

Megan Stephenson MD CCFP

And this is about responsibility, the stories patients tell us, the stories they entrust us with; the power of the story in the telling and in the reception and in the honouring of that story; doctoring is about paying the proper respect to the story, eliciting the story and writing the story down and then reflecting on the story late at night and using the story to learn, applying the story to achieve greater understanding; and this is family medicine, engendering trust and harnessing that trust for health.

But it is also about balance, about having a life in and outside of medicine, and Dr Stephenson has 2 children, Ainsley and Avery, 11 and 8, and it is a beautiful fall day; the air is crisp and there is a ball, and a beautiful game, and the kids kick it to their mother, who is also their coach, and they kick it to each other, and they are glad to be there; the trees are turning and it is the pitch at Pine Glen Elementary and there are drills and there is simple dribbling and there are rolls on the pitch and these people are in love; they are all in love; but this is also about responsibility; this is teaching the girls that family is important, is about being responsible to them, and so the girls must be responsible in turn, and Dr Stephenson has raised her kids as a team with her husband and without recourse to babysitting, without day care, with the full awareness of the responsibility she bears to them, and reciprocity is the order in the chart; the kids are aware of the responsibility their parents have to their patients' lives and stories. Thus Ainsley and Avery have been given the opportunity to be responsible, just as Dr Stephenson's patients are encouraged to be responsible for themselves, are expected to do some of the work of relationships, and the work is part of the story, and Dr Stephenson, in continually being exposed to the stories of her patients, gets constant affirmation that, in some way, she is doing the right thing. ❁

Cover photo: Laura Bombier, Huntsville, Ont

Story: Shane Neilson MD CCFP, Erin, Ont

Additional photos and the French translation of the story appear on page 376.

D'autres photos et la traduction en français du récit se trouvent à la page 376.

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.

Inside half-cover (IHC)