



A Lasting Legacy:

The Martin Family and March of Dimes

The history of March of Dimes is interwoven with the Martin family, beginning with **Paul Martin Sr., former Minister of Health and Welfare**, and for whom the charity's giving society is named. Paul Martin Sr. is best known for making the extremely difficult decision of approving the polio vaccine for distribution in Canada, against enormous odds. His bravery saved thousands of lives and helped stop an epidemic that had left thousands of children and adults with severe disabilities.

Many people are unaware of the family's personal history with polio. As March of Dimes heads into its 60th anniversary in 2011, two members of the Martin family, **former Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Paul Martin**, and his eldest son, **Paul W. Martin** shared their thoughts on the family's legacy, how polio has touched their lives and the importance of March of Dimes.

Paul Martin Sr., The Right Honourable Paul Martin and Paul W. Martin



Photo credit:

Steve Russell,
Toronto Star

David Gillespie

The Right Honourable Paul Martin was eight years old at the family's cottage near Lake Erie when he became sick, experiencing a pain he describes as, "feeling like I had a plate in my stomach." His mother, already fearing the polio epidemics that had been sweeping through the province, rushed the young Paul to the hospital in nearby Windsor where the family received the diagnosis that most terrified people in the 1940s and 50s: Paul had polio.

Q: Do you remember having polio as a child?

A: **The Right Honourable Paul Martin:**

So many of your memories as a child you are not sure if they

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Survivors Speak:

Sandra Rutherford

I contracted polio in 1951 at the tender age of six months. Huge chunks of my childhood were spent in the hospital. One experience still haunts me. I was two and a half. I'm pinned from hip to toe in a blanket of rock-hard plaster. I'm sobbing and grasping onto the metal bars of my crib trying to stand up. Somebody, not my mommy, rushed into the room, flung a massive curtain around me, then fled, which heightened my hollering "Mommy!!!" and my wondering "Why can't she hear me?"

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Note from the Chair, Elizabeth Lounsbury

I have been involved in a most interesting project, working towards



creating an international network of post-polio support groups similar to what we have at Polio Canada®. So far we have groups participating from the USA, Canada,

United Kingdom, European Union, Australia, Taiwan, India and a number of African countries.

This new network is going to celebrate Polio Awareness Month in October with the theme “We are Still Here”.

Here in Canada, we are supporting another **photo awareness contest** and it is my dream and hope that all of you will participate. Call your local

group for contest information. Imagine having your photo be the winning picture!

I hope to meet many of you at the L.I.V.E. (*Leadership in Volunteer Education*), Conference in the Fall. Have a healthy Autumn and don't forget to laugh as laughing is good for us.

Elizabeth Lounsbury

SAFETY IN THE BATHROOM: ARE YOU AT RISK?

The answer is, unfortunately, yes. The fact is, everyone is at risk. Infants, children to the very elderly - anyone can be hurt while performing daily tasks in the bathroom. The most common dangers include slips and falls, burns from scalding water, and electrical shock. For those over 65 years of age, falls can lead to grave injury and a loss of independence. In

fact, 30% of seniors fall every year and of these falls, 85% occur in the home. People with post-polio syndrome (PPS) are at even greater risk. Muscle weakness, loss of dexterity, and PPS related fatigue can all make you less safe in the bathroom.

The good news is that you can take measures to prevent many of these falls and maximize your safety. You can

maintain your dignity, independence, and privacy by making a few specific modifications and/or changes to the bathroom environment that suit your individual needs.

This article was provided by AMG Medical. For more information and to view a list of potential hazards and suggestions on how to make your bathroom a safer place, please visit www.myaquasense.com

Warning signs that you may fall	Recommendations
<p>Toilet: Difficulties getting on or off the toilet Losing balance while adjusting clothing</p>	<p>Install grab bars – wall mounted Install safety rails – attached to toilet using existing seat hardware Use a raised toilet seat – two inches can make a difference! Some models have grab bars attached Modify clothes so that they are easy to take on or off</p>
<p>Tub: Losing balance when stepping in/out Being tired when bathing Water temperature that is too hot</p>	<p>Use bathmats and non-skid surfaces. (<i>*Bathmats are considered universal precautions and are recommended for all age groups, with or without mobility, sensory or cognitive impairments.</i>) Install grab bars or a bath safety rail Use a bath chair – there are many different styles Have a bath board or transfer bench – eliminates the need to step over the edge of the tub and allows safe and independent entry Use an anti-scald device and/or turn down hot water thermostat Install a hand-held shower</p>
<p>Sink: Fatigue or dizziness</p>	<p>Sit on a stool</p>
<p>Overall Bathroom Visual challenges</p>	<p>Ensure you have adequate lighting Have a clear plastic shower curtain Use a mirror magnifier Use contrasting colours on bathroom objects to make them easier to see</p>

A Lasting Legacy: *continued from page 1...*

are actual memories, or remembering what you have been told. But I do remember getting sick. I was in a ward with about thirty other children. I remember jumping on my bed, and an iron lung was wheeled into the room. The boy in the bed next to me said, “You had better stop that, because that is what you are going to end up in.” I remember being quite lonely, my parents were not allowed in the room, and I remember seeing them standing at the door, not able to come in. And the one thing I will never forget is that there was a wonderful young nurse, I can’t remember her name now, but I will never forget, she spent time with me, and I was feeling pretty lonely and then one day she didn’t come in. I asked another nurse where she was and was told it was her day off. About twenty minutes later this nurse walked in – she had come to the hospital on her day off to visit me. I never forgot that.

Q: March of Dimes (to Paul W. Martin): Do you remember your father telling you anything about his experiences having polio?

A: Paul W. Martin: Yes, but only briefly. I think it was something that generation didn’t talk about as much. But attending the event (Paul W. Martin attended March of Dimes’ Ability and Beyond Gala dinner on behalf of the family), I really learned more about our connection with polio and it has sparked my interest and I want to know more.

Q: March of Dimes (to The Right Honourable Paul Martin): How long did it take for you to recover?

A: The Right Honourable Paul Martin: Well, I missed a year of school, or certainly at least six months. I know I was not allowed to play football, and I do know I clearly disobeyed this edict. I also remember that I had a softball that I loved, it was missing the cover, and I lost it one day, it had fallen into the river and I was very upset about losing it. My mother had been told by the doctor that it was very important not to upset me. The next morning the softball was on the porch. I didn’t realize until much later that she had bought a new ball and taken the cover off and left it for me to find – so I wouldn’t be upset. But I also knew that the doctor had told my parents not to let me become upset, and a child that is not allowed to be upset can become insufferable. I did something to my mother, I must have been about ten, and she blew her cork, and that was when I knew I had recovered.

Q: Switching subjects, do you remember when your father was making the decision to move forward with the vaccine campaign?

A: The Right Honourable Paul Martin: I was quite young, but yes, I do remember. My father travelled a lot for work, so when he was home, he really made an effort with me and my sister. My mother was more of the disciplinarian. I remember that weekend he was very tense; I think I had knocked something over in his study and he lit into me. I went to my mother, and she told me that my father had a very big decision to make. I know he agonized over that weekend, especially because some American children had died receiving the vaccine. He really studied and

determined it wasn’t the vaccine itself that was at fault, he had the confidence in Connaught Laboratories (Connaught Laboratories was the Canadian manufacturer of the polio vaccine). And even though the Prime Minister at the time Mr. St Laurent was dubious it was the right decision. And we talked about it many years later and he told me it was the single most difficult decision he has ever made in his life.

Q: How do you think the fact that both you and your father had polio affected him and his decision to push forward with the vaccine campaign?

A: The Right Honourable Paul Martin: The fact that my father had polio was the driving force behind his decision to go into politics. He was from a very poor family in Pembroke. After polio he was paralyzed on one side had trouble with one arm and one eye, his brother used to pull him around on an old sleigh. Having had polio made him want to be Minister of Health, made him advocate for universal healthcare, it is why he is known as the “Father of Universal Healthcare.”

Q: What role has March of Dimes played in your family’s life?

A: The Right Honourable Paul Martin: My father was very close to March of Dimes, for him it was the ultimate charitable endeavour. I remember going to hear him speak at a March of Dimes event in Windsor. He was so involved because polio and March of Dimes had left such a mark on both his and my life.

A: Paul W. Martin For me, the importance of March of Dimes has always been what they do now to help people with disabilities.

Even though polio touched my family's life in such a profound way, it always seemed to be something that happened in the past. For my generation, it seems like something like the black plague, a historical disease. So it is kind of a compliment to March of Dimes that my generation knows them for their work on behalf of people with disabilities.

A: The Right Honourable Paul Martin:

The extraordinary thing, is that for my generation, my father's generation, and I would suspect even my grandfather's generation, there was no such thing as a school without one or two kids

in class with braces, and that was polio. It was just a fact of life, part and parcel of upbringing. And I remember friends, forced to walk, to put up with tremendous suffering and pain, and being told they just had to deal with it. So it is extraordinary that for my sons, they just don't know it. They haven't experienced it.

A: Paul W. Martin:

We are happy about the success of March of Dimes. I know my grandfather would be so touched that the March of Dimes Giving Society is named in his honour.

A: The Right Honourable Paul Martin:

March of Dimes has always been an integral part of Canada's response to need and disability. As polio was beaten back, March of Dimes didn't stop providing support, but recognized that needs still existed for people that had disabilities, first from polio, and then for anyone with a disability. It is really a great tribute to March of Dimes that it realized it was not only the cause that needed to be addressed, but really the consequence. And March of Dimes continues to do great work. ■

October is Polio Awareness Month!

Help spread the word! October is Polio Awareness Month around the world, and support groups from 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.

Events are held 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 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".

For a list of activities across Canada or to learn how your group can participate, please contact Polio Canada by calling the Warmline toll-free at 1-888-540-6666 or e-mailing info@poliocanada.com. ■

Celebrating 25 years of support to Toronto-area polio survivors

On Saturday, May 1st, The Toronto-Peel Post Polio Group held an all-day event to recognize a quarter century of support to people living with post-polio syndrome (PPS).

The Anniversary Celebration featured guest speakers including Anthony DiPasquale, a nutrition and exercise specialist who has a vast knowledge of healthy living for polio survivors, Joan Headley, the Executive Director of Post-Polio Health International, Angela King, a respiratory specialist and Audrey King, founder of the group.

The event was also a celebration of diversity. Many of Toronto's polio survivors contracted the virus in their home countries before relocating to Canada. The group also used the event to share stories of polio and PPS treatment across the globe.

Congratulations to Chair Jan Nichols and the entire Toronto-Peel Post Polio Group on 25 years of making a difference. ■

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

Children adapt to their surroundings, and I did too. A progression of resilience, surgeries, back and leg braces, crutches, to no brace and crutch-free, to one brace with crutches, until I rebelled and threw them into the closet. It was hard trekking but I was bent on breaking out and becoming fashionable. At eighteen I was working, and wearing shoes to complement my wardrobe. Would I admit a too-high-for-me heel was risky? Nope!!

1979 caught me under the knife to fix hips dislocated from birth. With a possible limp-free prognosis added to the mix, I embraced the challenge. A series of painstaking surgeries, rehab, then a walk down the aisle? Yep! Not limp-free, turned out that wasn't to be, but while donning a dazzling gown, brace on my polio leg, crutches, dad and brother on either side, I ambled to my beloved groom.

1984 heralded our darling daughter. My hips collapsed from a 50-pound weight gain during pregnancy. Standing was excruciatingly painful and walking with crutches was too exhausting. Becoming wheelchair-dependent was a blessing as I was better able to mother from my chair.

1986 and hip replacements would have me upright with a brace and two crutches aptly named "grace" and "mercy". Being a woman of faith I am ever mindful of where my strength arises. I got rather nifty at maneuvering around the house with just my "mercy" crutch. By the early 1990's I was falling a lot, so "grace" was needed as well to keep my face off the floor.

Married life ended in divorce court, yet amid all that emotionally-shattered brokenness, I focused on the precious child I am blessed to love and nurture. Skills dubbed out-of-date required vocational rehab at the March of Dimes office in Thunder Bay. I had given little thought to March of Dimes or its connection to polio. Nor did I consider polio the culprit depleting me of energy I needed to keep up day-to-day, let alone work outside the home. I was only in my forties, for crying out loud, so why couldn't I bounce back like I used to whenever life threw me a curve ball?

Long story short, I would flunk work-rehab, but at that March of Dimes office, I rescued a pamphlet that was headed for the floor. Talk about a God-send when you're at the end of yourself. The words "post-polio syndrome" had me betwixt relief and angst. They provoked a visible arsenal of hair-raising goose bumps while terror ignited from inside my head to the pit of my stomach! Then denial erupted and well, I lost it. Talk about a flood of tears. Polio?? – No!! No way!! I'd licked that sucker long ago, thank you very much.

Truth be told it is I who got suckered by this "crippler" I'd fought tooth and nail to overcome. And I wasn't alone. That brochure led me to a post-polio support group where tears and questions are welcomed.

That first meeting (over fourteen years ago) was one of the harshest reality checks I've ever had to face, which is probably why in 2005, I readily



Sandra Rutherford speaking at March of Dimes L.I.V.E. Conference

volunteered to Chair March of Dimes' Thunder Bay & District Post-Polio Chapter.

Like so many survivors living with PSS, my quality of life is affected by a barrage of severe burning pain, overwhelming fatigue, trouble sleeping...Lest you think I'm complaining – I'm not – nor am I elderly.

Post-polio syndrome forces me to conserve my ever-depleting energy for all that truly matters. Passion propels me to join courageous like-minded men and women to correct misguided perceptions that the "crippler" is passé. Polio still exists in 2010. ■

When you are coming to terms with new symptoms, it is important to know that you are not alone. The most important aspect of 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.

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 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 POLIO CANADA® NOW!

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

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City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

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

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

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Charitable No. (BN) 879585214 RR0001