



The Story So Far: CHUM crisis deepens with another resignation



Monday Calendar: March 9-15, 2015



The Watchers, March 9-15: Oedipal creepiness, archeological intrigue and NYC girl drama



Seven Days, Seven Nights: Warhol to Alan Parsons, among best bets this week



Gallery of the latest Aislin and Pascal cartoons

INTRODUCING THE NEW MONTREAL GAZETTE



HOME

NEWS

LOCAL
NEWS

Quebec • National • World •

A fundraiser, in loving memory of Mary Melillo Pacella

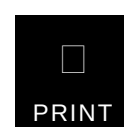
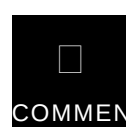
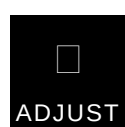
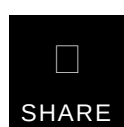


SUSAN SCHWARTZ, MONTREAL GAZETTE

[More from Susan Schwartz, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: March 8, 2015

Last Updated: March 8, 2015 5:15 PM EDT



Just two months after his mother's death at 52 from complications of lung cancer, Anthony Pacella organized a family bowling day to honour her memory, to increase awareness about the illness and to raise money for the St. Mary's Hospital Foundation.

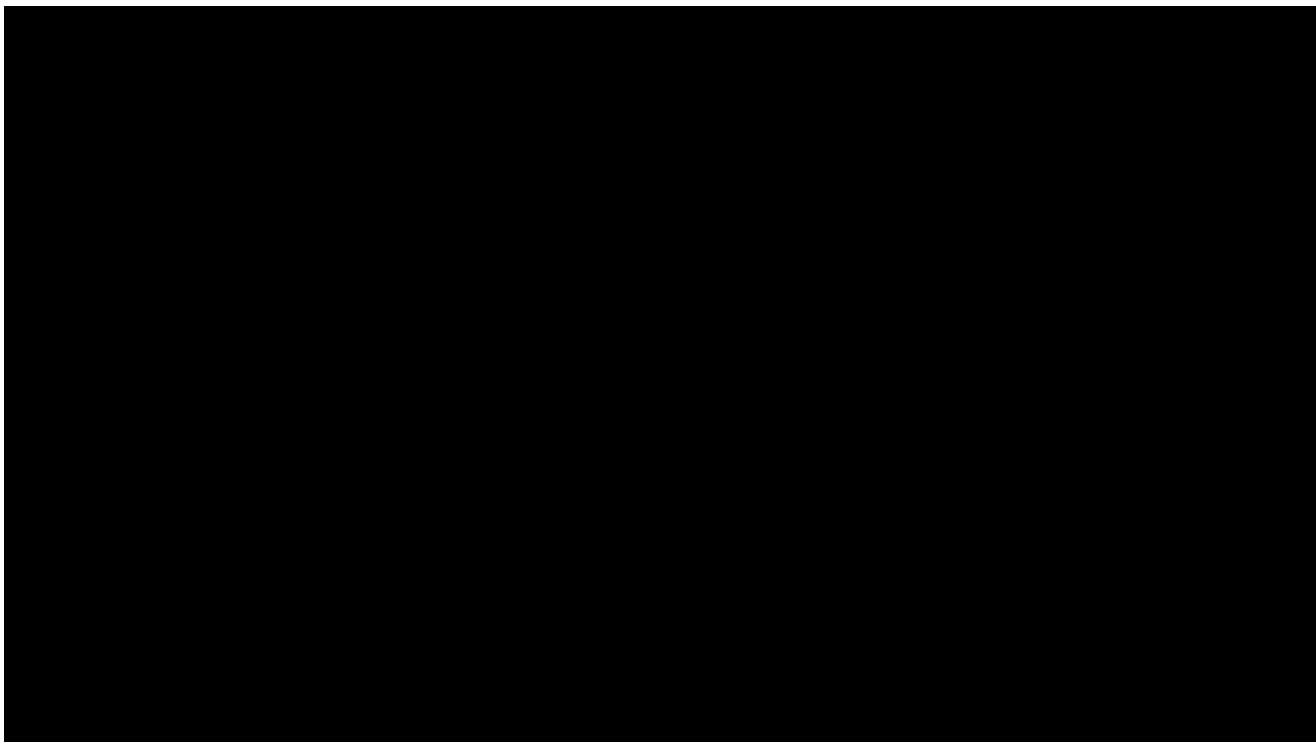
He called it StrikeOut Cancer and it raised more than \$14,000. He was 15 years old.

About 200 people attended the event, held March 6, 2011. There were dozens of sponsors and prizes, and refreshments and T-shirts for the participants. There was a DJ and a silent auction. "It was uplifting, emotional and exciting," Pacella said at the time.

A crew of family and friends helped enormously, before and during the event, but it was his initiative. He'd started to plan it when his mother was still alive — as a surprise for her. “Initially, I wanted to do an event she'd be able to attend, to make her happy,” Pacella, now 19, recalled in an interview. “It was about seeing her smile.”



Advertisement



Anthony can no longer make her smile. But he can do something he knows would have made her proud — and that is “trying to make a difference in the world.”

The second, third and fourth editions of the StrikeOut Cancer bowl-a-thon events were as successful as the first and, with a Halloween bash and the generosity of family and friends, have raised more than \$65,000 for the Community Cancer Care Program at St. Mary’s in memory of Mary Melillo Pacella.

“We are honoured to be the recipients of this initiative,” Cynda P. Heward, the CEO of St. Mary’s Hospital Foundation, wrote in a letter of recommendation supporting Pacella. The fifth edition of the StrikeOut Cancer bowl-a-thon is set for April 25 at Centre de Quilles 440 in Laval and a StrikeOut Cancer gala is planned for early November.

“I hope to show others, especially young adults, that anyone can make a difference in society — no matter how young you may be,” Pacella, now in his first year at Concordia University’s John Molson School of Business, observed in a recent letter to potential sponsors.

He wants to raise awareness of lung cancer, to help support individuals and families affected by it — and to help spread the word that lung cancer affects non-smokers, too: Fully 15 per cent of people in whom lung cancer is diagnosed never smoked, including his mother.

In most cases, lung cancer is at an advanced stage when it is diagnosed. His mother had had a cough and hoarse voice and back pain for months before the diagnosis of Stage 4 lung cancer. There is no Stage 5.

“For all of us, it was such a shock,” said Pacella of himself, his brother, Daniel, who is five years younger, and their father, Angelo. For him, he said, the loss was especially acute because “my mom was my best friend.”

She was incredibly brave during what turned out to be the final months of her life. “She cried maybe twice in front of us. Otherwise, she almost always had a smile on her face. She was ill and dying — and yet she was able to treasure her last days. I think about us, how people in general take so much for granted, how we get frustrated or mad about the littlest things,” he said.

“I am thankful for all the support I have from family and from close friends, who have become my second family; I don’t know where I would be today without them.”

In a letter to his mother before she died, he wrote: “there is one thing I promise you — and that is

to always be there for my father and brother, to be the best role model for my brother and to be there for my dad.”

Close friend Lucien Choucroun says Pacella has stepped up to the plate at home, keeping tabs on his brother’s schoolwork, making lunches and preparing dinner when their father, who works for the post office, is caught up at work.

“It’s incredible that Anthony is able to do all those things,” he said. But then, “he is a very caring person — like a rare pearl ... Anthony is the type of person who could be having the worst day in the world and, if maybe you are having a bit of a bad day, he would rather put a smile on your face than anything.”

Pacella says he realized after his mother’s death that he felt more mature than many of his contemporaries. “You stop being a kid when your mom dies,” he said.

But that she was really gone sank in only later, once he was at Vanier College; most of his friends were at Dawson. “It was hard being alone; that’s when your thoughts affect you most. But I grew from that,” he said.

Family therapy has helped. He does well at school: In group projects, “everyone says, ‘you just seem like a leader.’ ” And he continues to organize the StrikeOut Cancer events.

Pacella has been approaching potential sponsors, those who have helped before, and new ones. St. Mary’s will continue as beneficiary of the bowl-a-thon and proceeds from the gala will go to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Meanwhile, he carries thoughts and memories of his mother everywhere. Sometimes he has a photo of her on the screen of his phone. “Or I read a letter or a birthday card that my mother wrote. Or I rewatch home videos ... One thing I really miss is hearing her voice.

“On my phone, there’s a message from her: ‘Love you, Anthony,’ it says.”

Anthony Pacella can be reached at strikeoutcancerfund@gmail.com.

sschwartz@montrealgazette.com

twitter.com/susanschwartz

PREVIOUS

NEXT

This Week's Flyers



Comments

We encourage all readers to share their views on our articles and blog posts. We are committed to maintaining a lively but civil forum for discussion, so we ask you to avoid personal attacks, and please keep your comments relevant and respectful. If you encounter a comment that is abusive, click the "X" in the upper right corner of the comment box to report spam or abuse. We are using Facebook commenting. Visit our FAQ page for more information.



Add a comment...

☒ Also post on Facebook

Facebook social plugin

VIDEO

International Women’s Day March



WEATHER

Montreal, QC

-3°C

Overcast

Feels Like

-8°C

TOP VIDEOS

- Quebec Court rules that prostitution revenue is taxable
- Proposed regulations for gender status change spark debate
- A major fire ravages building on St-Hubert Plaza
- At long last, Mordecai Richler gets the tribute he deserves
- Dolan's Mommy receives award for outstanding box office sales
- Before Dawn: First to arrive, last to leave a rave
- Beaconsfield guild takes rug hooking to a whole new level
- Ought's brief calm before the storm
- Bia's new album Navegar a stripped-down, sensual ode to Brazil
- Women unite against austerity measures

CLASSIFIED

 remembering.ca

Stories, pictures and tributes to life. View and place obituaries, and more.

THE ULTIMATE
GIRL'S DAY OUT!

THE
NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
SHOW

MARCH 13 - 15
PALAIS DES CONGRÈS



SAVE MONEY!
BUY TICKETS ONLINE NOW!
www.NationalWomenShow.com

POPULAR
LOCAL
NEWS



Arson suspected in building fire



Two hit on Highway 10 helping an accident victim

The Story So Far: CHUM crisis deepens with another resignation



Another resignation at the CHUM



Women unite against austerity measures



Monday Calendar: March 9-15, 2015



NEWS	OPINION	SPORTS
Local News	Columnists	Hockey
Quebec	Editorials	Football
National	Letters	Soccer

World	Aislin & Pascal Cartoons	Baseball Basketball Tennis Golf Auto Racing
BUSINESS	ARTS	LIFE
FP Markets FP Headlines FP Money Energy Local Business Technology	Local Arts Movies Television Music Theatre Books Celebrity	Fashion & Beauty Food Health Diet & Fitness Homes Parenting Relationships Travel Royals



© 2015 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.

Powered by WordPress.com VIP

CLASSIFIEDS

- Careers
- Celebrating
- Driving
- FlyerCity
- Marketplace
- Obits
- Place an Ad
- Shopping
- Gift Guide

LEGAL

- Privacy
- Terms
- Copyright & Permissions

SERVICES

PROPERTIES

[Advertise With Us](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[My Subscription](#)

[Contact](#)

[ePaper](#)

[Digital Access](#)

[Manage Newsletters](#)

[Contests](#)

[Calgary Herald](#)

[Canada.com](#)

[Edmonton Journal](#)

[National Post](#)

[Ottawa Citizen](#)

[Leader-Post \(Regina\)](#)

[The StarPhoenix \(Saskatoon\)](#)

[The Province \(Vancouver\)](#)

[Vancouver Sun](#)

[Windsor Star](#)