



Une prescription de tendresse  
A prescription of tenderness

## CAT-C

### The First Annual National Symposium of the Canadian Association of Therapeutic Clowns.

Therapeutic clowns from across the country will be gathering in Montreal for **the First Annual National Symposium of the Canadian Association of Therapeutic Clowns (CAT-C)**, from October 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> 2005. These practitioners come together to exchange their knowledge on how to effectively handle delicate situations in palliative care, senior care, how to enter the world of the multi-disabled and not to mention how to do a really good magic trick.

Dr Clown, a non-profit charitable organization that provides specially trained professional clowns for hospitals in the Montreal area, will host the first Symposium. This forum will allow these practitioners to exchange views on training, artistic and psycho-social issues.

The Canadian Association of Therapeutic Clowns (CAT-C) was formed in March, 2005 with founding members from health care settings across the country. It seeks to standardize best practices of therapeutic clowning, offers on-line support and opportunities for professional development to its members, and is committed to education and research.

With the focus on the imaginative and the creative, therapeutic clowns offer new opportunities for play and laughter, for self-expression and self-acceptance, for mastery and empowerment, and for moments of tenderness and comfort. We believe that these interactions have an impact on the patients', their loved ones' and the staff members' experiences and perceptions, and thus help to humanize the health care setting.

Therapeutic clowning was first developed as a profession in Canada, when, in 1986, Karen Ridd took her clown Robo into the Children's Hospital of the Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre. Since then therapeutic clown programs have developed all over Canada, including Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal.

The vulnerable and affable figure of the clown offers powerful beneficial effects to hospitalized patients, young and old. Opportunities for play and laughter help reduce the stressful atmosphere of the hospital for patients, their families and staff, aiding with the coping, rehabilitation and healing process.

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