



# ACTS OF GREATNESS

THE CAMPAIGN TO HELP END MS



# MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDATION CHAIR

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Acts of Greatness gives families, researchers and people living with multiple sclerosis (MS) more than just hope; our campaign is a promise to fuel progress. Simply put, Acts of Greatness exists to accelerate research & discovery, improve the lives of those living with MS and propel us closer to finding solutions for this complex and unpredictable disease.

Canada has the highest rate of MS in the world, with an average of 12 Canadians diagnosed with MS everyday, MS is Canada's disease which is why we as a Foundation Board have agreed to take a leadership role in contributing to the success of this \$75 million dollar campaign that is creating a better world for those affected by MS, here in Canada and around the globe.

With \$72 million raised to date, let's take a moment to celebrate and reflect on the collective impact we have had in moving the needle for those connected to MS. We are nearing the finish line now and have much to celebrate as we continue to inspire others to act and support the remaining \$3 million of our important campaign target. What will your next Act of Greatness be?



**"Let's take a moment to celebrate and reflect on the collective impact we have made"**

# RESEARCH ACCELERATION

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## Investing in Promising Research

We will not experience a world without MS if we do not continue to invest in critical research. In the past five years, Health Canada has approved eight new therapeutics for the treatment of MS and submissions have been filed to approve one more. MS drug approvals are only possible when an existing body of research exists to support potential safety and efficacy for future treatments. Thanks to you and our Acts of Greatness supporters we are privileged to be investing in the most promising MS research including over 400 research projects that will continue to: advance treatment & care, enhance well-being, bring us closer to preventing MS and allow us to understand and halt disease progression.

## The International Progressive MS Alliance

The International Progressive MS Alliance (the Alliance) - founded in 2012 - is a growing multi-organizational group that brings together the world's leading experts to put an end to progressive MS. As one of the founding and managing members of the Alliance, we have continued to maintain a leadership seat at the table, contributing over \$3 million to the initiative of which over \$800 thousand was raised through the Acts of Greatness Campaign, thanks to donor support.

Among the many accomplishments of this international group we are proud to highlight the establishment of the Alliance's two International Drug Discovery Collaborative Research Networks that are seeking to identify breakthrough treatments for progressive MS. These are first-of-their-kind large-scale global networks bringing together leading minds from MS research institutions from around the world in order to drive innovation and expedite results. These networks represent an investment of over €8 million in research funding.

- One network is developing a drug discovery platform to identify compounds that can protect and repair the brain.
- Another network is focused on preventing brain damage in MS through new understanding of how the innate immune process affects progression and identifying drug candidates.

# RESEARCH ACCELERATION CTD.

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## Canadian MS Progression Cohort

Also referred to as CanProCo, the Canadian Prospective Cohort to Understand Progression in People Living with MS is a unique \$10 million initiative, bringing together nearly 50 leading MS researchers from various disciplines across Canada. Generously funded in-part by Acts of Greatness donors, through a collaborative effort, researchers hope to understand why some people progress in their MS while others do not. The research team seeks to understand the risk factors and markers of MS progression, in turn improving the lives of people living with MS in Canada and around the world.

The research initiative which kicked off in 2018 under the leadership of Dr. Jiwon Oh, Director of the BARLO MS Program at St. Michael's hospital in Toronto, has recruited over 90 per cent of the 1,000 research participants that will be followed over five years.

In addition to uncovering insights about MS disease progression and disease management, the research and data collection is also revealing new learnings into the health economics of MS. By better understanding the economic outcomes of MS including measures such as productivity (e.g. absenteeism from work) we can use data to better advocate for increased MS research funding and legislation that can help create positive change in the lives of people with MS.

## Fast Forward Research Translation Program

Over the last few decades, pharmaceutical companies have shifted their focus to invest in later-stage clinical research while government funding agencies continue to pour funds into early academic discovery research. The result has been an ever-widening funding gap in the research and development pipeline between lab-based research and clinical trials, which has caused the discovery of new treatments to fall behind. Organizations like the MS Society of Canada and the National MS Society (U.S.) have risen to the occasion of bridging this gap by advancing new funding models with a goal of de-risking drug discovery and accelerating the development of new treatments for MS through Fast Forward grants. Most recently, through an Acts of Greatness Fast Forward grant, Dr. Fang Liu, a Senior Scientist at Toronto's CAMH, has filed patents and is investigating promising compounds with her eyes set on bringing them to market to benefit the progressive MS community.

# EMPOWERING THE MS COMMUNITY

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## endMS National Training Program

To accelerate MS research, we need to ensure we have brilliant scientists to lead the way. This philosophy is what drives the MS Society to invest heavily in our next generation of MS researchers through the endMS National Training Program (NTP).

The NTP is composed of two initiatives: the annual endMS Summer School and the Scholar Program for Researchers IN Training (SPRINT). These programs engage and support the brightest scientists in Canada, cementing their interest in uncovering the mysteries of multiple sclerosis.

Generous Acts of Greatness donors are to thank for providing sustainable funding for this critical program that contributes to building a talent pipeline of future MS researchers.

## endMS Scholars Program for Researchers in Training (SPRINT)

An impressive 54 students have been funded through Acts of Greatness and have participated in our year-long intensive endMS SPRINT program, a collaborative, mentor-based catalyst program for graduate students and post-doctoral/clinical fellows to accelerate and support their journey as MS researchers. These SPRINTers were selected through a competitive call for applications that sought to identify the most promising young minds in the country. SPRINT trainees were given the unique opportunity to work in small, interdisciplinary groups of students from across Canada on an MS-focused research study that is typically outside of their field of primary interest. Our SPRINT trainees have built connections with peers, learned about the importance of collaborative research and have exchanged research ideas, while working closely with a senior researcher who mentored them throughout the process on a rigorous project.

To deepen each trainee's level of engagement within the MS field, they each participate in two consecutive MS Summer Schools (see following page) where they participate in knowledge translation and have special access to learning workshops and professional development to set them up for long-term research success.

# EMPOWERING THE MS COMMUNITY CTD

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Impressively 59 out of our 90 SPRINT alumni remain actively involved in the program through participating, supporting, and promoting the endMS Training Program. These alumni have served as mentors, members of the endMS National Training Program committees, and have participated in summer schools as volunteers, presenters and workshop leaders. Our alumni have made vast contributions to MS research and have received honours and awards including the prestigious Canada Research Chair.

## endMS Summer School

240 endMS Summer School participants have been funded through Acts of Greatness and have had the opportunity to participate in a one-week interactive education program, enhancing their knowledge and skills in MS research. Summer School areas of focus - which are identified annually have included themes such as: The Biology of Attack and Repair in MS, Environmental and Lifestyle Factors Associated with MS and Moving MS Research Forward through Clinical and Biomedical Partnerships. The focus alternates between basic research one year and clinical & population health research the next. Diverse learning opportunities exist for Summer School participants including lecture-based plenary sessions, facilitated workshops, and opportunities to interact with people affected by MS. Summer School involves an interdisciplinary agenda that strives to offer participants the most comprehensive understanding of MS.

## Notable Alumni - Dr. Craig Moore, Canada Research Chair

Dr. Craig Moore, a SPRINT alumnus and Tier 2 Canadian Research Chair in Neuroscience and Brain Repair at Memorial University in Newfoundland, is at the forefront of MS research. After being accepted into the SPRINT program in 2012 and attending two endMS Summer Schools, Dr. Moore became a mentor for a new cohort of SPRINT trainees and distinguished himself as a dedicated researcher in his own right.

Today Dr. Moore is collaborating with world-leading MS experts to understand the role of a type of white blood cell known as B cells in MS. "I want people with progressive MS and their families to know that there are people out there working hard to find therapies for progressive MS."

# IMPROVING LIVES

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## The MS Knowledge Network

Knowledge is power. In 2016 the MS Society launched the MS Knowledge Network: the Society's hub of knowledge and expert navigators, providing consistent, quality MS information and support for anyone in Canada. Funded by Acts of Greatness donors, MS Navigators provide the MS community with trusted information on all aspects of life with MS via phone, email, social media channels and live web chat. Over 25 thousand individuals have accessed the MS Knowledge Network looking for support in a variety of areas including:

- Sourcing reliable information about multiple sclerosis and allied conditions
- MS symptom management
- News about accessible programs and services across Canada
- Making sense of advances in MS research
- Guides and online resources for everyday use, e.g. how to apply for CPP, how to talk to children about MS
- Help navigating local health and community services
- Practical assistance finding income and employment support, financial planning
- and more!

For those looking to navigate MS resources more independently, the Knowledge Network also includes a web-based library composed of hundreds of trusted and validated MS articles. The library is hosted on the MS Society of Canada's website and is accessible 24/7.

Advancements in our level of understanding about MS and disease progression have swelled over the years. Contrary to what we know now, people living with MS used to be told to reserve their energy and avoid exercising, women were warned against childbearing and therapeutics to prevent disease progression did not exist. The MS Knowledge Network is a reliable, central resource for all those affected by MS to stay current on all aspects of the disease, empowering those living with MS to live their best lives.

"I appreciated the support and honesty that I received. I am newly diagnosed and struggling with the financial burden of MS - finding it difficult to maintain employment and pay for treatment, etc. The MS Navigator helped guide me through options that I didn't know I had" - Anonymous MS Knowledge Network User

# MS KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

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**Top  
Navigation Topic**  
Quality of life support



**Accessible**

via phone, email,  
social media,  
live web chat and online library



**Languages Supported:**  
English  
French



**25,000+**  
**Canadians**

have received support  
through the MS Knowledge Network



**10**

Expert navigators  
available 60 hours  
each week

**90%**

of users were  
"very satisfied"  
with their  
experience



# MEASURING PROGRESS

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We are building on momentous progress toward a world free of multiple sclerosis and along our journey we are supporting Canadians affected by MS by providing critical programs & services and by funding the most promising research.

Thanks to our Acts of Greatness donors and volunteers, we are offering the MS community more than hope. Below are a few examples of our progress.

IMPACT GOALS	ACTIVITY	OUTCOMES
Advance Treatment & Care	International MS Alliance Founding Member	Established two Alliance-led global drug discovery networks
Enhance Well-Being	Launched Canada's first and only MS navigation Knowledge Network	Supported and empowered over 25,000 individuals through navigation
Understand & Halt Disease Progression	endMS National Training Program	240 Summer School participants and 54 SPRINTers funded
Prevent MS	Investment in research projects that demystify the causes of MS and address prevention	10 MS Prevention research projects valued at over \$3M being carried out in 2022

# NEXT STEPS

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Thank you for your commitment to Acts of Greatness. We are at an exciting juncture of our campaign and have surpassed 96 percent of our \$75 million fundraising goal. As we near our campaign finish line it is critical for each of us to take action and finish the campaign on a high note. What will your next Act of Greatness be?



## **Make a Gift**

We would be grateful for your consideration of a campaign gift renewal or upgrade and would be pleased to discuss a gift designation that will be most meaningful to you and your family.



## **Introduce us to your Network**

As Foundation Board members and ambassadors of the MS Society of Canada, you are poised to educate others about MS and help them relate to our important cause. We welcome the opportunity to meet with your network to inspire their support of Acts of Greatness.



## **Host an Event**

By hosting an event of any size, whether in-person or virtual, you create an opportunity to draw individuals closer to our cause. The MS Society can support you by providing speakers and consulting.



## **Make an Ask**

We would be pleased to support and assist you in approaching your network to discuss making a campaign donation. We would be pleased to provide consult, prospect research, written proposals, presentations and more.

# THANK YOU

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Because of the generosity and tremendous effort put forth by you and members of the MS Society of Canada community, we are poised to reach our \$75 million Acts of Greatness campaign target in 2022. Here is what we have left to accomplish:



## RESEARCH

- Support the most promising MS Research addressing: Therapy & Clinical Tool Development, Cause & Risk Factors, Symptom Management, Quality of Life, Repair in MS, Mechanisms of Progression and more



## BUILD CAPACITY

- Support 49 students who will become the next generation of MS researchers, from across Canada, participate in the 2022 endMS National Training Program



## REMOVE BARRIERS

- Support income security for those affected by MS disability through the MS Knowledge Network
- Provide navigation for those seeking professional health services as well as programs & services in their areas

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada community has been demonstrating Acts of Greatness for more than 74 years. Acts of Greatness have led to improved quality of life for all those affected by MS. Let's continue this legacy of progress and inspire progress for years to come.

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