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Renelle Chiasson MD CCMF

By the time Renelle Chiasson came to do her medical studies at the University of Montreal (1991–1996) and then her residency in family medicine at Sherbrooke University, she was already convinced that she would return to work in the place where she grew up. She missed the sea and the smell of the salt spray too much. If she thought for a while of pursuing a specialty in cardiology, or even of making a career as a translator—she speaks French, English, and Spanish fluently and can get by quite well in German—the illness of her mother, who died of pancreatic cancer, changed everything for her. Family medicine seemed to her a privileged calling.

During the first years, she practised in a private office, in emergency, and in hospital. Then she devoted herself to private practice, and also kept herself busy in several care centres and with hospitalized patients through the extramural program. She is also Head of the Family Medicine Service at the hospital.

Working in a little town of less than 10 000 inhabitants has advantages and disadvantages: “Advantages because everyone (or almost everyone) knows you and disadvantages because everyone (or almost everyone) knows you!” Being a family doctor takes on its full meaning when you work in a confined area: you find yourself literally with the grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren of the same family as patients. You become not only physician, but also confidant, advisor, and sometimes friend. “You are often stopped in public, in the grocery store or in a restaurant, for

advice (whether you are the person’s doctor or not) or for laboratory test results. But in the end, these little inconveniences are nothing compared with the expressions of appreciation you get from people.”

Even if, like each and every one of us, Renelle has already experienced some difficult moments, she has overcome them with *joie de vivre*. It’s her leitmotif, her creed. Her cooing accent with its rolling “r” and her bubbling laughter are eloquent testimony to this. Her strong network of friends, her reading, and her confidence in the future have always served her well. Her role as stepmother to 11-year-old Xavier and 8-year-old Véronique is close to her heart. She is fulfilled by her family and her work.

Her passion is raising dogs. She has more than 7 dogs at home and 15 in her kennels. She has all breeds of dogs, from her 150-pound Saint Bernard to her 1.5-pound chihuahua, with Labradors and Mechlns and many other breeds in between. Raising dogs was a good thing for her because this was how she met her partner. When asked whether she raises the dogs to breed them, she answers, “No, I just enjoy them!”

What a beautiful full life this Renelle, this Acadian from Tracadie-Sheila, lives! 🍂



Dr Chiasson is a family physician and Head of the Family Medicine Service at the Centre Hospitalier de Tracadie-Sheila and Head of Family Medicine and Emergency Services at the Réseau santé vitalité de la Péninsule Acadienne in New Brunswick.

D^{re} Chiasson est médecin de famille et Chef de service de médecine familiale au Centre hospitalier de Tracadie-Sheila et Chef de service de médecine familiale et d'urgence au Réseau santé vitalité de la Péninsule Acadienne en Nouveau-Brunswick.



(Photos, from left to right)

Dr Chiasson in the clinic with secretary Nadia Robichaud, nursing assistant Rosemonde McLaughlin, and secretary Mireille Chiasson.
Dr Chiasson with her partner, Yolan Thomas, and her stepchildren, Xavier and Véronique Thomas.
Dr Chiasson with her dogs Belle, Gaston, and Cognac.
Dr Chiasson playing with Véronique.
Dr Chiasson with Xavier and Véronique.
Dr Chiasson with young patient Alexis Brideau.

(Photos de gauche à droite)

D^{re} Chiasson dans la clinique avec Nadia Robichaud, secrétaire, Rosemonde McLaughlin, infirmière auxiliaire, et Mireille Chiasson, secrétaire.
D^{re} Chiasson avec son conjoint, Yolan Thomas, and ses beaux-enfants, Xavier et Véronik Thomas.
D^{re} Chiasson avec ses chiens, Belle, Gaston, et Cognac.
D^{re} Chiasson joue avec Véronik
D^{re} Chiasson avec Xavier et Véronik.
D^{re} Chiasson avec son jeune patient Alexis Brideau.

Photos: Krista Koval, Moncton, NB

Story/Texte: Roger Ladouceur MD MSc CCMF FCFMF, Verdun, Que



THE COVER PROJECT *Canadian Family Physician* has embarked on a project to assemble the portrait of family medicine in Canada. Each cover of the journal will feature a family physician chosen at random from our membership list, along with a short essay—a brief glimpse of the person and the practice. Over time, the randomness will become representative and the differences, taken together, will define what it is that all family physicians have in common.