

# THE CANCER FIGHT

THE CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY PROVIDES A MUCH-NEEDED BOOST TO THOUSANDS BY CONNECTING COMMUNITIES, MOBILIZING FUNDS AND EMPHASIZING PREVENTION

Such demonstrations as wearing the Society's daffodil pin in April reminds people touched by cancer that they are not alone.

FOR MORE THAN 70 YEARS, THE Canadian Cancer Society has been engaging communities and leading the fight against cancer. It started in 1938 with new information on the early warning signs of cancer. Today, the Society remains relevant, current and meaningful to Canadians by focusing on its mission to eradicate cancer and enhance the lives of people living with cancer, while delivering support services, funding leading-edge research, and working to prevent cancer before it even starts.

"Being national," says Ron Kuehl, vice-president of revenue development, "we have a broader platform to do some things others can't as they may focus on one particular cancer. Our organization deals with all forms of cancer, so we can develop advocacy to help everyone."

However, it's a challenge, he says, to remain one of the top fundraising organizations when the cancer fundraising landscape has changed so drastically. At its beginning, the Society was one of only a few cancer charities. Today, there are more than 200 not-for-profit organizations fighting specific types of cancers or providing targeted services.

With 95 per cent of its funding coming from individual and corporate donors, it means the Society can be independent



**Canadian  
Cancer  
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and focus on leading-edge research to support its advocacy work with all levels of government.

Being pan-Canadian and donor-funded enables the Society to work with federal and provincial agencies addressing everything from enhanced national caregiver strategies to the delivery of health care at the provincial level, including the Society's B.C. initiative in Victoria banning the use of tanning beds by people under 18.

"We excel at connecting with individuals and corporations at the community level across B.C. and all of Canada," says Kuehl. "This allows us to stay connected to British Columbians so that they can understand the significant impact their gifts will make when given through the Society. They realize that being involved with the Society means that are immediately helping families dealing with cancer."

This ability to connect with people likely explains why the Society, despite its size,

remains a grassroots organization. In B.C. alone, the organization is assisted by some 20,000 volunteers who are making a difference in every community in the province.

"Each one of us knows someone whose life has been touched by cancer," says Kuehl. "One of the most important messages we want to convey to people is they are not alone on their cancer journey."

## SUPPORT

The Society provides support to help families affected by cancer and enhance their capacity to thrive. The Society offers a toll-free cancer information line (1.888.939.3333) and website ([www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)). People anywhere can access a detailed database of information that is up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive. Additionally, through its programs, the Society endeavours to reach people of all ages, genders, cultures, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds.

Barbara Kaminsky, CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society B.C. and Yukon, says that when people have to travel to receive cancer treatment, there can be geographic and financial burdens.

The Society supports these people by assisting with transportation and providing lodges in Vancouver, Kelowna and Victoria where people can stay at a very reasonable >



# THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE FIGHT

Thank you to our partners whose support made this year's Daffodil Month such a great success. We look forward to seeing even more Canadians wearing the daffodil pin in 2012. With your help, we'll get there.



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**Left: Northerners will have better access to treatment when the Kordyban Lodge is built in Prince George. Below: Camp Goodtimes gives children with cancer a fun and safe week of horsing around at no cost.**



cost while getting treatment for cancer. A new lodge is being built in Prince George to help people in the North access treatment. It's more than a roof and a bed; the lodges provide additional support services to the people who most need them.

"It ensures they get access to wellness programs while they are there. We look at what we – and they – can do to maximize their health and reduce their subsequent cancer risks. We offer nutrition, information, smoking cessation and relaxation," says Kaminsky. "One way to eradicate cancer is to stop it before it starts. Prevention speaks to that. Prevention also speaks to enhancing the quality of life. People in our lodges learn how to maximize their chances of survival. Even though British Columbians may be more health conscious than other Canadians, we know that as a society we have more work to do to empower people to adopt a healthier lifestyle and to become post-cancer thrivers."

## PREVENTION

Kaminsky wants everyone to remember two words: prevention works. In fact, half of all cancers can be prevented, and she wants to take that message to every British Columbian.

"Look at the devastation; the number of people diagnosed; the impact on the family; the health-care costs, the economic loss to the family," she says. "Even with the best treatment possible and even if all cancers were curable, people would rather not get cancer to begin with. If we work on it incrementally, we can reduce the rate of cancer." Prevention works, she says, because it addresses risk factors and causation before cancer develops.

"Take smoking for example," she says. "Up to half the population used to smoke and it was considered normal. Today in B.C. about 12 per cent of adults smoke, the lowest rate in the country. This is because people understand that smoking causes cancer and heart disease."

## RESEARCH

Because the Society is national, it has the unique and enviable ability to hand-pick which research to invest in. It isn't limited by geography or cancer type.

"When a family member is diagnosed with cancer, principally there's one thing they are interested in – healing and getting better," says Kuehl. "For them, the origin of the research is less important than overcoming cancer. Our strategy is to invest in leading-edge research on a pan-Canadian basis, which will impact the patient at the bedside."

Kaminsky adds that more research into the causes of cancer will lead to more prevention. It's why the B.C. division established the chair in the primary prevention of cancer at UBC's School of Population and Public Health, a position held by Dr. Carolyn Gotay.

"In our mind, it's a three-step process," says Kaminsky of the wide-ranging reach of research. "The first was recruiting the chair. Now we are focusing our efforts to bring in other researchers and provide public education to reduce individual risks and inform policy-makers thus protecting the whole population. Our third step will be to have a physical building as a go-to place for cancer prevention. It will be unique."

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Of course, significant resources are required to fund the Society's prevention, research and support programs. Each of the organization's three main community-based fundraising efforts reflects its philosophy of local engagement and there are many ways for individuals and corporations to get involved in their communities where they can make a difference right at home.

Relay For Life is a unique, empowering and unforgettable experience that celebrates survivors, remembers loved ones and mobilizes communities over a 12-hour period. Relay For Life is held in communities across the country and raised \$52 million in Canada last year.

"The communities engage volunteers. These are local events where people can fight back. Relay taps into the energy of each community and engages people in the fight against cancer. The funds are invested in our mission," says Kuehl.

Cops for Cancer is another community-based event involving first responders who peddle with a purpose. This event, which can be sponsored by a business or organization, raises funds for pediatric research and care, including supporting Camp Goodtimes. The camp provides children and teens with cancer with the ability to change their lives, with many campers taking on challenges and building friendships that empower them for their cancer journeys.

Every April, the Society undertakes a series of activities for its symbolic Daffodil Campaign. Last year, B.C. developed a daffodil pin as part of a pilot project. This year, the Society introduced the pin across the country. It was worn in every community across Canada as a universal symbol of hope in the fight against cancer. Corporations can join the movement and get involved in next year's campaign by becoming a distributor or sponsor. All the money raised goes into one of the three main streams of the Society: support, research or prevention.

"At the Canadian Cancer Society, most of our funds come from donors in every single community," says Kaminsky, who came from the publicly-funded health-care system to the top job at the Society's B.C. and Yukon division 17 years ago. "It is an incredible responsibility to use the money wisely and I am aware of it every single day."

*This promotional feature was prepared for the Canadian Cancer Society by BC Business magazine's Special Advertising Features Dept. Writer: Corey Van't Haaff. For information, contact VP of corporate features John Cochrane at 604-299-7311. Email: jcochrane@canadawide.com*

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# RELAY FOR LIFE

## Cancer is everybody's business

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