Thank you

A salute to our volunteers

As we look at the impact of our work in 2015-16, it is important to recognize and say a huge thank you to thousands of Saskatchewan volunteers who contributed their time and talent.

Our organization’s vision is to make a world where no Canadian fears cancer and volunteers are instrumental to that work. Reducing the fear of cancer begins with preventing it through education and advocacy for healthier public policy. Across Saskatchewan volunteers helped with seminars and workshops, like our hugely successful Spice Up Your Life healthy eating series. And volunteers lent their voices to move us forward on issues like underage tanning, tobacco control, and improved palliative care.

Reducing the fear of cancer comes through continuing to better understand the more than 200 diseases that we call cancer, creating new ways to prevent, slow, and even reverse it through research. Saskatchewan volunteers fund research and keep the faith that science will prevail against cancer, though the challenge dwarfs the most ambitious of humanity’s projects.

Reducing the fear of cancer is about information and support whenever someone is diagnosed, before they begin treatment, during it, and life afterward. Volunteers across Saskatchewan provide referrals to quality information and participate in programs that match people with others who have gone through a similar cancer experience. Our volunteer drivers logged thousands of kilometers bringing people to treatment and safely home afterward.

Reducing the fear of cancer also means helping Saskatchewan people with low incomes to cover travel and accommodation costs for treatment. In the last year we expanded our support to cover some exceptional needs usually related to end-of-life through our small Compassionate Care program. When families caring for loved ones diagnosed as palliative exhaust other means of financial support, we provide modest financial support for a range of needs.

Finally, volunteers make these programs and all of our other work possible through fundraising and awareness throughout the year.

To our volunteers across this province, thank you. Cancer will be beaten.

Keith Karasin,  Don Hansen, Vice Chair
Chief Executive Officer  National Board Representative, and Treasurer
Canadian Cancer Society Saskatchewan  Canadian Cancer Society Regina

Canadian Cancer Society Community Report: Saskatchewan 2015-16
Spotlight on Vaidehee Lanke, a researcher in the making

“Why do so many people in the world devote their lives to science?” This was one of the many questions that sparked Vaidehee Lanke’s natural curiosity in science and research back in Grade 8 at Montgomery School. She was 1 of 30 students who entered her very first science competition, the Sanofi BioGENEius Challenge Canada (SBCC). Her project involved studying the ingredients of lip balm because of the number of people who use it regularly.

Fast forward to 2014 when Vaidehee had an opportunity to connect with Dr Troy Harkness, faculty member and researcher in the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology. As a result, she was invited to complete a student research internship at the U of S where she worked alongside Dr Harkness and his team on Canadian Cancer Society-funded research. That project is studying multiple drug resistance in breast cancer chemotherapy. Working with Dr Harkness has been a rewarding experience for Vaidehee. She received hands-on experience and essential skills needed to work in the research field.

Vaidehee is further motivated by the fact that 2 out of 5 Canadians are expected to develop cancer in their lifetime, and 1 out of 4 die from it. She recognizes that “cancer not only affects the lives of those individuals and their families, but it affects the entire society.” Ultimately, her hope is that one day there will be a potential solution to cure the world of all cancers.

As a Grade 10 student at Aden Bowman, she believes the opportunity she received should be offered to other students to help create the next generation of oncologists, medical researchers and scientists. “It is absolutely essential that opportunities be given to other high school students. An intern today is a part of the cancer solution tomorrow,” says Vaidehee. She says her time with Dr Harkness was an opportunity of a lifetime and hopes that more researchers will follow suit and help open their doors to young scientists.
Stopping cancer before it starts

To stop cancer before it starts, we filled 2015 with more than 100 research-based educational presentations to more than 10,000 students, health professionals and other Saskatchewan residents from Ahtahkakoop First Nation to Kelliher High and everywhere in between.

Helping people understand cancer risk factors can have far-reaching impact by helping influence personal health and building an understanding of the issues that policy-makers face and need to address to protect future generations. For example, our Drop Dead Gorgeous tan-free campaign saw 2,461 youth participate in having their photo taken to reveal the damage brought on by sun and indoor tanning. In 2015/2016, we held 51 presentations to educate 3,702 people on the dangers of sun and ultraviolet ray exposure.

That public education effort in tandem with years of relentless advocacy with municipal, local and federal politicians led directly to new regulations that came into effect November 1, 2015 banning artificial tanning for people under age 18 in Saskatchewan.

Jennifer Rainville’s story has helped influence public policy

“I started tanning at age 18. In 2003, I got a part-time job at a tanning salon. We were expected to read pro-tanning literature at work and, as an employee at the salon, I was able to tan for free.

During my peak tanning months, I would tan about 3 times a week. I followed all of the rules, but after 10 years of tanning beds, I realized there was no safe way to tan. I had a few moles removed in August 2009. My oldest daughter was 15 months old when I got the call from the doctor’s office. I was nervous and curious, but never thought it could be cancer. When I got to his office, he showed me the report and the words ‘early invasive melanoma’ stuck out. I started to cry.

I had no idea what melanoma meant. At my appointment with the plastic surgeon, I was reassured that the outlook was good, but they would have to make sure the cancer had not spread.

I am now covered in scars from having moles removed and am currently waiting to have more moles taken out. All of this could have been prevented. My story is a classic example of how years of tanning bed use can cause a deadly cancer that is completely preventable.”

Thanks to voices like Jennifer’s and many others, the Canadian Cancer Society continues to move forward with more education and advocacy that will stop cancer before it starts.
Engagement

Volunteering to build thriving survivors, thriving communities

Brian Cottrell, a cancer survivor and longtime Canadian Cancer Society volunteer, is grateful for the people who supported him during and after his cancer journey.

That’s why he has been volunteering with the Canadian Cancer Society for the past 13 years – so that no one should have to fight cancer alone and to help create more thriving survivor stories like his.

“I appreciated what people had done for me. I had just received the gift of life so I needed to do something to give back. The Canadian Cancer Society gave me that opportunity,” Brian says. “I can’t tell you enough how important it was to me to be able to rub shoulders with other survivors. People do survive cancer and more and more people all the time are surviving – not just surviving, but thriving.”

Through the Canadian Cancer Society, Brian participates in Relay For Life and was a member of the Regina Relay For Life committee for 11 years. Brian has also served on the board of the Regina unit and the Saskatchewan Division board of directors. “The Canadian Cancer Society is a gift to survivors, to those going through treatment and their families,” Brian says.

This gift is made possible by the generosity of donors and volunteers, who, like Brian, are drawn to the Canadian Cancer Society because they have a connection to cancer. Brian encourages Canadian Cancer Society supporters to continue giving in whatever way they can.

“If you’ve had somebody go through a cancer journey, if you’ve lost a loved one to cancer, keep working on their behalf and help make a difference,” Brian says. “You help us build stronger communities of support here at home, in Saskatchewan. Communities that are united in the fight against cancer – because together, we thrive.”
Information and Support

Getting to Treatment

We provided 11,842 rides to people going through cancer.

Our volunteer drivers logged 74,774 km.

Financial Assistance

We provided 1,183 nights of accommodation.

We provided $200,000 in funding to patients and caregivers to get to treatment.

Peer Support

We provided 314 temporary breast forms to women.

We provided 200 telephone support matches.

Children’s Caring Kits

We provided 40 caring kits to children with cancer.

We provided $10,000 in funding to Camp Circle O’ Friends.

Information Specialists

Our Cancer Information Specialists helped 980 people in Saskatchewan.

Living Well Retreats

We held 5 community retreats and 406 people attended.

Compassionate Financial Assistance

We provided $11,400 of funding for end-of-life care goals.

5,500 people in Saskatchewan are diagnosed with cancer each year.
Partnerships

Spice Up Your Life events, brought to you by Safeway

For over 10 years, Safeway and their employees have generously supported the Canadian Cancer Society.

Safeway employee contributions are going towards Spice Up Your Life, a series of free events that invite the public to learn about their health in a fun and interactive setting. The events feature healthy cooking demos, exercise experts and dietitians or health educators. In addition to the Safeway employee contributions, Safeway assists with pharmaceutical speakers and providing Safeway Compliments products.

Conexus helps cancer patients get to treatment

Conexus Credit Union members and employees, like so many Saskatchewan people, have been touched by cancer and understand all too well the challenges cancer patients and their families face. Getting to and from treatment is one of those challenges.

A generous gift of $25,000 from Conexus to the Society’s Getting to Treatment program will help give cancer patients and their loved ones one less thing to worry about.

As a credit union, it is part of the Conexus DNA – the cooperative principle of people helping people and giving back to community, which is spread across the province, from LaRonge to Coronach and from Moosomin to Central Butte.

Crane continues its support of the Society’s work with $16,000 donation

Nathan Basey and Fay Peterson nominated the Canadian Cancer Society to receive a donation through one of the charitable trusts their employer manages for the third year in a row.

The Canadian Cancer Society has received more than $40,000 from the Crane Fund for Widows and Children to date.

The Crane Fund for Widows and Children contributes to charitable organizations that provide assistance in communities where Crane Co. and its subsidiaries do business in the United States and Canada.
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