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**Media Contact:**  
Sobia Khan 800-998-7398 Ext. 130  
[skhan@huntingtonsociety.ca](mailto:skhan@huntingtonsociety.ca)

## **May Is Huntington Disease Awareness Month And Durham Region Woman is Waving the HD Flag**

(KITCHENER, ON) May 9, 2017 – This May, the Huntington Society of Canada (HSC) flag is flying high in Ajax, Whitby, Bowmanville, Oshawa and Pickering to mark Huntington Disease Awareness Month. And Bunny Clark intends to be at each one of those flag-raising ceremonies.

When Bunny's first husband, Duncan, discovered the fatal brain disorder ran in his family, Huntington disease (HD) barely registered as a blip on the public radar, while medical professionals had little to offer. He watched several of his siblings slowly succumb to a disease that many describe as having the symptoms of Parkinson's, schizophrenia and Alzheimer's – simultaneously. Rather than suffer the same fate, he committed suicide in his late 30's.

Now, Bunny has lost a beloved nephew to Huntington disease, and her daughter and several nieces have started developing symptoms. "It's tough," she says. "It's really hard to watch people have to give up things they've loved: their jobs, their hobbies, their families."

However, while a cure or meaningful treatment options have yet to be found, she draws strength from the progress that has happened since Duncan died. "He knew what was in store for him and couldn't see any hope in the future," she says. "Now we have hope — because of the awareness, because of the research, because of the clinical trials that they're doing."

Bunny has helped drive that shift. Since getting involved with the Huntington Society of Canada (HSC), she has established a local chapter in Durham Region and organized a series of events to raise awareness and money to support those who are impacted by Huntington disease.

This year promises to be more successful than ever. As well as five different flag-raising ceremonies, Bunny helped with a fundraising concert featuring roots-rock band Eli & the Straw Man on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Then, on May 28<sup>th</sup>, she'll be lacing up her sneakers for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Durham "Walk to Cure Huntington Disease."

What keeps her motivated despite so much personal heartbreak? "I really, totally believe in my lifetime we will see a cure... and awareness is the only way that's going to happen," Bunny says.

"It is the dedication and support of people like Bunny that are the fabric of the Huntington Society. Volunteers who go above and beyond help us grow, achieve impactful results and reach our goals," says Bev Heim-Myers, Chief Executive Officer of the Huntington Society of Canada. "We are incredibly fortunate for people like Bunny and the thousands of volunteers who stand beside us and make us the best that we can be."

### **About Huntington Disease**

Huntington disease (HD) is an inherited, 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. Huntington disease is devastating for both the body and the mind. The symptoms, which may include uncontrollable jerking movements and relentless cognitive and emotional impairment, usually present between the ages of 30 and 45, and gradually worsen over the 10-25 year course of the disease. Eventually they lead to total incapacitation and death.

### **About the Huntington Society of Canada**

The Huntington Society of Canada (HSC) is a respected leader in the worldwide effort to end Huntington disease (HD). HSC is the only national health charity dedicated to providing help and hope for families dealing with HD across Canada. HSC aspires to a world free from Huntington disease. For more information about Huntington disease and the Huntington Society of Canada visit [www.huntingtonsociety.ca](http://www.huntingtonsociety.ca).

### **Media Contact:**

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Communications Coordinator  
Huntington Society of Canada  
1-800-998-7398 Ext. 130  
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