



Survivors Speak:

Marion Croft

The history of polio is still being written as global eradication efforts continue and it becomes possible there may be a polio-free world within the next five years. However, polio survivors still have a story to tell, one they are determined doesn't get lost to history. Toronto resident Marion Croft is one of the many sharing her story of surviving polio and overcoming adversity.

Marion contracted paralytic polio in 1949 when she was only 18 months old. She doesn't remember much of her experiences, but she does have clear memories of finally returning home from Thistletown Hospital, and that her parents were only allowed to visit her through the glass once a week.

"My parents told me that I bonded very strongly with a British nurse, and when I was discharged from the hospital, I was speaking with a strong English accent," says Marion.

Marion was March of Dimes' first 'poster child', posing with then Toronto Mayor Allan Lamport to kick-off the Mother's March.

There is probably no other Canadian phenomenon that exemplified the true spirit of volunteerism more than the Marching Mothers® campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s. Desperate to find a cure for polio, a highly contagious, disabling and sometimes fatal disease, mothers across Canada joined a North America-wide fundraising drive towards research.

...continued on page 3



Marion with Mayor Lamport

IN THIS ISSUE...

Survivors Speak	Page 1
Note from the Chair	Page 2
MODMobility®	Page 2
Polio Awareness Month	Page 3
Little Activities Reap Big Health Rewards	Page 4
DesignAbility®	Page 4
Traveling with Post-Polio Syndrome	Page 5
Build a Legacy	Page 5

Note from the Chair, Elizabeth Lounsbury



I have lived with the effects of polio for 61 years, married for 49 of those years. My husband has been my right-hand man, handling all the things I could not do. Recently, and suddenly, I found myself in the role of his caregiver. His hip froze and he needed a hip replacement. I now had to be there for him, and also had to cope with all he had done for me in the past. I soon found I was wearing down and needed help - quickly.

I started by calling our local health unit and found that even though we live miles from a city, help was available. Shortly after making the call, I had a lady coming in twice a week to do the things around the house I couldn't do, and a personal support worker coming in three times a week to assist with my husband's shower. This was a huge relief to me. I have heard from many of you that have found themselves in similar circumstances. Life can change in an instant.

Often I ask myself - why did I wait until I needed help to explore what was available to me? Well, I suppose the truthful answer to that question is I am great at denial and didn't think it would happen to me. How much simpler would my life have been, and how much less stressful if I had just thought ahead and had the phone numbers at hand to call?

When thinking about my note for this issue of PoliO'Canada it happened that I was thinking about our future. What lies ahead down the road and what can I do now to make the next stages easier for both of us? Believe me; going from one stage in life can be so much easier if a plan has been formed when not under pressure.

I hope you have all had a good summer. Where I live, there has been too much rain and not enough sun but I have made the most out of every day. The season is changing, autumn and then winter is on the horizon promising beauty of a different kind. Hopefully I, and all of you, will have the opportunity to find new pleasures.

Elizabeth Lounsbury,

Chair, Post-Polio Canada

Elizabeth Lounsbury

Introducing MODMobility®

March of Dimes Canada launched this service in 2012, and now operates two accessible buses in the Greater Toronto Area. MODMobility® provides transportation for groups of seniors and persons with disabilities, traveling to destinations such as parks, conservation areas, theatres and events, or planned scenic events.

The first vehicle accommodates up to eight wheelchairs and eight seated passengers (16). The second bus (which was donated by Hospital Special Needs Inc.), accommodates eight wheelchairs

and fourteen seated passengers, or up to 22 passengers.

Please share the information with groups or organizations in the GTA, including faith groups, seniors' homes, supportive housing, clubs and others. It's easy to rent!

Call or email:

MODMobility@marchofdimes.ca

(416) 391-2937 or (416) 425-3463, ext. 7249

Survivors Speak: *continued from page 1...*

These dedicated women went door-to-door in their neighbourhoods, collecting donations for March of Dimes. Over the years, this simple, community-based process raised millions of dollars for polio research and rehabilitation. It supported the research of Dr. Jonas Salk, whose polio vaccine was released in 1955, putting an end to the epidemics.

Marion was left with permanent disabilities from polio. She needed braces on both legs until she was seven years old, and has used a brace on her right leg her entire life. Like many polio survivors at that time, Marion spent her primary school years in a school for children with disabilities. When she reached high school age, she insisted on going to the local school. It was while at that school, which was completely inaccessible, and where Marion had to climb three flights of stairs daily, that she developed her grit and determination.

“I’ve always felt that I had to work harder than everybody else, that I’ve always needed to prove

myself as good as others,” says Marion. “My whole life I have had to push doors open that were closed to me, to get people to see the ability, not the disability, but it’s made me stronger.”

It was with this drive and determination that Marion has led a full and active life, raising three sons, including identical twins, and working a number of jobs. Most recently, she has been with Ontario Power Generation for over 20 years.

Marion was the President of the Newmarket and District Association for the Physically Disabled for a number of years, engaging local residents with disabilities in the community, and helping to change societal attitudes towards those with physical challenges. She is heavily involved with Toastmaster’s and is in the process of writing a book about her life, and beginning to take on speaking engagements.

“If there is something to be learned from my story, then I am happy to share it,” says Marion.

October is Polio Awareness Month

What Does Community Mean to YOU?

Help spread the word! October is Polio Awareness Month around the world, and support groups across the country are doing their part - getting involved in their communities to increase awareness of post-polio syndrome (PPS) and the positive impact of peer support groups.

This year’s theme is “What does community mean to you?”. We want to hear how your community – whether it is your family, friends, loved ones or the community at large have helped with your experiences as a polio survivor and living with post-polio syndrome.

Many post-polio support groups will be holding events across Canada to educate the public about PPS and

to remind people that for the estimated 125,000 polio survivors in Canada, the virus is still a very real part of their every day lives. Holding an awareness event allows volunteers from Post-Polio Canada to reach out to fellow polio survivors in the community and connect them to support services.

“I don’t believe there is right or wrong way to raise awareness”, says Donna Mackay, Associate Director of National Programs for March of Dimes Canada. “The important thing is that people do something in their community no matter how big or small, because every little bit counts”.

To share your story, call toll-free at 1-800-263-3463 or e-mail polio@marchofdimes.ca

Little Activities Reap Big Health Rewards

Being active needn't be complex. Studies show there are whopping health benefits associated with simple activities like sitting outside on the porch, taking a walk, being neighbourly and helping out a friend.

Go for a Walk

Walking is a gentle low-impact one-size-fits-all form of fitness with many health benefits. It elevates the mood, lowers bad cholesterol and raises good cholesterol. It's just as good for the heart as heavier-impact jogging or running, safer than other types of exercise, and because it's adaptable to just about any ability level, anyone can do it. People who have trouble with balance and endurance can gain a lot of mileage using a correct walking aid properly, such as a cane, pick-up walker or rolling walker. Take a walk outside in the sunshine. Invite a friend who can use the company and you've tripled the benefits!

Soak up Sunlight

Sunlight is a natural mood booster. Your body needs to soak in natural sunlight in order to produce enough vitamin D to sustain a healthy immune system and strong bones. Vitamin D plays an important role in the functioning of the adrenal gland. The adrenal gland dispenses hormones like dopamine and adrenaline to

help the body cope with stress. Letting your skin come into contact with direct sunlight helps stave off chronic fatigue and depression.

Vitamin D helps prevent bone density loss, lowering the risks of fractures and developing osteoporosis. Since most vitamin D deficiency is caused by lack of exposure to natural sunlight, spending time in the sun is a worthwhile activity.

Help a Neighbour

Give somebody a hand any way you can. It doesn't have to be physically arduous to benefit the recipient or yourself. Whether you're keeping someone company or helping them with errands, shopping or household chores, studies reveal you're raising your life expectancy.

Research shows generosity lowers the risk of dying for people who have gone through traumatic life events. The mental and physical health benefits of helping others canceled out the higher risk of death associated with the experience of the stressful event.

For more tips on health and mobility, read the articles and blog posts on the Hugo Mobility Health Blog. Submitted by Amanda Frank, Hugo Mobility.



DesignAbility®

March of Dimes Canada's DesignAbility® program offers custom-built solutions and modifications to the everyday challenges that can be faced by people living with mobility issues.

If you or someone you know has a disability and needs a solution or product

to increase independence that cannot be found on the market, DesignAbility® program may be able to help.

**Please visit
www.marchofdimes.ca/designability
to learn more.**

Traveling with Post-Polio Syndrome

At 15 years old, in his native country Holland, Robbert Pentinga was diagnosed with polio and meningitis. After falling into a coma, he was temporarily blinded for several weeks. But, Robbert was lucky. Under the attentive care of his doctors, and with the support of his mother who never left his side, his condition improved. Now in his 80s, Robbert feels blessed to have enjoyed a long, active life full of family, laughter, and of course, travel!

When he was only 21, Robbert moved to Canada to become a minister for the United Church in Cornwall, Ontario. During his 60 years in Canada, he often returned to Holland, and made sure his travels included other parts of Europe as well. While his left leg was noticeably smaller and weaker than his right, he didn't need much assistance with walking until a few years ago when he acquired post-polio syndrome.

Robbert hasn't let his post-polio syndrome slow him down! He sees his illness as a brief period of difficulty in his life, rather than a long-term issue. With the help of his wife and three daughters, Robbert has been able to travel throughout the years, in spite of the mobility challenges he faced. And he always purchases travel insurance.

You may be unsure how your disability or post-polio syndrome affects your travels, or your ability to purchase insurance. Ingle Insurance, through the TravelAbility® program donates a portion of proceeds to support March of Dimes Canada's programs and services. More information about travelling with disabilities or pre-existing medical conditions can be found on their website at www.ingleinsurance.com.

This article was provided by Rachel Kellogg of Ingle Insurance.

Build a Legacy

You can change the lives of children and adults with physical disabilities by planning a gift to March of Dimes Canada.

Through a planned gift to March of Dimes, you can leave your mark by ensuring that future generations of people living with a disability become more independent and mobile.

Your legacy can take many forms:

- **Bequests:** Make a gift to March of Dimes through your Will
- **Life Insurance:** Use an unneeded policy or create a new policy to make a donation
- **Charitable Gift Annuities:** A charitable gift annuity allows you to make a gift to support March of Dimes today while assuring you have fixed income for life
- **Charitable Remainder Trusts (CRT):** A life income gift that enables you to give today (with immediate tax savings) while retaining use of the asset

- **RRSP/RRIF Funds:** Make a gift to March of Dimes by changing the beneficiary information on your RRSP or RRIF
- **A Gift:** Make a substantial gift to March of Dimes through a transfer of residential, commercial, or undeveloped real estate or a gift of jewelry or art
- **Appreciated Securities:** Donate appreciated stocks, bonds, mutual funds, flow-through shares or stock options and take advantage of the best tax benefits

As our way of saying thank you, donors who include March of Dimes in their estate plans are offered membership into the Legacy Circle Society.

For more information on how you can build your legacy, please contact:

Planned Giving Department
1-800-263-3463 ext. 7338 or email
plannedgiving@marchofdimes.ca

When you are coming to terms with new symptoms, it is important to know that you are not alone. The most important aspect of Post-Polio Canada® are our member groups, which organize local meetings and seminars, in addition to providing information, support and encouragement. Please contact the local support group leader nearest you.

POST-POLIO CANADA® SUPPORT GROUPS IN CANADA

Southern Alberta Post Polio Support Society

7 – 11 St. NE Calgary AB T2E 4Z2

Contact: Reny de Jong

Tel: 403-813-9583

Fax: 403-281-1939

calgary@sappss.com

www.sappss.com

Wildrose Polio Support Society

132 Warwick Road NW
Edmonton, AB T5X 4P8

Contact: Glyn Smith

Tel: 780-428-8842

Fax: 780-475-7968

wpss@polioalberta.ca

www.polioalberta.ca

Lethbridge & Area

2722 – 7 A Ave. North
Lethbridge AB T1H 1A4

Contact: Juanita Takahashi

Tel: 403-329-9453

lethbridge@sappss.com

Saskatchewan Awareness of Post-Polio

2310 Louise Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2C7

Contact: Ron Johnson

Tel: 306 - 477 - 7002

Fax: 306-373-2665

sapp1@sk.sympatico.ca

www.geocities.com/sapponline

Polio Regina

825 McDonald St
Regina, SK S4N 2X5

Contact: Carole Tiefenbach

Tel: 306-761-1020

twilf_ecarole@hotmail.com

nonprofits.accesscomm.ca/polio

Post Polio Network (Manitoba) Inc.

c/o SMD Self-Help Clearing House
Suite 204, 825 Sherbrook Street
Winnipeg, MB R3A 1M5

Contact: Charlene Craig

Tel: 204-975-3037

postpolionetwork@shaw.ca

www.postpolionetwork.ca

Polio Ontario

Over 15 groups throughout Ontario

Tel: 1-800-480-5903

or 416-425-3463 ext. 7207

polio@marchofdimes.ca

Association Polio Quebec

3500 Boulevard Decarie, Suite 263.
Montreal, QC H4A 3J5

Contact: Mado Shrivell

Toll Free: 877-765-4672

Tel: 514-489-1143

Fax: 514-489-7678

associationpolioquebec@bellnet.ca

www.polioquebec.org

Polio New Brunswick

268 Montreal Ave.
St. John, NB E2M 3K6

Contact: Peter Heffernan

Tel: 506-635-8932

peterhef@nbnet.nb.ca

Polio Northern New Brunswick

Contact: Claudia LeBlanc

Tel: 506-548-1919

sunrayfifty@yahoo.com

Polio PEI

47 Westwood Crescent

Charlottetown, PE C1A 8X4

Contact: Stephen Pate

Tel: 902-566-4518

stephen_pate@hotmail.com

YOU ARE NOT ALONE - JOIN POST-POLIO CANADA® NOW!

Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms. Are you a: Polio Survivor Healthcare professional Family/friend Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

E-mail address: _____

Your donation to Post-Polio Canada® will help us continue providing education and support.

Here is my tax-receiptable donation to Post-Polio Canada® of: \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 I prefer to give \$ _____

I prefer to give monthly \$5 \$10 or Other \$ _____

Please bill me on the 15th or 30th of the month.

My cheque is enclosed OR Please charge my: VISA MasterCard American Express

Card No.: _____ Expiry Date (mm/yy): _____

Name on card: _____ Signature: _____

Send form with donation to: **Post-Polio Canada® - March of Dimes Canada, 10 Overlea Blvd., Toronto, ON M4H 1A4**

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Text the word **SUPPORT** from your mobile phone to 45678 to donate \$10.