

Volunteer

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voice

*Volunteerism in the MS Society of Canada,
Alberta Division & Edmonton Chapter*

MS Society – Alberta Division/Edmonton Chapter
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From 1948 to 2008 *The MS Society's 60th Anniversary*



Lisa Billesberger, Volunteer Coordinator

Although Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is often thought of as a modern disease, it was first described 140 years ago at the University of Paris by neurology professor Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot. As the scientific method became more established the symptoms of MS were characterized, and organized support for MS research and care began to surface.

It was 1946 when Sylvia Lawry, whose brother had been recently diagnosed with MS, placed an advertisement in the New York Times, "MULTIPLE sclerosis. Will anyone recovered from it please communicate with patient". Sylvia did

not succeed in connecting with a cure for MS; however, she did receive numerous letters from other MS patients also seeking hope and this led her to found the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in New York in 1946.

A determined mother living with MS in Montreal, Evelyn Opal was inspired to form a Canadian Chapter when her neurologist told her about the newly formed National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Throughout 1947 and 1948, Evelyn met with Harry Bell, a Montreal engineer who also had MS, with the purpose of establishing a Canadian MS research support society. As a result, the federal charter

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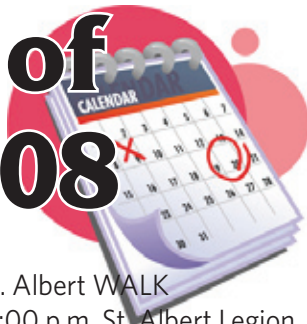


2007 Super Cities WALK for MS Volunteers - Thanks to all of our volunteers for your dedication and commitment through the years!

More stories and volunteer opportunities at www.mssociety.ca/alberta

Our mission: To be a leader in finding a cure for multiple sclerosis and enabling people affected by MS to enhance their quality of life.

Calendar of Events 2008



April 23 – Super Cities WALK for MS – St. Albert WALK
Volunteer Information Night, 7:00 p.m. St. Albert Legion

April 27 – Super Cities WALK for MS, St. Albert, Millennium Park

April 27 - May 3, 2008 – National Volunteer Week

May is MS Awareness MONTH

May 20 – Super Cities WALK for MS, Edmonton –
Volunteer Orientation Night, 6:30 p.m.
MS Society Main Office (150, 9405 50 Street)

May 25 – Super Cities WALK for MS, Edmonton, Rundle Park

May 28 – RONA MS Bike Tour – Volunteer Orientation Night,
6:30 p.m. MS Society Main Office (150, 9405 50 Street)

June 7 & 8 – RONA MS Bike Tour – Leduc to Camrose

Sept. 2008 – The MS Drive For A Cure - Fundraising Golf Tournament

Sept 6 & 7 – RONA MS Bike Tour - Mountain

We are currently accepting volunteer applications for the 2008 Event Season. You can apply via the website www.mssociety.ca/alberta/volunteer.htm, by e-mailing abvolunteers@mssociety.ca or by calling Volunteer Resources at (780) 463-1190 or 1-800-268-7582.

Check us out on-line!

Event Volunteer web pages

- ▶ **St. Albert WALK**
www.mssociety.ca/alberta/volunteer-scwalk-st.albert.htm
- ▶ **Edmonton WALK**
www.mssociety.ca/alberta/volunteer-scwalk-edmonton.htm
- ▶ **RONA MS Bike Tour**
www.mssociety.ca/alberta/volunteer-bike-ms150.htm

Make Your Mark and End MS!

Mona Pattison, Super Cities WALK Manager

This year the Edmonton and St. Albert Super Cities WALKs for MS will see 3,000 participants raise over \$740,000 and registrations and pledges are already coming in fast and furious.



The amazing heights we reach every year would not be possible without our many dedicated volunteers. Thank you for taking a stand against MS and raising funds that will make a difference in the lives of the 11,000 Albertans living with MS. With your help we will end MS!

If you haven't already signed up, we invite you to join us and volunteer at the spring WALKs!

St. Albert WALK	Sunday April 27, 2008
	Millennium Park
Edmonton WALK	Sunday May 25, 2008
	Rundle Park

19th Annual RONA MS Bike Tour – Volunteer, Volunteer, Volunteer!

Keltie Troock, Bike Tours Manager

June 7 and 8, 2008 marks the weekend of the largest MS Bike Tour in Canada – the RONA MS Bike Tour – Leduc to Camrose! This year we are letting even more cyclists register in an effort to raise more money for MS research and services. This means that we will need more hands on deck to make sure that the event runs smoothly. We are now recruiting volunteers for all areas of the Tour. Contact lisa.billesberger@mssociety.ca for more information.



MS Read-A-Thon

Shannon Vecchio, Senior Coordinator,
MS Read-A-Thon

I would like to introduce myself to all volunteers who may not know me: I have recently started working on the Read-A-Thon program and am looking forward to a challenging but rewarding year. Please feel free to stop by or call to talk about possible Read-A-Thon volunteer opportunities or even just to chat. I would also like to introduce everyone to Bosko, the new Read-A-



Thon mascot. He has generously donated his time to grace our new brochures this spring, and he comes all the way from Australia!

Now that the introductions are out of the way, let's take a look back at the Read-A-Thon through the ages since the MS Society is turning 60 this year. The Read-A-Thon started in 1977 as a pilot project at Jack Miner Senior Public School in Scarborough, Ontario. Bosko is not the first mascot for the Read-A-Thon. The Mystery Sleuth was the program's first mascot – a bloodhound dog, the Mystery Sleuth donned a Sherlock Holmes hat as he searched for a cure for the disease.

The mascot then underwent a transformation into a rat – an acronym for Read-A-Thon. Now the official National logo is of three students reading together. In addition to this logo, we are now introducing Bosko the Australian book reader. These mascots have helped to encourage Canadian students to read more than 20 million books and raise over \$40,000,000 in the past 30 years! For more information on the Read-A-Thon please contact **Shannon Vecchio** at **463-1190** or **Shannon.Vecchio@mssociety.ca**. Thanks for helping to end MS!



From 1948 to 2008 The MS Society's 60th Anniversary

Lisa Billesberger, Volunteer Coordinator

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Volunteer VOICE is online!

If you've changed email addresses lately, make sure we know about it. Don't worry if you don't have an email address –we will continue to mail the newsletter to you!

May is MS Awareness MONTH

60th Anniversary

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creating the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada was issued on August 6, 1948. \$50,000 was pledged for MS research over a period of five years, and the first installment was paid to the Montreal Neurological Institute in January 1949.

MS research and viable treatment options have exploded in the last decade and a half. The difference in attitude towards MS is already tangible –Janice Billesberger, who was diagnosed with MS 14 years ago, believes that, "for a disease that once only held dread and a grim prognosis, there are now positive treatments and options for those diagnosed with it. Exciting research is currently underway that leads to excitement and hope for those, who like me, have been impacted by MS".

With the help of its dedicated volunteers –who play pivotal roles in leadership, client services, and fundraising –the MS Society of Canada has been a leader for 60 years in promoting this progress. The MS Society of Canada invested over \$9, 000, 000 towards MS Research in 2005-2006. Furthermore, significant capital is directed towards Client Services to improve the lives of people with MS while they wait for the cure. The MS Society looks forward to the positive changes that present and future MS research and care will bring and thankfully acknowledges the invaluable role that volunteers play in this process.

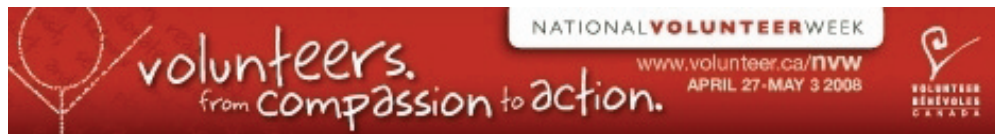
Portrait of a Volunteer

Lisa Billesberger, Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteers are at the grocery store, shushing the screaming kids and hurriedly tossing things into the cart; visiting in continuing care centres; sitting in the crowded lecture hall, studiously listening to the wordy university professor ramble on and on; leading and listening at important meetings all day, every day; and serving-up happiness in the form of liquid caffeine to patrons. These are some of our volunteers and not one of them can be stereotyped into a standard description. Indeed, they really are found everywhere. Despite their differences, however, every volunteer does have one thing in common—they change lives.

From April 27 - May 3 we recognize National Volunteer Week, a week that is specifically set aside for celebrating the thousands of Canadians who altruistically donate their most precious commodity—time—throughout the year. At the

MS Society, we realize that volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Whether they help with administrative duties at the office, at a fundraising event, or in the client service program each volunteer is an integral part of fulfilling the MS Society's mission of finding a cure for MS and, until this is done, enhancing the quality of life of those currently living with MS.



Every volunteer is invaluable, and we appreciate all of our volunteers. We thank you for your past and present volunteering, and sincerely look forward to continuing our relationship with you in the future.

Volunteer Orientation Dates

Super Cities WALK for MS, Edmonton

Tuesday, May 20 at 6:30 p.m.
MS Society Office
150, 9405 50 Street

RONA MS Bike Tour

Wednesday, May 28 at 6:30 p.m.
MS Society Office
150, 9405 50 Street

Update on Client Services

Scott Rattray, Director of Client Services, Edmonton Chapter

The snow is melted and the days are getting warmer, which means it's time to get outside, into the community and involved with the MS Society's programs and services.

On May 5th, there will be a National Education Event titled **The Questions You Have - Answered** at the Chateau Louis Hotel and Conference Centre from 6:30-8:30pm. This will be a great session for persons with MS as well as volunteers of the Edmonton Chapter to attend to learn more about the illness and about current research.

On June 26th the Edmonton Chapter will be hosting its **Celebration in the Park**, which is an annual barbecue to say thank you to our members, volunteers and others involved with the MS Society. The event will run from 12-2pm at Hawrelak Park, Site # 1 and will offer a great meal and superb door prizes.

Cost is \$5 per person.

On a volunteer front, we are still actively recruiting volunteers for our **Friendly Visiting Program**, which offers social interaction to persons living with MS in extended care, assisted living and continuing care settings. If you are able to give an hour of time every couple of weeks to visiting with a person living with MS, please contact Jeannine. Also, Edmonton Chapter's **New Bowling Program** is still in need of volunteers. The program runs every second Monday from 11:30am-1pm at Bonnie Doon Bowling Lanes. Please contact Lisa if you are interested in volunteering for this program.

To register for the aforementioned programs, or to contact Jeannine and Lisa, please call **471-3034**. Thanks and have a great start to summer!