



October is Polio Awareness Month!

Since its inception in 2003 Polio Canada® has been celebrating Polio Awareness Month in March, to remind the many people who believe that polio is only a footnote in Canadian history, that for thousands of polio survivors, the virus is still a very real part of their daily lives. To that end, special recognition events were held by our peer support groups across the country, aimed both at honouring polio survivors, and educating Canadians about polio and its late effects in the form of post-polio syndrome.

This year for the first time, in keeping with Post-Polio Health International, we will be celebrating Polio Awareness Month in October. You can read more about these upcoming celebrations and some of the special events to be held to

recognize the month, in our Note from the Chair, Elizabeth Lounsbury, on page 2 of this issue of PoliO'Canada.

Of course, polio is not something that only affects people during Polio Awareness Month. Continuing to educate the public about post-polio syndrome and providing vital peer support services that link polio survivors together must be a year-long, ongoing effort.

We want to hear from you. You can call 1-800-480-5903 e-mail us at info@poliocanada.com or by mail:

Polio Canada®,
a program of March of Dimes Canada
10 Overlea Blvd., Toronto, ON M4H 1A4

Survivors Speak:

Anne Marie Bovair's story – "We are not alone"

For almost 20 years Anne Marie Bovair has been Chair of the Peterborough Post-Polio peer support group. She

contracted paralytic polio in 1953 when she was 13 months old. Having two older

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Anne Marie Bovair with one of her paintings

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1-800-480-5903

Note from the Chair, Elizabeth Lounsbury



In 2008, Polio Canada® adopted the Post-Polio Health International and the European Post-Polio groups' theme, "We're Still Here".

Their designated Polio Awareness Month has always been October. Until now, we at Polio Canada® held our awareness campaign in March – a very unpredictable month for weather – particularly in more northern climates. After consulting with Polio Canada®'s group members it was thought that we could raise even greater awareness if we also celebrated Polio Awareness Month in October.

This will, of course, be a transition year, and if any group wishes to still hold awareness activities in March, Polio

Canada® will support you – please let us know your plans and how we can help. I always say, there is no such thing as too much awareness about polio and post-polio syndrome!

In April, 2009, I, along with Sue Jones, Manager of Volunteer and Chapter Resources for March of Dimes Canada, will be travelling to Warm Springs, Georgia to attend a health wellness retreat, and the Living with Polio in the 21st Century conference sponsored by Post-Polio Health International. We welcome this opportunity to represent Polio Canada® and to network with other polio survivors from all over the world. Polio Canada® is always recognized as a leader in group support and information dissemination. I particularly look forward to meeting old friends,

and making new ones. I will report back to you about this event in our next issue.

Finally, I am hearing some wonderful ideas from our new staff team at Polio Canada® – it is an exciting time for all of us. Please let us hear from you. We want to hear your thoughts, suggestions and your personal stories. We can't know what your group needs if you don't tell us. Together we will raise awareness about polio and PPS. Let us remind Canadians that "we are still here" and that our numbers are growing due to immigration from countries where polio still exists.

I wish you all a healthy and happy 2009.

Elizabeth Lounsbury

Traveling with a Disability?

These tips can help you have a restful and enjoyable holiday

Avacation should be a time of peace and relaxation. But when traveling with a disability, problems like inaccessible hotel rooms and difficult flights can ruin a trip. March of Dimes Canada offers accessible travel tours through its Recreation and Integration Services program. In recent years, the program has taken groups on cruises to the Caribbean, a trip to Las Vegas and is embarking on an Alaskan Cruise. When traveling with March of Dimes, accessibility needs are already taken care of. When you travel on your own, following the same checklist can ensure a stress-free, fun holiday.

The best advice for any traveler is to plan ahead – as much as possible – it is worth it. These plans include checking and double checking EVERYTHING. Make sure you have clearly stated your needs to your booking agent, the hotel staff, airline and airport personnel – never assume that they know your requirements. Clarifying your needs



ahead of time and confirming that your accommodations are in place will ensure peace of mind throughout your trip.

When booking your flight be very specific about your needs. The airline will have a form for travelers with special needs – make a follow-up call confirming the form

was received. If you use a wheelchair or scooter, the airline has to know if it is manual or power, its dimensions and weight, the type of battery, and whether you need an aisle chair to get to your seat. If you need special assistance, call the special needs desk at the airport before you arrive, as it is the airport staff who will be helping you. Label everything you take with you so it can be easily located at the baggage claim. Some people find it easier to rent a wheelchair or scooter and have it waiting for them at the hotel. If you use this option, make sure to book at least a month in advance and then call both a week and the day before you leave, to re-confirm your rental.

When arranging your hotel room, again, be very specific about your requirements, as your definition of accessible may not be the same as the hotel's. For example, if you need grab bars, a roll-in shower or shower bench, wider doors etc., make

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Understanding Stress: The first step to Managing your Health

A chronic condition like post-polio syndrome can create new disabilities and challenges as one ages. These new disabilities may mean that tasks that used to come easily are now more difficult, and that many aspects of daily living are dramatically different from before. Many people find it difficult to cope with the progression of a disability. The stress caused by these new challenges can have a detrimental impact on both your physical and mental health, so it is important to learn to manage your stress levels.

Emotions can often take over many situations, but it is how you manage these feelings and control the situation that can either hinder or enhance your health. A situation you might find challenging acts as a stressor, or in other words, a stress-stimulus. It is important to note that it is not the stressor itself that causes stress, but your reaction to the situation that brings about a positive or negative response.

For example, if post-polio fatigue has left you exhausted and frustrated at the end of the day, you may be so overtired that it feels impossible to fall asleep. The next night, the situation occurs again, and your body and brain learn to not only feed these feelings but to build up the frustration

even more – your brain is swelling with irritation, your body becomes tense. The fight is two against one, with your peace of mind as the ultimate loser. As the same situation occurs again and again, the reaction becomes a ‘triggered response’ – the simple act of entering your room for the night will cause a negative stress-response in your body. Learning to manage this stress, by properly assessing your energy levels during the day and adapting accordingly, can help reverse your body’s reaction to this “triggered response”.

Acknowledging feelings of frustration and anger is the first step on the road to managing stress in a healthy and positive way. It is important to identify the ‘trigger’ situations that lead to a negative stress-response so you can plan ahead to either avoid these situations, or, more realistically, be prepared to deal with them effectively and confidently.

Be it getting into bed, waiting for public transit or dealing with a difficult person, these tips can help you better manage your stress level.

- Plan ahead for tasks that may cause difficulties: Make sure everything you need and your assistive devices are in their proper place. Double check if you have to.

- Take a breath; Count to five: This gives your body and mind time to re-align and perhaps loosen up and focus. Make sure you count ALL the way to the number five, to give you enough time to calm down.
- Think TNT: Teeth, Neck, and Toes: Are your teeth clenched? Are your neck and shoulders tied up in knots? Think and feel the tenseness in your muscles all the way down to your toes. Flex your muscles and then loosen them.
- Know your body: Can my body handle this right now? Will I be able to carry out the whole task on my own? Should I ask for help?
- Give yourself a visual reminder: This might mean writing a note and putting it on your pillow or pasting a smiley-face sticker on your metro-pass that catches you in the moment and reminds you to take that five-second breath and refocus.

Remember to step back and see the overall situation every once in a while so that your needs are being met with the right amount of positive-stress to keep you motivated. The key to coping with anger and frustration is not to deny the feelings, but instead, accepting the stressful situation and finding the best way to deal with it.

How Do I Ask for Help?

Sizing up a potentially difficult situation before it happens is the key to success. Ask yourself, “Am I safe doing this task on my own, or is asking for help the better option?” Taking the initiative to direct your own care is a careful balance between knowing your capabilities and your limits. Plan ahead and think about what you will realistically need help with and when you will need it. Take the initiative to talk with your caregiver, family member or others to make sure they have an understanding of what it means to **assist you**, versus doing a task **for you**. Open communication will make potentially stressful situations flow more easily.

1. Plan ahead and ask for help before you encounter stress or frustration.
2. Ask for help from someone you feel comfortable with and can trust. If you still don’t feel comfortable, ask

someone who has gone through it before.

3. Don’t feel ashamed or embarrassed to ask for help – it can help alleviate a potentially stressful or unsafe situation.
4. State clearly what you want the person helping you to do. Never assume they know what you want... not everyone is a mind reader. Make sure they listen.
5. Try to stay positive.
6. Say thank you and be appreciative when your helper does a good job. However, if the task did not go well, address the problem right away to prevent the same problem from happening again.

For more resources to help manage stress, please contact Laura Klaponksi, Education and Health Promoter by calling 1-800-263-3463 ext. 7212 or e-mailing lklaponksi@marchofdimes.ca. She can also be mailed at: **Polio Canada**[®], a program of March of Dimes Canada 10 Overlea Blvd., Toronto, ON M4H 1A4



Introducing MODmobility®

March of Dimes is pleased to announce MODmobility®, an online store offering a wide range of used assistive devices for sale.

MODmobility® is a social enterprise of March of Dimes Canada. An additional goal of the enterprise is to train and place people with disabilities into competitive employment. Operations have been contracted to Motion Specialties Incorporated, one of Canada's largest suppliers of home healthcare equipment.

MODmobility® accepts donations of used equipment in good condition, or that can be refurbished at any of 24 Motion Specialties locations across Canada. March of Dimes Canada provides a charitable tax receipt for any equipment valued over \$50.

Recycled equipment is then made available for sale through our online store and at Motion Specialties locations.

Guidelines for Accepting Equipment:

- Equipment must fall within one of the predetermined categories listed above.
- Equipment must be in good working condition.
- Must not be a discontinued product, parts must be available to purchase for repair.

For more information on MODmobility® or to donate or purchase equipment, please visit the website at www.modmobility.ca, call 1-866-976-6632 or e-mail info@modmobility.ca.

EQUIPMENT CATEGORY	EQUIPMENT TYPE
Lifting Devices	Scooter and wheelchair lifts
	Floor lifts
	Ceiling lifts
	Stair lifts
	Porch lifts
	Seat lift chairs
Bath Aids	Commodes
	Bath transfer benches
	Bath seats
	Bath lifts
	Grab bars
	Toilet safety frames
	Raised toilet seats
Mobility	Scooters
	Power wheelchairs
	Manual wheelchairs
	Rollators
	Standers
	Walkers
	Strollers
Miscellaneous	Hospital beds
	Over-bed tables
	Ramps



The social enterprise is supported by the Toronto Enterprise Fund, a funding partnership of United Way Toronto, the City of Toronto,

the Ontario Ministry of Community & Social Services (Ontario Disability Support Program) and Homelessness Partnership Initiative, a federal program administered by the City of Toronto.

Travel Tips *Continued from Page 2*

sure to communicate this information to the staff. Make sure that your accessible room is 'guaranteed' and not just 'requested' – and get this guarantee in writing. This way if there is a mistake upon arrival the hotel will be much more helpful – upgrading your room, giving discounts, etc. Feel free to arrange the furniture in your room in a way that works best for you. You can push the bed against the wall and request that housekeeping take away extras you don't need to make more room, such as armchairs, side tables, etc. Don't be shy.

If you are renting a car, many agencies can

offer accessible vans with enough advance notice. If you use a wheelchair or scooter, provide the company with its dimensions so that they can provide a suitable vehicle. Bring your accessible parking permit from home. Most places recognize out-of-country/province permits. Do NOT assume that because your van is clearly fitted for a wheelchair that the parking authority will not ticket it – they will!

Alternatively, you can try your luck with taxis, as many locations have accessible cabs. If you have a great experience with a certain company, or a particular driver, try and get their information. Often you can use them for the duration of your holiday.

Taking the time to prepare ahead and anticipate potential problems before they arise can ensure you have the trip of your dreams. Happy Traveling!

The TravelAbility® program offers travel insurance for people with disabilities, with a percentage of the proceeds donated to March of Dimes. The Recreation and Integration Services program offers accessible trips, year-round out-trips, and its popular summer holiday at Geneva Park in Orillia.

For more information on TravelAbility® insurance or Recreation and Integration Services please call 1-800-263-3463 ext. 7207 or e-mail recreation@marchofdimes.ca.

Anne Marie Bovair's Story *Continued from Page 1*

sisters who were unaffected, her parents initially thought Anne Marie had a bad flu. She was given the diagnosis of polio at St. Joseph's Hospital in Peterborough and by the time she was transferred to Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto her entire left side was paralyzed. She was eventually able to walk with a leg brace, but required three surgeries on her left leg and has always walked with a slight limp.

Growing up in the 1950s with a visible disability was challenging, but Anne Marie had a supportive family who encouraged her to engage in activities she loved that did not tax her physically. She became an avid reader, learned to do needlework, swam in the lake in summers, and expressed her artistic side through painting, a hobby she still nurtures. By her early twenties, she was married to her husband Murray, had a son Michael, and a job she enjoyed with the Peterborough County City Health Unit.

Anne Marie first began experiencing the overwhelming fatigue of post-polio syndrome (PPS) when she was in her late thirties. Although the condition was – and still is, little understood by the medical community, Anne Marie was fortunate enough to be assessed at the now closed West Park Post-Polio clinic in Toronto, where she learned that she had PPS. Just before she turned 40, Anne Marie was forced into early retirement due to her PPS. A colleague in the Health Unit, Lois Harte-Maxwell, a fellow polio survivor, suggested she join the local post-polio support group. Initially reluctant, fearing she would be the only young member

of the group, she joined, and was soon heading the Chapter.

Anne Marie is very grateful to March of Dimes for supporting the Peterborough Post-Polio Chapter and helping her learn more about PPS. "I am really indebted to March of Dimes," she says. "They taught me to find my baseline energy, gauge my strength levels and to plan my days accordingly – they helped me accept that the fatigue would be part of daily life, and how to try to manage it," she continues.

At its peak, the Peterborough Post-Polio group had close to 175 members. However, in recent times, membership and group activities have dwindled. But with the help of her colleague Pat Butcher, the Chapter still puts out an informative newsletter and keeps in touch with its members – with the goal of reviving the group and once again having regular meetings.

"Anne Marie has been tremendous in working to keep the Peterborough Post-Polio group alive," says Donna Mackay, Associate Director of National Programs for March of Dimes Canada. "March of Dimes Canada and her Chapter have benefited tremendously from her time and efforts and we could not be more grateful – I know she is trying to reach out to new polio survivors to help grow the group," she continues.

Over the past few years, Anne Marie's mobility has declined, and she now uses a walker or a wheelchair when traveling longer distances. But her family has remained a great source of strength and

support. As she says, "disability affects the whole family, and I have been lucky to have such a great one." She is still able to swim, practices gentle tai-chi and yoga at home, and paints regularly.

"I have my challenges, I get frustrated and tired sometimes, I have to be honest about that," says Anne Marie. "But I always believe you have to make the best of things and be successful with what you have – I know what we are doing with the post-polio group is so important and that's why I keep at it."

Anne-Marie is actively trying to make contact with Peterborough's polio survivors who may not know about post-polio syndrome – she wants to help explain their new symptoms and let them know that they are not alone. Peterborough is the fastest-growing retirement community in the province, and Anne Marie suspects there may be a growing number of residents who could benefit from the group. She encourages all Peterborough-area polio survivors to contact the Warmline® at 1-888-540-6666 for more information.

To share your story in an upcoming issue of PoliO'Canada, please contact Laura Klaponski, Education and Health Promoter by calling 1-800-263-3463 ext. 7212 or e-mailing lklaponski@marchofdimes.ca. She can also be mailed at:

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10 Overlea Blvd., Toronto, ON M4H 1A4

Post-Polio Health International's 10th International Conference

Elizabeth Lounsbury, Polio Canada® Chair and Susan Jones, Manager of Volunteer and Chapter Resources are on the planning committee which is organizing the Post-Polio Wellness Camp for 2009. Susan Jones will be leading a

'Caregiver Workshop' and 'Tips for Travel Workshop' at the camp. The Wellness Camp will precede Post-Polio Health International's 10th International Conference being held April 23-25, 2009.



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® is our member groups, which organize local meetings and seminars, as well as provide information, support and encouragement. Please contact the local support group leader nearest you.

Polio Canada® Support Groups in Canada

Post-Polio Awareness and Support Society of British Columbia

102-9775 4th St.
Sydney, BC V8L 2Z8
Tel: 250-655-8849
Fax: 250-655-8859
E-mail: ppass@ppass.bc.ca
www.ppass.bc.ca

Southern Alberta Post Polio Support Society

#7-11th Street, NE
Calgary, AB T2E4Z2
Tel: 403-265-5041
Toll Free: 1-866-265-5049
Email: sappss@shaw.ca
www.polioalberta.ca

Wildrose Polio Support Society

132 Warwick Road NW
Edmonton, AB T5X 4P8
Tel: 780-428-8842
Fax: 780-475-7968
E-mail: wpss@polioalberta.ca
www.polioalberta.ca

Saskatchewan Awareness of Post Polio Inc.

2310 Louise Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2C7
Tel: 306-477-7002
E-mail: sapp1@sk.sympatico.ca
www.geocities.com/sapponline

Post Polio Network (Manitoba) Inc.

Contact: Charlene Craig
Post Polio Network (Manitoba) Inc.
c/o SMD Self-Help Clearing House
825 Sherbrook Street
Winnipeg, MB R3A 1M5
Tel: 204-975-3037

Polio Regina Inc.

825 McDonald St.
Regina, SK S4N 2X5
Tel: (306) 477-7002
Email: polio@accesscomm.ca
www.nonprofits.accesscomm.ca/polio

Polio Ontario

Over 15 groups throughout Ontario
Tel: 1-800-480-5903
or 416-425-3463, ext. 7207
E-mail: polio@dmarchofdimes.ca

Association Polio Quebec

3500 boul. Décarie, bureau 263
Montréal, QC H4A 3J5
Tel: 514-489-1143
Toll free: 1-877-765-4672
E-mail:
associationpolioquebec@bellnet.ca
www.polioquebec.org

Polio New Brunswick

268 Montreal Ave.
St. John, NB E2M 3K6
Contact: Peter Hefferman
Tel: 506-635-8932
E-mail: peterhef@nbnet.nb.ca

Polio Northern New Brunswick

Contact: Claudia Godin
Tel: 506-548-1919
E-mail: sunrayfifty@yahoo.com

Polio PEI

Contact: Stephen Pate
Tel: 902-566-4518
E-mail: stephen_pate@hotmail.com

You are not alone.

Join Polio Canada® now!

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please complete the following information:

Are you a: polio survivor family/friend
 healthcare professional other: _____

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

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

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

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

Name on card: _____ Signature: _____



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Polio Canada® - March of Dimes Canada
10 Overlea Blvd., Toronto, ON M4H 1A4

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In keeping with March of Dimes Canada's green initiative, all our newsletters are printed on paper from well-managed forests and other controlled sources. As well, all our printed materials are available electronically to save on costs and paper use.

1-800-480-5903
www.poliocanada.com