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Okanagan man brings community together to raise funds and awareness for Huntington disease
Celebrating National Volunteer Week: April 12-18, 2015

(KITCHENER, ON) March 30, 2015 – 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 12-18) the Huntington Society of Canada is honouring Dan Middleton’s volunteer work in British Columbia’s Okanagan region and the impact he makes in the HD community.

Dan Middleton didn’t know anything about HD when his sister-in-law Angela tested positive for the Huntington’s gene. However, his first instinct was to help. The keen triathlete called the Huntington Society of Canada and asked whether there were any fundraising runs in the Okanagan he could sign up for. There weren’t any at the time, so he started his own.

More than 100 people showed up for the first Run to Finish HD in Vernon, B.C. — far more than he expected. An even bigger surprise was the amount of money raised. Dan was hoping for three, maybe four thousand dollars. The actual total was over \$14,000. Seven years later, the annual event has raised nearly \$107,000 to date, along with a lot of awareness. It takes a bit of work to organize, Dan says, but he’s got a fantastic team of volunteers to help and it’s for a great cause.

Each year, more than one hundred people show up to run or stroll a few kilometres and enjoy music and a few hot dogs. “It’s not an official Boston Marathon course or anything,” Dan says. “Just a small community coming together.” Their success has inspired several other HSC Chapters across the country to organize their own runs.

Angela and Dan’s brother-in-law split up a few years ago, but Dan keeps right on raising money for the Huntington’s cause and heading up the Society’s Okanagan Chapter. Right now, he’s busy nailing down all the details for the eighth Run to Finish HD. “It’s such a devastating disease,” he says. “It makes me feel good to help out.”

The Huntington Society of Canada would like to thank each and every one of our over 10,000 volunteers across the country. Their hard work and dedication is deeply appreciated by the Society.

Now in its 74th year, National Volunteer Week is all about 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. Volunteers are part of the ripple effect.

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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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