ways to analyze them. Lung imaging is very exciting, and it hasn't been sufficiently explored. Another part of the motivation is to address the helium-3 isotope shortage worldwide; helium-3 is a rare and expensive isotope that is presently being used in advanced MR imaging."

Engineer Tao Li also recently decided to join Dr. Albert's research team. Li relocated all the way from China to Thunder Bay to help build the hardware required for Dr. Albert's experiments. He is in the first year of the Master of Electronic Engineering program (his second masters degree), and his new role on Dr. Albert's team will allow him to focus on his research - studying radio frequency coils and circuits.

Li brings with him experience in building a desktop x-ray machine in China, and he says he views his work at TBRRI as another opportunity to learn about MRI pulse sequences in more detail, and possibly even master his understanding of the area.



Marcus Couch, Dr. Mitch Albert and Tao Li at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. Dr. Albert says with his new team in place, he is another step closer to achieving tangible improvements in patient care.

"I find the MR field very exciting," Li explains. "I'm working on the MRI coils used in the MRI device to transfer and receive signals. Engineering is part of the whole MRI effort to improve image quality. I want to give Marcus Couch and Dr. Albert the best images possible."

Dr. Albert says with his new team in place, he is another step closer to achieving tangible improvements in patient care. "Our advances in imaging technology to better detect and treat conditions of the lung and brain will have significant benefits to our society," Albert says. "I feel privileged to pursue these goals with my team at TBRRI."

Pink Day Packs a Punch: Holy Angels School in Schreiber raises money for breast cancer

By Maryanne Matthews

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. While that fact may not be on the radar of most children, Holy Angels Catholic School of Schreiber found a way to get their students interested and involved.

"We knew we wanted to get the students to raise money for breast cancer in honour of Breast Cancer Awareness month," says Dave Mauro, a teacher at Holy Angels School. "The challenge was to think of an incentive other than the usual reward of food or candy." Holy



Mr. Mauro, holding up his end of the bargain, went to school dressed as a woman after the students donated over \$300 to the Northern Cancer Fund.



Students at Holy Angels Catholic School in Schreiber wore pink for a day and posed in the shape of a breast cancer ribbon. They brought in donations in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Angels houses students from Junior Kindergarten to grade 8.

Another teacher at the school came up with an idea that was sure to spark the interest of the students. If they could raise the goal amount of \$150, Mr. Mauro would come to school dressed as a woman in pink. "Unfortunately, being a small school there are only two male teachers," says Mr. Mauro. "Since I teach in the afternoon, I was the lucky winner of this task. I agreed,

but only because it's for such a great cause," he laughs.

The picked a day in October when the students would all wear pink and bring in their donations. In preparation, the teachers made posters telling the students to bring in their money if they want to see Mr. Mauro dressed as a woman. That was all the motivation they needed. When the designated 'pink' day rolled around, the students emptied their pockets of over three hundred

dollars for the Northern Cancer Fund of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation.

"We chose to support the Northern Cancer Fund because we wanted the money to stay local. That way the people of our own community would benefit from it," says Mr. Mauro. "The teachers are really proud of the students for bringing in so much money. There are only 64 students in the whole school so for them to more than double the goal amount is really

impressive."

100% of the funds will remain in Northwestern Ontario and support breast cancer treatment, awareness and research. To learn more about how you can support cancer care, or any other area of care at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, visit www.healthsciencesfoundation.ca or call 345-4673. You can also find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/healthsciencesfoundation.

Employees' gift enhances cancer care and honours corporate spirit

By Tracie Smith

What do you get for that hard-to-buy-for person on your list? It's a common question - one you may recently have asked yourself while preparing for the holiday season. The folks at Gillons' Insurance Brokers came up with the perfect answer.

"We have a true team environment here," explains Christine Denby, account manager at the Gillons' Fort Frances office. "At this time of year, we like to celebrate it by giving a little something back to the executive team." Usually, Gillons' employees contribute and Christmas gifts are purchased with the combined funds.

The challenge lies in finding the right gift. This year, the funds collected from 50+ Gillons' employees from across the region were donated on behalf of the executive team. \$750 was donated to the Northern Cancer Fund of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation. 100% of the donation will remain in Northwestern Ontario to support the Tbaytel Tamarack House, a home away from home for patients from regional communities undergoing treatment for cancer.

"We wanted the charity to reflect the communities in which we work, live

and play," notes Denby.

"A donation like this one is rooted in the true meaning of giving," says Glenn Craig, President & CEO of the Health Sciences Foundation. "I applaud the Gillons' team for their thoughtful decision, and for promoting the positive, altruistic environment that fosters this spirit."

"The Gillons' employees have captured both our corporate and personal values with this gift. To be a part of something as important and meaningful to cancer patients from our home communities - it's the best gift we could have received," says Duane Cridland, Gillons' President & CEO.

Gillons' Insurance Brokers has been serving Northwestern Ontario for over 85 years. Once a small business based in Fort Frances, Gillons' now employs over 50 professional, knowledgeable people and has offices in Fort Frances, Atikokan, Dryden, Emo, Rainy River, Red Lake and Sioux Lookout.

Gillons' commitment to community makes this donation to Tbaytel Tamarack House especially appropriate. Each year, over 1,500 Northwestern Ontario residents are treated for cancer at Thunder Bay



As a member of the Gillons' Insurance Brokers' team, Duane Cridland is no stranger to giving to charitable causes. Last June, Cridland had his head shaved in support of cancer patients.

Regional Health Sciences Centre's Regional Cancer Care. 33% of those patients live in regional communities. While they are in Thunder Bay for treatment, they stay at Tbaytel Tamarack House. The facility, which features 20 guest rooms, lounge areas, the impressive kitchen and amenities to make long stays away from home as comfortable as possible, is located on the top floor of the professional building just steps away from Regional Cancer Care. Each year, there are over 4,000 total night stays at TBayTel Tamarack House.

Your doctor, your client, your child.

Pediatrician Dr. Brun does everything in her power to care for her young patients. Your donation helps give her the tools she needs.

Together, we're healthier.

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Northern Cancer Fund
Northern Cardiac Fund
Health Sciences Discovery Fund