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## **Cycling Duo Expect to Reach Newfoundland as they Cross Canada to Raise Awareness for Huntington Disease**

(KITCHENER, ON) July 21, 2016 – When Marty and Jim decide to get involved they go big, really big. The dynamic duo has now crossed a grand total of 9 provinces on their bicycles to raise awareness for Huntington disease (HD). With the finish line on their horizon, they expect to reach their final stop, Signal Hill in Newfoundland, mid-morning on July 25<sup>th</sup>. At Signal Hill, unbeknownst to Marty and Jim, they will be greeted by their families, local chapter volunteers and several supporters for a grand ending to their grand journey. The bike ride wound through Canada with an original goal to finish by July 31st, 2016. With all the momentum from their ride and the support from their family, friends and community, they are well ahead of their goal! Originally expecting it would take them 79 days to complete the entire bike ride, they are covering an average of 120-125 km per day with a total distance of 7500 km.

For Jim, having his bike signed at the start of their journey in Windsor by an individual with HD has been his most memorable moment so far. For Marty, that memorable moment occurred when meeting and talking with a couple affected by HD at a tourist site in British Columbia. Marty and Jim have traveled almost 6300 km so far, with a total riding time of more than 300 hours – they show no signs of slowing down! And for both of them, the best part of their journey so far has to be the people they’ve met along the way.

But for the duo, the idea to ride cross-country really started when Marty Denonville’s sister-in-law found out that her three children had HD. Marty knew he had to do something - something big! He teamed up with long-time friend, Jim Stewart, and the two decided to cycle across Canada this summer to raise awareness and funds in support of families who are affected by Huntington disease.

Volunteers are at the heart of the Huntington Society of Canada (HSC). Volunteers tell a powerful story of caring people who pull together to improve the quality of life for Canadians impacted by HD. Marty Denonville and Jim Stewart are two such volunteers who are sharing their own story by cycling across Canada. As Denonville describes it, “One of them started exhibiting symptoms of the disease and the other two were tested and diagnosed as well,” he said. “It’s a brutal disease and has a devastating effect not only on those who have the disease, but on their families as well. It’s just not fair.”

Two guys, four wheels, and one cause – with a goal of raising \$30,000, they’re ensuring that all Canadians know about HD and its ferocious impact. Many liken the symptoms of HD as having ALS, Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s – simultaneously.

As the two move through the provinces, having biked through nine so far, they are constantly moved to tears by the generosity of people they meet along the way. In Indian Head, Saskatchewan, they were moved by a gentleman offering \$5.00 towards the cause. After attempting to decline his gracious offer, the gentleman stated, “Please take it, I really believe in you guys.” A small donation with a huge impact that they will carry with them for the rest of the ride.

“Volunteer dedication and support are the fabric of the Huntington Society. Volunteers like Marty and Jim 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 volunteers like Marty and Jim and the thousands of volunteers who stand beside us and make us the best that we can be.”

**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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