



# MS Read-A-Thon

A newsletter for Alberta schools in MS Read-A-Thon



## MS Quick Questions for your students

### 30 years of reading

The Read-A-Thon program is in its 30th year, and what a celebration it is! Over the past 30 years the MS Read-A-Thon has delivered numerous assemblies educating students and teachers on what MS is and the effects of MS. We continue to try and raise dollars for those people affected by MS and for MS Research to hopefully, one day, END MS!

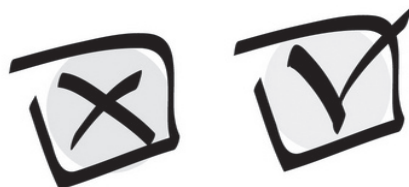
Unfortunately, in Alberta more than 11,000 people have MS and Canada has one of the highest incidences (new cases) in the world, 240 cases per 100,000 population (U of Calgary 2005 study). The MS Society is able to provide support and education to these Albertans across the province.

- ? What does “multiple sclerosis” mean? Many Scars
- ? How many Canadians have multiple sclerosis? 55,000 – 75,000 people
- ? People are most likely to be diagnosed with MS between which ages? 15-40
- ? What does multiple sclerosis attack? The Central Nervous System
- ? What is the name of the coating that protects our nerves? Myelin
- ? Who is more likely to be diagnosed with MS – women or men? Women are three times as likely to develop MS as men
- ? Name 3 symptoms associated with MS? Blurred vision, fatigue, slurred speech, problems with balance & co-ordination, numbness or ‘pins & needles’ sensation in parts of the body, stiffness in the muscles, memory loss

### Can you find the following words:

- Nerve
- Brain
- Myelin
- Brain
- Scar
- Messages
- Spine
- Cure

G	S	C	U	R	E	K	M
Y	B	F	L	S	S	W	Y
N	E	R	T	E	P	C	E
E	S	C	A	R	A	N	L
V	P	D	B	I	M	E	I
U	I	Q	J	R	N	R	N
W	N	P	G	D	E	V	A
M	E	S	S	A	G	E	S



# Statistics

- MS 30327** — Total number of students the MS Read-A-Thon presented to

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- MS 5,752** — Total number of students that participated in 2006/2007

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- MS 154** — Total number of schools that participated

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- MS \$378,621.90** — Total amount raised in Alberta

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- MS 3,847,807** — Total number of minutes read by students in Alberta

## Top 10 schools fundraising and reading in 2006/2007

### Top Schools by Funds Raised

1. Steffie Woima Elementary School	\$9,502.88
2. Elmer Elson School	\$8,951.53
3. St. Lucy School	\$8,350.48
4. William Reid Elementary School	\$6,942.91
5. Mike Mountain Horse School	\$6,882.66
6. Barrhead Elementary School	\$6,751.56
7. Lochearn Elementary School	\$6,675.45
8. Ecole St. Gerard Catholic School	\$6,586.89
9. Beaverlodge Elementary School	\$6,547.71
10. Queen Elizabeth Elementary School	\$6,496.01

### Top Schools by Amount of Minutes Read

1. St. Lucy School	111,164
2. Beaverlodge Elementary School	100,274
3. Laurier Heights Elementary and Jr. High School	90,086
4. Barrhead Elementary School	86,503
5. Caledonia Park School	86,408
6. Vanier Community Catholic School	82,862
7. Vilna School	77,224
8. Elmer Elson School	75,452
9. St. Basil School	75,215
10. Coloniale Estates School	59,933

## MS Read-A-Thon students surprised to learn teacher has MS

*Diagnosed a week after her 18th birthday*

Hard work and a little beginner's luck helped push C.P. Blakely school to the number eighth spot in Alberta for MS Read-A-Thon fundraising. So far the K-5 school in Sylvan Lake has seen 81 students raise a grand total of \$5680 and log a total reading time of 32,317 minutes!

"We are very proud of their success during their first year," said Sherri Taylor, Senior Coordinator, MS Read-A-Thon. "I am amazed at the schools participation, and the total number of minutes read for a 3 week period."

Teacher Chandra McNabb's grade four class has led the pack, raising an impressive \$1056.

Brandon Tweed, one of McNabb's students, was the school's top fundraiser, bringing in \$400. Although pizza played a large factor in motivating McNabb's students initially, they had some additional motivation when they learned that someone very close to them has MS: their teacher.

**"What I do is important and I know that I'm making a difference."**

McNabb, now 25, was diagnosed with MS a week after her 18th birthday while still in high school. Like many young people diagnosed with MS, the news came at a time when she was a physically active, vivacious teenager, who especially enjoyed figure skating. She even had dreams of becoming a figure skating instructor and getting her kinesiology degree.

McNabb began experiencing numbness in her legs and face and was gripped constantly by a strange tiredness. An MRI later revealed that she had relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis.

Experiencing symptoms such as loss of balance and extreme tiredness, McNabb had to change her career plans. She liked working with kids and so decided to become a teacher. "Teaching is so rewarding," says McNabb. "What I do is important and I know that I'm making a difference. It gives me a reason to get up in the morning and get going."

"It's refreshing to see someone like Chandra, who has MS, use her experiences with the disease in such a positive way to generate awareness with students and get them involved in a good cause," said Taylor.

*See McNabb - back page...*

# Evaluations

The Alberta Division sent out an evaluation for all schools that participated in 2006/2007. Here is some of the feedback from your school and how we can better the delivery of the Read-A-Thon.

**How did you first become aware of the MS Read-A-Thon?** Most of the schools heard about the program through our mail out. Our mail out goes to all Elementary and Junior High schools in the province of Alberta. We do a spring and fall mail out.

**Have you participated in the MS Read-A-Thon previously?** Majority of schools that answered the questionnaire had participated in previous years with only a select few that had not ever participated.

**What grades in your school participated in the MS Read-A-Thon this year?** This question was answered by selecting the entire student body or partial student body. The answer was split 50/50.

**In addition to being the MS Read-A-Thon contact in your school, what other position do you hold?** Most schools have the librarian in charge of the administration of the MS Read-A-Thon. There are a select few that use the principal/vice principal or secretary.

As your school's MS Read-A-Thon contact the level of responsibility was manageable for majority of the schools to deliver.

**What aspect(s) of the program played an influential part in your decision to participate in the MS Read-A-Thon?** Promotion of Literacy and Public education of MS were the two most popular answers to this question and then the third was the Disability Awareness the MS Society provides.

**Will you participate in the MS Read-A-Thon in the years to come?** Majority of the schools answered yes, with a small percentage that said maybe, and would consider the program every second year. All schools responded participate again.

**What was your impression of the MS Read-A-Thon Print Materials (information pack, student/teacher envelopes, and staffroom, classroom, and awards posters)?** Majority of the schools felt the print materials and information was very effective. There were schools that indicated that these materials were ineffective.

**What element of the MS Read-A-Thon assembly did you find of most value?** Majority of schools felt the explanation of what MS is and the focus of literacy where the two most value aspects of the assembly. The guest speaker with MS was third. The comment was the guest speaker did a great job explaining MS and answering questions.

**What element of the MS Read-A-Thon assembly did you find least effective?** All of it was effective. The comments from schools; would like to incorporate it into other things – as it is “more or less” the same every year. I do appreciate the “kick-off” idea, but some kids did not want to come to the same assembly again. Timing of project. Probably need a new video as most grades have seen this one a number of times. NA – all parts necessary. It focused too long of a time on what MS was and did not give enough explanation as to what the program is. The kids wanted to know about MS but then were super confused about the program.

**How would you evaluate the MS representative who conducted your MS Read-A-Thon assembly?** Majority of the schools felt the Read-A-Thon presenter was excellent.

Majority of the schools felt the length of the MS Read-A-Thon assembly was just the right amount of time. Currently, the assembly is half an hour.

Majority of the schools felt the length of the reading period was just the right amount of time. Currently the reading time is three weeks or 21 days.

**Does your school participate in any other external programs?** Which ones and why? Jump Rope for heart (physical component), Hoops for Heart, Foster parents plan (caring component) Terry Fox run (physical,) the school participates in several programs. They vary from year-to-year as staff and students make different choices. Short Cut to the Cure, Kinsmen skate-a-thons, Unicef campaign, Various community fundraisers for those in need – SPCA, etc., Book fairs, Chocolate selling, Many – academic & physical challenges, art contests, No, school council does more fundraising, We try to choose 1 fundraiser a year. We like to spread our support around as much as possible, Holy Childhood, 30hr Famine, etc. It's important to care about others. It depends on the school dynamic, We are involved in accelerated Reading program (Renaissance Learning), Canadian Hero and great cause, Donations often bring a cause forward, Cookie dough sales, Food bank challenge, Fundraising for the school activities, Pennies for

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## It's not too late to register to celebrate our 30th Anniversary!

It is not too late to sign up and participate in the MS Read-A-Thon. This program is easy to run and leaves a lot of the coordination and logistics to us. All your school needs to do is pick a time to host a ½ hour assembly and start reading that day. The students then read for a 3 week period and the MS Society arranges for a secure pick up of the student/teacher envelopes — which you do not need to count. About 3-4 weeks after your awards will arrive to your school and will be separated by teacher for easy distribution. You will also receive a letter stating the total raised and the total number of minutes read for your school.

## Teachers' conferences

We may be seeing you at your Teacher Conference. This year, the MS Read-A-Thon will be at four conventions throughout the province in the month of February. We are providing information about the Read-A-Thon, how your school can help, client service information and local fundraising information. Come visit us for a chance to win some great prizes!

## ...Evaluations

*continued from page 3*

### When does your school traditionally decide which external program(s) it will support for the school year?

- June of previous year;
- For the most part, decisions have been made during the school year in which they take place;
- Throughout the year;
- At start of year for some. Others are automatically done
- In September;
- In the fall but also if a worthy cause presents itself & we feel it is important to help out.

**How would you evaluate your interaction with the MS Read-A-Thon office?** Majority of the schools indicated that the MS Society Alberta Division provided excellent interaction. Majority of the schools overall rating of the MS Read-A-Thon is excellent.

We recognize that we need to adapt to the changing needs and demands of elementary schools. We would appreciate any other comments or suggestions you might have regarding our program.

## ...McNabb

*continued from page 2*

McNabb's focus is to keep a positive outlook on life and not let MS prevent her from doing the things she loves. To this day she is still highly involved in figure skating as an instructor, although she doesn't attempt too many fancy twirls and spins! She credits her mother for keeping her motivated on a daily basis. "She helps me deal with a lot of my MS issues, just as my job does."

*C.P. Blakely Elementary School participated in the Fall 2006. The MS Society of Canada-Alberta Division wants to thank C.P. Blakely Elementary School for their participation and sharing this story with us.*

- Pledge envelopes are "cluttered", parents complained they were hard to read/understand. Could they be designed more simply?
- Teachers suggested number of pages (rather than # of minutes) would even out differences between younger reader and a mature one.
- Rather than print out your standard envelopes in 21 days, allow schools to make that decision & just leave that column blank for students to write in the date.
- All of our major events occur in the fall - November - so it means that we raise less participation because people are broke.
- You are doing great. I am very grateful for the opportunity to do the Read-A-Thon each year.
- The students should not read because of the prizes; but I must admit that some of them did and were disappointed that they did not get the ones that they chose. Also, our school is privately funded and we do a lot of fundraising so it is hard to ask the kids & parents for money always.
- We need to push it more.
- The program was very well organized. It was simple to coordinate. Thank you.

Great news! We heard your comments and action is being taken. Alberta Division hosted our first Read-A-Thon presenters Workshop Sept 6th. We hope to improve the delivery of the assembly and take your suggestions to make the MS Read-A-Thon most effective and easy to deliver within your schools!

A big thank you to all schools that participated in our evaluation for this year!



### Are you interested in finding out more about Read-A-Thon? Contact:

Shannon Vecchio  
MS Society of Canada, Alberta Division  
150, 9405 50 St., Edmonton, Alberta T6B 2T4  
Phone: (780) 463-1190 • Fax: (780) 479-1001  
Email: shannon.vecchio@msssociety.ca