



Survivors Speak: Kathleen Wilkinson 'In her own words'

Those of you who are reading this are probably on the same journey that I have been on since I had polio at the age of 13.

It was before the Salk vaccine which has made a difference to this disease. It was also before universal healthcare, which has made a big difference to all in Canada. Rehab was only available for those who could access it, and there was little they could do for the many polio patients who were in the Maritimes at that time. We were far away from rehab centres and the mantra was 'use it or lose it'. After the hospital you went home and tried your best to do as much as you could.

When it was time for high school I was in British Columbia. When you were the new kid on the block you tried to be as normal as you could, and since nobody really knew you, they thought you were someone who walked with a 'funny gait'. I was so clumsy that I failed gym and other physical activities. Books and music were my back-up and I was happy with that.

(continued on page 2)



Kathleen Wilkinson

October is Polio Awareness Month

Many Canadians believe that polio is merely a part of Canadian history – a forgotten disease. But for the thousands of Canadians living with the virus' late effects in the form of post-polio syndrome, polio is a very real part of their lives.

There are approximately 31,000 Canadian polio survivors.

Post-Polio Canada®, a program of March of Dimes Canada, helps provide education and support to polio survivors, their loved ones, caregivers and healthcare professionals across the country. With October designated as Polio Awareness Month, the program has increased its efforts to educate the public about post-polio syndrome.

We want to hear from you! March of Dimes is looking for polio survivors to share their photos that best illustrate their polio experience, and how they now live with post-polio syndrome.

(continued on page 3)

In this issue...

- **Survivors Speak** p.1
- **Polio Awareness Month** p.1
- **Note from the Chair** p.2
- **Fall Prevention** p.3
- **Get to #KnowPolio!** p.4
- **March of Dimes Canada can take you where you want to go** p.4
- **Making it Possible: Verna Massam's Story** p.5



Note from the chair, Elizabeth Lounsbury

This note has been provided by Sylvia Davies, National Manager, Regional Development and Peer Support, Community Engagement & Integration Services. Elizabeth Lounsbury is currently experiencing health issues in her family. We wish her only the best and are keeping her and her family in our thoughts.

When I was a child living in rural Saskatchewan I knew little of polio. My only memory related to the virus was drinking the sweet pink liquid I later learned was the polio vaccine. Actually, there were a couple more signs of polio in my small farming community. There was the woman who walked with

a limp and the man with a brace on his leg. I was a curious child so asked my parents about these people. My mother indulged me with a basic explanation of polio. Then, when I was a teenager, it came up one day that my Aunt had polio as a child. She showed no visible symptoms except a slightly unusual gait in her walk, nothing you would notice unless you were very observant.

After I began working with the Peer Support Program at March of Dimes Canada I was explaining to my sister that in Peer Support we worked with people with post-polio syndrome. She said, "Remember, that's what Aunt Helen had." I thought back. Initially my Aunt had been diagnosed with osteoporosis. Later that diagnosis was changed to post-polio syndrome. At that moment it struck me, I had knowledge of polio all of my life, yet my children know nothing of polio. To me, that is great progress. And that is why I am proud we are participating in the Immunization Awareness Campaign this fall, so the generation of my children and the future generations continue to have no experience with this virus called polio.

I would love to hear your thoughts, stories or anything you would like to share with the polio community.

Please email me at sdavies@marchofdimes.ca

Survivors Speak: Kathleen Wilkinson 'In her own words'

(continued from Page 1)

When I graduated university, I moved to Victoria. The time in university and a new job started to show the effects of polio and other than keeping active, I was still working to be as 'normal' as possible. My gait became more noticeable, and it was thought that surgery could help me. So, most of my first year out of university while working was spent in a wheelchair and in plaster casts. You just didn't think of cutting back on work, but with good friends and a good job I carried on.

March of Dimes had just come to Victoria and I was offered a little Datsun car with hand controls. This was how I learned to drive.

I loved teaching and worked with primary-school aged children. However, I continued to have difficulty with movement and tired fairly quickly, so did the usual round of doctors and psychiatrists because the reason for my lack of improvement was not easily found.

In the 1980s March of Dimes started providing information about post-polio syndrome and I was diagnosed with it at Sunnybrook Hospital. It was a long time between my bout with polio in 1949 and 1980, but finally, things made sense.

March of Dimes set up several conferences which were very informative, and they also set up a clinic for in-depth assessments at West Park Hospital. It was there that I became aware of how extensive my polio was in the early years. Those sessions with the physiotherapist, occupational therapist, social worker, and post-polio specialist were so helpful and I began to not feel so alone in my journey. I was also very blessed to have wonderful friends who took me into their home and were the support I needed. I became more involved with my church, and this fellowship has also been so helpful in my journey.

The next part of my life journey was getting married and living in a small community. I had learned

from West Park how to save my body and rest in an appropriate way. I took an early retirement in 1989 and did things more easily. I was able to volunteer and still do that today.

All of life has been a series of journeys. I have used various pieces of equipment and find my electric wheelchair is such a help now. Perhaps I have not done everything on my 'bucket list' but I did some travel and explored the world and new places. Now my post-polio has been joined by dystonia and arthritis, but at 79 years of age I realize that all of the journeys since polio have led to new adventures and new learning that I would not have otherwise had. I give thanks for that and for the friends who helped me. Those friendships have become stronger over the years, as has my faith.

We want to hear from you. To share your story, please email polio@marchofdimes.ca and we will include it in an upcoming newsletter or on our website.

October is Polio Awareness Month

(continued from Page 1)



Please send us your photos or videos via email so that your important polio story is not lost to time. March of Dimes Canada will post these messages of inspiration and hope on its website and social media accounts.

To share your photo, please contact Post-Polio Canada by calling the Warmline toll-free at 1-888-540-6666 or e-mailing polio@marchofdimes.ca.

Fall Prevention

by Linda Norton, Shoppers Home Health Care

Did you also know that according to Health Canada one in three seniors will fall at least once this year, and hip fractures are the most common type of fall injury? You don't however, need to be a senior to experience a fall, and fall-related injuries. Some things that you can do to help reduce your risk of injury include:

- Reduce the clutter. The more clutter you have, the more likely you are to trip.
- Ensure your home is well-lit, so you can see obstacles in your way. If you find you are often travelling in dimly lit areas, you can purchase a cane with a flashlight built into the handle, or a pilot light which is small enough to fit in a pocket, and slips over your ear for bright, hands-free illumination.

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- Invest in grab bars for the tub or shower, and near the toilet. While you may not need these items visitors may appreciate the assistance. Towel bars, soap dishes and toilet paper holders are not designed to support a person's weight and should never be used to assist with balance.
- Put a rubber bath mat in the tub or shower to help prevent slips and falls.
- Consider using a shower seat if you get tired standing, or if you are unsteady on your feet.
- Remove scatter rugs, or ensure that their edges are tacked down and they are non-skid mats.
- Rise slowly from a seated position. Getting up suddenly can cause dizziness, and lead to falls. If this is difficult, consider getting a lift chair, which gently lifts you into a standing position.
- Don't rush. Invest in a cordless phone so it is near you at all times, to avoid rushing to the phone.
- If getting into and out of a car is difficult, consider using a Handi-bar. This grab bar fits into the striker plate of the car door frame, and provides a stable grab bar. In case of emergency it can also be used to break your window, or cut the seat belt.

There are a whole host of other useful devices and gadgets available to make life easier, but many people don't know about them. If you find yourself struggling with an activity, ask your friends what they do, or visit a home health care store and ask the staff for advice. You might be surprised at what you find.

Get to #KnowPolio!

On Wednesday August 19th, 2015, March of Dimes Canada staff hit the streets of Toronto with a videographer from the University of Toronto film program to hear what people really know about polio and post-polio syndrome. This was done in advance of Polio Awareness month in October.

It was a hot day and we talked to many people. The film student will be putting together a series of awareness and educational videos for Polio Awareness Month that will be featured on March of Dimes Canada's website and social media platforms. The tagline for the campaign is: Get to know polio! And the hashtag for social media sites like Facebook and Twitter is **#KnowPolio**.

We want there to be NO polio and we want Canada to know polio so please help us spread the word during Polio Awareness Month!

Please do not hesitate to contact Gemma Woticky, Education and Health Promoter, if you have any ideas or questions about the upcoming Polio Awareness Campaign and Polio Awareness Month.

March of Dimes Canada can take you where you want to go



March of Dimes Canada's Recreation and Integration Services helps people living with physical disabilities overcome barriers to recreational opportunities.

Day-trips, vacations, sporting events and more are all available, and March of Dimes Canada, through its MODMobility® Program has three buses available for rental to accommodate groups.

ModMobility® is based on the goal and history of providing transportation and recreation services for people with disabilities. This out-trip bus service is available to retirement residences, nursing homes, centres for people with disabilities, hospitals and other groups who organize outings for residents to different locations.

To discuss opportunities or to schedule trips, please call 416-391-2937 or email: MODMobility@marchofdimes.ca. We look forward to serving you.

Making it Possible: Verna Massam's Story

One woman's hope to change lives today and tomorrow

Verna Massam's oldest memory is being woken in the hospital by the noises of nurses and doctors. It was 1936, and she had just been diagnosed with polio at three years of age. Another of Verna's earliest memories is of supporting March of Dimes Canada. She recalls her mother and sister going door-to-door on behalf of the charity in the early 50's. They collected dimes in milk jars to raise money for a cure for polio.

Since 1991, Verna has continued her family's legacy, and has supported March of Dimes for 23 years. She became a monthly donor 14 years ago, and has also included a gift to March of Dimes Canada in her Will. She knows her legacy will continue to help Canadians living with physical disabilities to lead more independent lives.

"March of Dimes Canada does so much good work," says Verna. "I am very impressed by the number of people with different disabilities that they help. When I visited my doctor, I met another person who was wearing a March of Dimes t-shirt and was moved by this, knowing that a charity I support is helping many people with various disabilities."

THE BENEFITS OF LEGACY GIVING

- A gift in your Will is a way to do even more for people with disabilities in a cost-effective and meaningful way.
- You can designate your gift to your local Post-Polio support group, chapter or initiative of March of Dimes Canada.
- You can retain the use of your assets and keep your cash flow today, while making a more substantial gift than you might have been able to make otherwise.
- Your gifts help you to reduce estate taxes on your final tax return and to increase inheritances to loved ones.
- Setting up a gift in your Will is very simple, and you can make changes at any time.



Verna Massam and her mum

March of Dimes Canada can help you with Estate Planning and Will preparation. To learn more, please contact Daniella Sretenovic at 1-800-263-3463 ext. 7338 or by emailing dsretenovic@marchofdimes.ca

IMPORTANT NOTE:

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 is our member groups, who 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

Association Polio Quebec
3500 Decarie Blvd., Suite 219A
Montreal, QC H4A 3J5
Contact:
Claire Cossette
Toll Free: 877-765-4572
Tel: 514-489-1143
Fax: 514-489-7678
association@polioquebec.org
www.polioquebec.org

Lethbridge & Area
2722-7A Ave. North
Lethbridge, AB T1H 1A4
Contact:
Juanita Takahashi
Tel: 403-329-9453
lethbridge@sappss.com

Post-Polio Network (Manitoba) Inc.
c/o SMD Self-Help Clearing House
Suite 204, 825 Sherbrook St.
Winnipeg, MB R3A 1M5
Contact: Cheryl Currie
Tel: 204-975-3037
postpolionetwork@gmail.com
www.postpolionetwork.ca

Polio Ontario
Over 15 groups throughout Ontario
Tel: 1-800-480-5903
or 416-425-3463 ext. 7209
polio@marchofdimes.ca
www.marchofdimes.ca/polio

Polio New Brunswick
268 Montreal Ave.
St. John, NB E2M 3K6
Contact:
Peter Heffernan
peterhef@nbnet.nb.ca
www.polioquebec.com

Polio Northern New Brunswick
Bathurst, NB
Contact:
Claudia LeBlanc
sunrayfifty@yahoo.com

Polio Regina
825 McDonald St.
Regina, SK S4N 2X5
Contact:
Carole Tiefenbach
Tel: 306-761-1020
twilf.escarole3@gmail.com
www.nonprofits.accesscomm.ca/polio

Polio PEI
47 Westwood Crescent
Charlottetown, PE C1A 8X4
Contact: Stephen Pate
Tel: 902-566-4518
stephen_pate@hotmail.com

Southern Alberta Post Polio Support Society
7-11 St. NE
Calgary, AB T2E 4Z2
Contact:
Esther Hendricks
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

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



Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms. Are you a: Polio Survivor Healthcare Professional Family/Friend Other

Name: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

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

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

Yes, I have left a gift in my will to March of Dimes Canada.

I would like more information on making a gift in my will to March of Dimes Canada.

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**

Charitable Registration No.: 10788 3928 RR0001
www.marchofdimes.ca | 1-800-263-3463



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