MARCH
OF DIMES
CANADA

PoliO'Canada

Spring / Summer 2018

Survivors Speak: Rod Mundy

Rod Mundy

Rod Mundy was five years old when he contracted polio in December of 1949.

He remembers bits and pieces from that time – riding over a bridge in an ambulance, being put in isolation. His most vivid, and saddest, memory is of that Christmas. His parents couldn't visit while he was in isolation, so they sent gifts in, but he wasn't allowed to take them when he was finally released in February of 1951.

Rod also remembers being allowed out for lunch on Sundays in those last few months. His dad would give him a choice of the zoo in Stanley Park or a ride on the ferry.

Rod had spinal polio, which paralyzed him completely at first. "My arms and upper shoulders came back quickly," he says. "But I developed severe scoliosis. My right leg was paralyzed and my left leg was sort of 50% usable."

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Exciting new partnership with Hill Street Beverage Company!

March of Dimes Canada is thrilled to introduce a new partner!

The Hill Street Beverage Company produces non-alcoholic wines and then partners with non-profit organizations to share the proceeds from particular products. Everybody wins!

Hill Street is now an official National Sponsor of our Rock for Dimes fundraisers, so you may be seeing them at events in the future.

Thanks to Hill Street for coming on board – we look forward to working together!

Find out more about Hill Street Beverages at: www.hillstreetbevco.com

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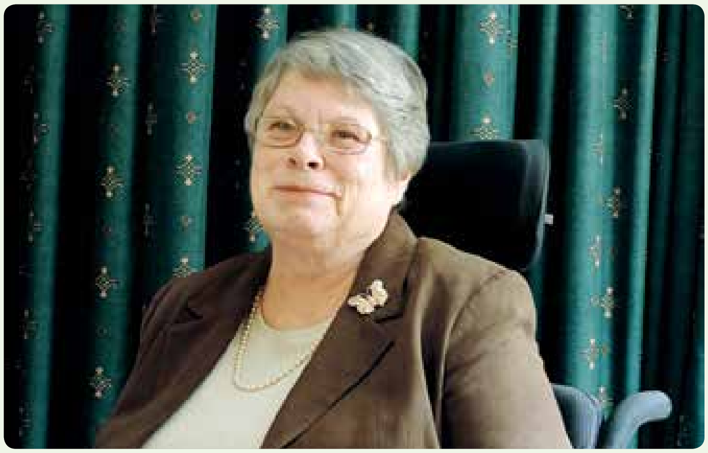

Note from the chair, Elizabeth Lounsbury

Happy spring, everyone!

Now that the weather has finally caught up with the calendar, we can all look forward to getting out of the house to enjoy family, friends, and hobbies. This is especially important to people, like many of us living with post-polio syndrome, with mobility challenges.

I've been thinking about this over the winter. As pretty as it can be, the snow makes getting around difficult, so I find myself at home much more than I'd like. I didn't even notice until a neighbour invited me to join a quilting club. It was a new experience that I really enjoyed, and turned into a new hobby.

If you've had a similar experience, there's a short piece in this issue with ideas on how to combat isolation. Maybe the suggestions will make next winter a bit more social!

For now, though, spring is in the air and I'm getting ready to head to Chicago for Polio Health International's Board of Directors retreat. We'll be discussing our direction for the next decade, and I hope to present the results of a survey done by the University of Toronto and March of Dimes Canada. I'll let you know how it goes in the next newsletter.

Meanwhile, please enjoy this edition of PoliO'Canada, and the nicer weather!

PPS Research Update

By Zinnia Batliwalla

Last year, twenty-four individuals participated in a total of three focus groups to understand what contributes to a high quality-of-life for older adults with post-polio syndrome (PPS). We are working to submit this qualitative research to an academic journal this spring. Once the study has been submitted, it will be subjected to peer-review, which means that experts in the field will evaluate the research to determine if it is suitable for publication.

A social-ecological framework, which highlights the interaction between the individual, community, and physical, social and political environments, was used to interpret the findings. By using this social-ecological model, we have been able to better understand the system-level factors influencing quality-of-life for the larger population of people aging with PPS, such as health professionals being knowledgeable about PPS and how to provide care, and access to home modifications and equipment to promote independence. We plan to develop specific recommendations to ensure health and social service systems are equipped to appropriately support people aging with PPS.

Survivors Speak: Roy Mundy

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All this meant that he didn't begin school until he was nearly seven, which made for what he describes as a rocky start.

The next several years involved a move from Vancouver to Ottawa, then a stint in Paris, and back to Ottawa, all thanks to his father's job with the federal government. In the eighth grade, Rod had three major operations. His back was fused, and then there were two surgeries on his legs.

At 20, Rod fell and broke his hip, which required another operation. "With things like this, you learn to walk several times over," Rod says philosophically.

He went on to become a teacher and principal in Ottawa, and then in Huntsville, Ontario, which led to many close friendships. He also got involved with MODC's support group in Barrie and then in Gravenhurst.

"One thing I've learned is that it's a different experience for everyone," he says.

Today, Rod does physiotherapy, massage, and a specialized program at a local gym to manage his physical challenges. He also reads a lot, travels with his wife Anne, spends time with friends, and enjoys his pontoon boat.

"I've always looked on the cheerful side of things," he says. "It's a nice life."

Post-Polio Network Manitoba

By Cheryl Currie

Post-Polio Network Manitoba (PPN Manitoba) Inc., a non-profit and non-governmental organization, was established in 1986. The organization serves as an information centre and a support group for polio survivors, families and their supporters. Our members are located across Manitoba.

As our members age, and with the passage of time, latent effects of polio are emerging. This has given rise to post-polio syndrome (PPS) and, with the normal aging process another health concern is faced by polio survivors. There are currently no specialists in Manitoba who can deal with PPS, and a majority of those in the medical field either do not understand or have a limited understanding of both the syndrome and accompanying issues.

Needless to say, this further adds to the challenge of addressing and coping with the health issues. A great majority of our members are survivors from the epidemic outbreak of poliomyelitis in the 1950's. As survivors, they recognize the importance of vaccinations against debilitating diseases such as polio. Polio is no longer as much of a concern as it once was, but without vaccinations against these viruses, outbreaks are a real possibility. The recent backlash against vaccinations is very distressing for polio survivors. In Manitoba at the recent school trustees annual meeting a proposal to make vaccinations for school aged children compulsory was defeated. Misinformation is the greatest cause of the backlash against vaccinations.

In this context, public education and increasing levels of awareness have become a critical first step. This undertaking has to engage and inform at all levels- consumers, medical practitioners, government and community. PPN Manitoba is engaged in this effort through its various initiatives such as newsletters, participating in public events, and events sponsored or

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convened by the Network. Our goals are to:

- Increase awareness through a dialogue between our membership and the community;
- Convene conferences to enable disseminate infomration;
- Articulate the interests and concerns of persons with post-polio syndrome Reach out to new Canadians.

Given the fatigue and aging affecting our membership, PPN Manitoba appreciates the value of a collaborative approach with other like-minded organizations which allowseffective and efficient use of resources.
PPN Manitoba looks forward to a strong relationship to enable undertaking and accomplishing the objectives set out above.

Get Connected: How to combat isolation

It happens to the best of us — we get tired, or busy, or just comfortable in our routines, and we end up isolating ourselves from our communities.

Sometimes we just need to shake ourselves out of it. Get together with friends, try something new. But for people living with mobility challenges, it might not be that easy.

Winter is particularly isolating, given how difficult it is to get around. If you use a wheelchair or walker, or even a cane, you probably can’t or don’t want to navigate the snow and slush. That’s all behind us now — at least until next year — so it’s the perfect time to build strategies for combating isolation that will keep us connected when the snow flies again.

Here are five easy things you can do to keep socially active and connected:

1. **Start with your network.** Make an effort to spend time with family and friends — people you can have a low-key, relaxing evening at home with.
2. **Use the interne**t. The internet is an easy way to find relevant support groups or clubs. One of the best things about the internet is that it allows us to find like-minded people, both in real life and online. Social networks are also a good way to keep up or make plans with friends and family. Don’t use online contact to replace real life contact, but do take advantage of it!
3. **Know what’s available.** Look into what resources are offered in your area. Perhaps there’s an accessible transportation service, or an organization that can help with assistive devices, that would make it easier for you to get around.
4. **Focus on what you enjoy.** Make this easy on yourself — plan to do things you enjoy! You don’t have to constantly embark on new adventures. If what you really like to do is watch action movies, then invite a friend who also enjoys them to join you.
5. **You don’t necessarily have to leave the house.** Getting out is a good thing, but you can enjoy the company of friends and family at home, too.

Wildrose Polio Support Society member Marion Chomik shares story at annual event

Marion Chomik, a polio survivor and member of our Wildrose Polio Support Society, recently participated in a panel discussion about polio.

This was part of an annual History of Medicine event held by the University of Alberta Hospital. The focus this year was on polio, and featured discussions of lived experience and a presentation about the epidemic in the Edmonton region.

Historian Stephen Mawdsley of the University of Bristol spoke specifically of Western Canada's fight against polio before the vaccine was discovered.

MODC was represented by Brandon MacLean, who set up a booth and brought information for attendees.

Thanks to Marion for sharing her story, and to Brandon for helping to spread the word about our services.

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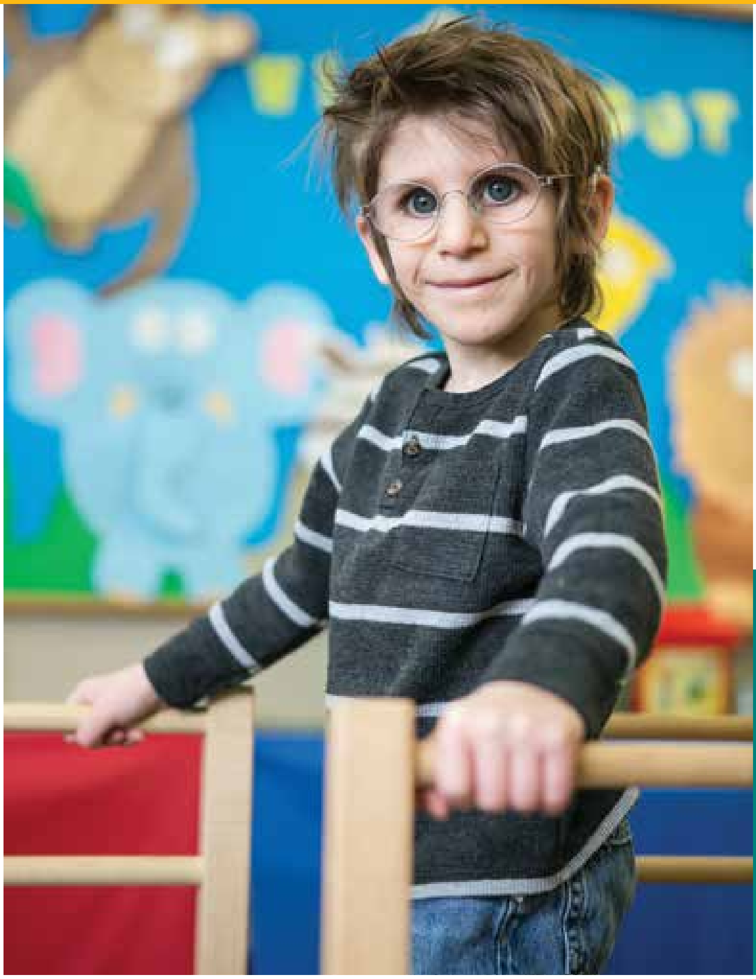

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Charitable Registration Number: 10788 3928 RR0001

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 SUPPORT GROUPS

Association Polio Quebec
3500 Decarie Blvd., Suite 219A
Montreal, QC H4A 3J5
Contact:
Roxanne Gauvreau
Toll Free: 1-877-765-4672
Fax: 514–489–7678
association@polioquebec.org
www.polioquebec.org

Lethbridge & Area
Contact: Terry Price
Tel: 403-752-4667

Post-Polio Network (Manitoba) Inc.
c/o SMD Self-Help Clearing House
Suite 204, 825 Sherbrook St.
Winnipeg, MB R3A 1M5
Contact: Charlene Craig
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 Regina
825 McDonald St.
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Wildrose Polio Support Society
132 Warwick Road NW
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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!

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Name: ______________________ E-mail Address: ______________________

Address: ______________________ City: __________ Province: ________ Postal Code: __________

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

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