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Toronto photographer raises awareness for Huntington disease through photobook ***May is Huntington Disease Awareness Month***

(KITCHENER, ON) May 7, 2015 – Photographer Meghan Andrews has Huntington disease (HD). Meghan has chosen to help raise awareness for HD by photographing families affected by Huntington disease and publishing the photos in her photobook, *Huntington Disease: Trials and Triumphs*.

Meghan Andrews’ love of photography started at a young age. Documenting her travels and taking photos of family and friends eventually led her to become a freelance photographer.

Meghan’s father had Huntington disease and passed away in 2004. It was hard for her to watch him grow progressively worse until he could no longer walk, talk or feed himself. After he passed away, she was tested and found out that she also has the HD gene.

At first she was upset about the results, but her friends and family helped her through it and she began to seek ways to turn her results into something positive. She decided she could use her skills as a photographer to document families affected by HD.

“I thought that by documenting families with Huntington’s I could bring awareness to the disease and illustrate how the disease affects not only the patient, but the family as a whole,” says Meghan.

Accompanied by her mother, Meghan travelled across the country to photograph HD families from coast to coast. Her photobook, *Huntington Disease: Trials and Triumphs*, highlights the strength, courage and positivity of 15 families coping with various stages of HD.

Meghan’s photobook can now be purchased online at <http://www.blurb.ca/b/5738114-huntington-disease-trials-and-triumphs> or by contacting the Huntington Society of Canada at 1-800-998-7398. The photos will also be featured at an exhibit at Toronto’s Gallery50 November 11-22, 2015.

As a result of this project, Meghan says that her attitude has shifted for the better. She constantly finds herself thinking, “If these people can get through this with a smile on their face, then so can I.”

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May is Huntington Disease Awareness Month. This year it comes on the heels of *Inside the O’Briens*, the newly released novel by award-winning, New York Times bestselling author and neuroscientist, Lisa Genova. Released on April 7, 2015, it is a poignant portrayal of the devastating impact of HD on Joe O’Brien, a 44-year-old police officer from the Irish Catholic neighborhood of Charlestown, Massachusetts. A devoted husband, proud father of four children in their twenties, and respected officer, Joe begins experiencing bouts of disorganized thinking, uncharacteristic temper outbursts, and strange, involuntary movements. He initially attributes these episodes to the stress of his job, but as these symptoms worsen, he agrees to see a neurologist and is handed a diagnosis that will change his and his family’s lives forever: Huntington disease.

The novel is a good way to gain a better understanding of the impact of HD on generations of families. The

Huntington Society of Canada is truly grateful to Genova for raising awareness of HD in Canada and across North America. To support the HD community and people like Erin, through the Huntington Society of Canada, visit www.huntingtonsociety.ca.

The Society is registered at Chapters Indigo fundraising initiative, visit ow.ly/LFcJS to purchase a Chapters Indigo gift card that can be used to purchase *Inside the O'Briens* or another book of your choice. Chapters Indigo will donate 10% of the value of your card to the Society.

Huntington disease is a debilitating brain disorder that is fatal and does not have a cure. The symptoms, which may include uncontrollable jerking movements and relentless cognitive and emotional impairment, usually present between the ages of 30 and 50 and gradually worsen over the 10-25 year course of the disease. Eventually they lead to total incapacitation and death. About one in every 7,000 Canadians has HD and approximately one in every 5,500 is at-risk of developing the disease.

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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