



News Release

For Immediate Release

May 10, 2018

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE DOCTOR RECEIVES CHILD RIGHTS MEDAL

VICTORIA – Social pediatrician Dr. Christine Loock was today honoured with the Janusz Korczak medal for child rights advocacy for her lifetime of work with vulnerable families in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. The medal, awarded jointly by the Representative for Children and Youth and the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, recognizes outstanding contributions to the promotion of child rights in the spirit of Dr. Janusz Korczak.

At a ceremony at the Legislative Buildings, dignitaries including Lieutenant Governor Janet Austin and Polish Ombudsman for Children’s Rights Marek Michalak recognized Dr. Loock for her pioneering work in social pediatrics. Representative for Children and Youth Bernard Richard and Janusz Korczak Association of Canada president Jerry Nussbaum made the presentation.

Dr. Korczak was a Polish-Jewish author and pediatrician, best known for his selfless heroism in 1942 when, as an orphanage director in Warsaw, he refused offers of freedom and accompanied the children in his care to a Nazi extermination camp.

Social pediatrics is an interprofessional, community-based model of medicine designed to create trust between vulnerable families and service providers, break down silos between professionals and reduce barriers to health care. Dr. Loock was an early leader in the field. She has been practising in the Downtown Eastside since 1989 and has led the RICHER social pediatrics program at BC Children’s Hospital since its inception in 2006.

“Social pediatrics is about who we aren’t serving,” said Loock. “It’s about fostering equity. At the start, families were distrustful of health services. By building relationships, we broke down social and systemic barriers of fear, wait times and access to services. We’re doing this with community. And that means empowering communities and families to have agency in their health. It’s about changing systems and working together.”

Dr. Loock is a developmental pediatrician at Children’s and Women’s Health Centre of British Columbia, including Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children, and medical director of the provincial Cleft Palate Craniofacial Program. She is co-author of the *Canadian National Guidelines for Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*.

“I met Dr. Loock soon after arriving in B.C. in 2017 and was immediately inspired by her deep commitment to children and families,” said Richard, adding that he was honoured to participate in the ceremony.

“Dr. Loock’s on-the-ground advocacy embodies the spirit of Korczak,” said Nussbaum. “Her dedication over nearly 30 years of service to children is humbling, and her impact on the lives of families is immeasurable. The honour she has received today is so well-deserved.”

Media Contact:

Jeff Rud

Executive Director, Strategy and Communications

250-216-4725

Email: Jeff.Rud@rcybc.ca

