

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Huntington Society Celebrates Huntington Disease Awareness Month by
Lighting It Up Across Canada
#LightItUp4HD**

(Kitchener, ON) May 11, 2016 – Volunteers across Canada are lighting it up for Huntington disease (HD). May is HD Awareness Month and Debra Christenson in Welland, Ontario is courageously and enthusiastically spreading the word by lighting up the City of Welland Bridge from May 16 through 20, educating Canadians about the disease and how they can help the thousands of Canadians impacted by this devastating disease.

Starting last year, Jamie spearheaded #LightItUp4HD by arranging the first illumination in Canada, the CN Tower. The purpose is to raise the visibility of Juvenile Huntington disease (JHD) and Huntington disease (HD) by illuminating purple and blue lights respectively. When the sun set on May 4th, thousands of Canadians saw the CN Tower lit up, and in turn the HD community lit up with pride. Thanks to his enthusiasm, we are expanding “LightItUp4HD” all across Canada by lighting up buildings, monuments and statues during the month of May 2016.

This year, Debra was influential in ensuring that the historic site, the City of Welland Bridge in Welland, participated in the campaign. The Bridge will light up the night sky in blue and purple from May 16 through 20 in honour of Huntington Disease Awareness Month, and in support of individuals and families who are affected by HD and JHD.

For so many years, HD has been kept secret in families, due to stigma and discrimination. This “LightItUp4HD” campaign is a wonderful opportunity for those with HD to raise awareness, make connections, get support from their communities, and move forward with pride and dignity.

Volunteers have reached out to the Society’s sister organizations from around the world and asked them to participate. Scotland, Ireland, Spain and the United States, are just some of the countries working with us to #LightItUp4HD during the month of May 2016. To see a complete list of sites, visit www.lightitup4hd.com.

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Debra wants to educate Canadians about the disease by lighting up national monuments. The more people understand the disease, the more they can accept those who are impacted and extend support. The month of May is particularly designated as Huntington Disease Awareness Month, and we will also be launching our Public Service Announcement (PSA) about Huntington disease on May 1, 2016. To see the Society's new PSA campaign visit <http://www.huntingtonsociety.ca/psa-campaign/>

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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.

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