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## **BC man organizes annual tattoo event to raise funds and awareness for Huntington disease** ***Celebrating National Volunteer Week: April 23-29, 2017***

(KITCHENER, ON) April 19, 2017 – Volunteers are at the heart of the Huntington Society of Canada (HSC). Our volunteers tell a powerful story of caring people who pull together to improve the quality of life for Canadians impacted by Huntington disease (HD). To celebrate National Volunteer Week (April 23-29), the Huntington Society of Canada is honouring Hedley’s volunteer work in British Columbia’s Victoria region and the impact he makes in the HD community.

When Hedley steps into a tattoo parlour, finding an empty patch of skin can be tricky. With more than 40 tattoos adorning his legs, arms, back and chest, real estate for new ink is running out.

But as the organizer of Tats for a Cure — a fundraiser that trades donations to the Huntington Society of Canada for tattoos — the B.C.-based volunteer will always find room for one more. “Oh yeah, I’ll find a spot,” he says.

The annual event draws crowds to Victoria’s Incendiary Tattoos and raises thousands of dollars each year. Inside, the company’s artists volunteer their time and talent, inking permanent amaryllis flowers onto the brave supporters (or offering temporary tattoos for the kids and needle-shy). Outside, Hedley keeps those waiting in line entertained with a trademark joke or one-liner.

Volunteering helped Hedley bounce back after he was diagnosed with Huntington disease. And with both his children having a 50/50 chance of inheriting the fatal neurological disorder, the stakes couldn’t be higher or more personal. “Knowing that my kids have a chance of getting it and wanting to get a cure so bad for them I guess is what drives me,” he says.

As the fundraising coordinator for the local HSC chapter, Hedley has also organized an Indy Go-Kart Challenge that raised \$20,000. Meanwhile, adding the Society’s logo and web address to the back of his Toyota Tacoma made every drive around the block an opportunity to spread the word. What’s more, when it came time to sell the truck, he managed to convince the new owner from Kelowna to keep the tailgate emblazoned.

For Hedley, volunteering helps him grow as a person and lets him go home at the end of the day feeling good. And like the ink in his arm, his efforts create a lasting impact for his children, for HSC and for the entire HD community. As for folks who are thinking about volunteering, his advice is simple: “Pick something that’s close to your heart, and get out and do it,” he says.

From April 23 to 29, Volunteer Canada and the Huntington Society of Canada celebrate Canada’s 12.7 million volunteers during National Volunteer Week (NVW). This year marks the 76th year Volunteer Canada has been recognizing the hardworking volunteers that make a difference in Canada. It has grown to be the largest celebration of civic participation in Canada. Help us celebrate National Volunteer Week in Canada.

**Huntington disease (HD)** is a debilitating brain disorder that is fatal and incurable. About one in every 7,000 Canadians has HD and approximately one in every 5,500 is at-risk of developing the disease. Many more are touched by HD whether as a caregiver, a family member, or a friend. HD causes cells in specific parts of the brain to die. As the disease progresses, a person with Huntington's become less able to manage movements, recall events, make decisions and control emotions. The disease leads to incapacitation and, eventually, death.

The **Huntington Society of Canada (HSC)** is a respected leader in the worldwide effort to end Huntington disease. HSC is the only Canadian health charity dedicated to providing help and hope for families dealing with Huntington disease across Canada.

**Volunteer Canada** ([www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca))

Involved Canadians build strong and connected communities to create a vibrant Canada. Volunteer Canada provides national leadership and expertise on volunteerism to increase the participation, quality and diversity of volunteer experiences. Since 1977, Volunteer Canada has worked closely with a network of more than 200 volunteer centres across Canada, over 1200 Volunteer Canada members, charitable and nonprofit organizations, businesses, educational institutions, and government departments.

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