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## ***Alberta woman is honoured as a national champion for the Huntington Society of Canada***

(Kitchener, ON) February 6, 2014 –February is Champion of Hope Month at the [Huntington Society of Canada](#) (HSC). The Society is honouring Tara Johnson-Ouellette as a donor who has committed to making a monthly donation.

Tara knows firsthand the difference HSC’s programs make. She was 20 when her mother, Janice, was diagnosed with Huntington disease. In the months that followed, both women cried themselves to sleep each night. The disease progressed quickly. While others her age were going to parties and making plans for the future, Tara became her mother’s caregiver.

Tara doesn’t know how she would have gotten through that period without the support and services of the Huntington Society of Canada. “It’s your lifeline,” she says. “It is literally your lifeline.”

For the past 20 years, Tara has contributed in many ways. She set up the Janice Johnson Family Fund in support of HSC. She raised awareness and pioneered new fundraisers with the Calgary Chapter. She secured generous donations to launch the YPAHD program and built strategic partnerships with Parkinson’s Alberta and the Alberta Council of Healthpartners.

Tara also served on HSC’s national board, where she gained a deeper appreciation of how important it was to have a dependable stream of donations coming in on an ongoing basis. “It takes money—sustainable funds—to do any new programming,” she says.

That’s why she became a monthly donor in 2004. The small amounts transferred from her bank account each month may not seem like a lot, but Tara knows that she’s part of a growing pool of supporters whose reliable donations help the Society plan ahead and respond to urgent needs.

From her time on the national board, she also knows how much value the Society squeezes from each dollar. “We’re definitely a leader,” she says. “It’s phenomenal what we’ve accomplished.”

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[Huntington disease](#) (HD) is a debilitating brain disorder that is fatal and incurable. About one in every 7,000 Canadians has HD and approximately one in every 5,500 is at-risk of developing the disease. Many more are touched by HD whether as a caregiver, a family member, or a friend. Huntington disease is devastating for both the body and the mind. The symptoms, which may include uncontrollable jerking movements and relentless cognitive and emotional impairment, usually present between the ages of 30 and 45, and gradually worsen over the 10-25 year course of the disease. Eventually they lead to total incapacitation and death.

The Huntington Society of Canada is a respected leader in the worldwide effort to end Huntington disease (HD). HSC is the only national health charity dedicated to providing help and hope for families dealing with Huntington disease across Canada. The Huntington Society of Canada aspires to a world free from Huntington disease.

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