

MS Society Young Adult Committee Members (2020-21)

Sophie Berriault (Co-Chair)



Sophie is a young woman who, following her MS diagnosis, had to end a career in artist management and booking. Always close to this network and eager to make a concrete contribution to the MS Society of Canada's mission, she decided, in 2018, to put her talents and contacts to good use by organizing a concert, the SP Show (MS Show), showcasing Quebec's young artistic scene. In addition to producing \$25,000 in profits, the show generated extensive media coverage for the cause and raised awareness of the disease.

Following the success of the MS Show, a Research Fund was created in Sophie's name. The purpose of this fund is not only to finance research, but also to set up programs and services specifically for young people with MS. Motivated to grow the Sophie Berriault Fund, Sophie committed to raising \$20,000 per year for three years. This fund is tied to a student researcher with whom she will be in contact in order to reduce the gap between researchers and patients.

Sophie also leads the *PS I have MS* social media platform. On Facebook and Instagram, she shares information she likes to call "mind, body and soul" to inform young adults with MS and encourage them to take control of their overall health. She is currently working with the Quebec Chapter of the MS Society on various projects that will launch in 2020. As the recipient of the Outstanding Young Philanthropist Award presented by the Association des professionnels de la philanthropie (AFP) in November 2019, Sophie is more motivated than ever to help ensure that one day we can live in a world free of MS!

Melissa Brake



Melissa has been familiar with MS her whole life. Her Nan was an MS warrior nearly 40 years ago and her cousin is still a warrior today. So, when she was handed those two little letters seven years ago at just 19 years old, she knew the impact it would have on her life.

Melissa experienced her first relapse during the first year of her nursing degree. She lost the ability to speak, and all motor functions on her right side. Through many tears, a lot of hard work and persistence, she is proud to say she is now a Registered Nurse.

MS affects her mentally, physically, and emotionally both personally and professionally every day. She says her circle of support, and the MS Society of Canada are what keep her fighting, "I truly believe there is power in numbers and I am hopeful that one day MS will be a mere memory for us all." She is honoured to represent the MS community on a national level from Meadows, Newfoundland. Her goal is to help change the narrative surrounding MS as she believes that together, we can truly make a difference.

Paige B



Paige is a registered social worker in Calgary, Alberta. Most of her work is in the field of mental health working with individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. She is passionate about fostering community connectivity and creating safe and accessible spaces for people to thrive. In her free time she enjoys travelling, making crafts, and going on adventures.

Mallory Coates



Mallory is a licenced funeral director and embalmer in Regina, Saskatchewan, as well as owner of a small local business with her husband. She enjoys spending time with the newest addition to her family, a Staffordshire Terrier named Mr. Hank and being outdoors. Although she was able to accept her MS diagnosis in 2016, it wasn't until she attended the MS Society of Canada's MS Can Be Summit in 2019 that she really began to fully embrace the fact that she has MS and to truly understand what living with MS means to her. In her words, "I have discovered the importance of telling my story and will continue to encourage others to do the same."

Candice Colwell



MS chose Candice 13 years ago, forcing her to be stronger than she could have ever imagined. It has transformed Candice, making her stronger and more powerful. Candice has become an advocate for further research, people living with MS, and for vulnerable populations. This is Candice's third year being a part of the organizing committee for WAMS in Halifax and she is a 12-year veteran of the MS Walk.

When Candice is not busy kicking butt as an MS warrior, she works in the insurance industry and holds the highly coveted Chartered Insurance Professional designation. Candice holds a degree from Dalhousie University where she received a BSc with a major in psychology. When Candice is not busy working in the insurance industry, or slaying major MS demons, she's working arguably on her most important job – as the mother to a 65-pound Portuguese Water Dog, named Zissou.

Véronique Dallaire



Véronique is a lawyer and college teacher based in Québec.

In 2016, Véronique received her MS diagnosis. A couple of months after, she opened her yoga studio in Québec city to make yoga accessible to everyone, including people living with MS, with or without physical limitations.

She's a proud mom of two and soon to be triathlete. She's out to make a real difference in the world.

Amanda Fraser



Amanda lives in Edmonton, Alberta with her husband and their Boxer/Rottweiler cross, Baxter. For seven years, she has been a Registered Nurse in the Pediatric Intensive Care unit at Stollery Children's Hospital. She loves children and enjoys spending time with her nieces and nephew.

In 2014 Amanda was diagnosed with MS after being hospitalized with pneumonia and losing all strength in her legs. Fatigue and extreme weakness in her legs continue to be her primary symptoms. She enjoys fitness and walking and uses diet and exercise to manage her MS symptoms.

Amanda became involved with the MS Society of Canada in 2015 with MS Bike. She became an active top fundraiser and an MS Ambassador speaking at different local events and volunteering. In January 2018 she suffered a severe concussion after falling down a set of stairs and since that time has experienced two significant relapses and is unable to work. She remains involved with the MS Society and is passionate about community building. She is thrilled for this opportunity.

Adam Groh



Adam is a PhD student at the Montreal Neurological Institute-Hospital. With Dr. Jo Anne Stratton, he is working to further understand the ependymal cell – a critically understudied glial cell with major bearing on the pathophysiology of MS. He was motivated to take a large leap in research focus from the autonomic nervous system, to MS, by his mom and close friend who both live with MS.

During his time at the University of Western Ontario, Adam collaborated widely and spearheaded many educational and health-oriented outreach activities. As a member of the MS Society of Canada's Young Adult Committee, Adam is excited to provide insight into the organization's areas of research focus, participate in advocacy initiatives, and to contribute to future program delivery.

Kaileigh Kryzstofiak



Kaileigh is a lighting designer, cycling instructor, avid road cyclist, and yogi. She was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS in 2013. It took many years for Kaileigh to feel confident and humble enough to share her experience with MS and advocate for both herself and the MS community. Kaileigh now makes it her mission to help other people see that their experience, whatever it looks like, is valid, and they deserve to feel supported and advocated for.

As an active member of the MS community, Kaileigh is the Team Captain of the MS Bike Grand Bend to London team: The Velociraptors. She has ridden, been a top 100 fundraiser and team captain for seven years. Her experiences as an MS Bike Ambassador and spokesperson have led her to meet amazing people within the MS community who have challenged her appetite for ideas, validated feelings of worth, and brought a smile to her face.

Jean-Sébastien Lavoie



Based in Montreal, Jean-Sébastien is an animation director, illustrator, and musician. Jean-Sébastien loves to tell stories in whatever form they take, especially when the subject touches him personally. A sensitive person, he craves hearing about other people's reality and to defend his ideals. He's always been ambitious and willing to jump in and support many projects at one time. Diagnosed with MS in 2015, Jean-Sébastien has since had to slow down a bit but it doesn't take away his desire to keep telling stories about subjects that matter most to him.

Katherine Louman-Gardiner



Katherine is a professional engineer, athlete, and new mom, who lives with MS. She was diagnosed in 2006 while training for the Canadian National Bobsleigh Team. She works full time as a Professional Engineer, and maintains an active lifestyle, including commuting to work by bike, and getting out to the mountains as much as possible. Keeping active is the key to her physical and mental health.

Being diagnosed with MS is a life-changing event, and often impacts young adults embarking on their career or other adventures. Katherine is very excited to be involved with the MS Society of Canada's Young Adult Committee because engagement with young people will be the key to building a world free of MS.

Julie Petrin (Co-Chair)



Julie was raised in Kazabazua, a rural town in Quebec. At 16 she attended John Abbott College in Montreal to complete a degree in social sciences. After experiencing her first symptoms of MS – losing the ability to write followed by the loss of sensation in her face – she turned her interests to science. Julie was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS at 17 and moved to Sherbrooke to complete her BSc in neuroscience at Bishop's University. The diagnosis sparked her interest in understanding of how the human body and mind function. Julie then completed her MSc degree in Anatomical Sciences at Queen's University, where she conducted research in the field of MS fatigue. Julie continues her work in MS research working

toward a PhD in rehabilitation sciences. Her work aims to identify and prioritize concerns about access to Canadian healthcare services for persons with MS.

Julie is also driven by her love of travel, the outdoors and all related activities, cooking, her dog, and fitness for wellness.

Heidi Pylypjuk



Heidi is a research coordinator at the Children’s Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba. She has numerous years of experience in the research field including behavioral neuroscience and a master’s degree from University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine.

She intimately knows MS from helping to develop animal models in a laboratory to feeling the deteriorating effects on her own body.

As one of the first pediatric MS patients in the country, Heidi naturally became an advocate for the young adult population in Manitoba. Most notably, Heidi helped develop the first support group for young adults and has served three terms as a Community Representative on the National Research Grants Review Board for the MS Society of Canada.

When Heidi is not in the lab or speaking at events, she can be found caring for her miniature goats and many other animals.

Christopher Schieman



Christopher is a writer and communications professional based in Edmonton, Alberta. He’s previously worked with the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada and GEF Seniors Housing, before moving on to his current full-time role with FKA, a marketing and communications agency. He’s contributed to many publications across Alberta including *Avenue Edmonton*, *Vue Weekly*, *Heroes*, and the annual *Invest in Alberta* magazine from Economic Developers Alberta. Growing up, Christopher’s father lived with

MS, creating a foundation for his experience and curiosity for the disease. In 2019, Christopher received his own MS diagnosis, furthering his drive to delve into the causes and treatments for MS.

Audra White



Originally from Alberta, Audra currently resides in Ottawa while working for the Government of Canada. She has a BA in Economics, and a master’s degree in Resource and Environmental Management, both from Dalhousie University. Diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS in May 2017, she says she has enjoyed all the ups-and-downs that that has brought. Eager to advocate for those with MS, she is interested in combining health and climate change advocacy for those with disabilities so that the future is green and healthy for all.