

Winnipeg residents receive Canadian Diabetes Association national awards

Awards presented at annual meetings in Toronto

Winnipeg, MB (Dec. 11, 2013)–The Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) presented Dr. Elizabeth Sellers from Winnipeg, MB, with the 2013 Charles H. Best Award, which honours a health care professional who has made a significant difference in improving the quality of life for Canadians living with diabetes. John Murphy and Louise Yurchak also from Winnipeg, MB, were both presented with 2013 National Volunteers of the Year Award, which honours volunteers who have dedicated their time and contributed significantly to the Canadian Diabetes Association. These awards were presented in Toronto at an awards ceremony as part of the Association’s National Annual General Meeting.

Dr. Elizabeth Sellers

“I truly believe that Dr. Sellers epitomizes what the Charles H. Best Award stands for,” says Andrea Kwasnicki, Regional Director, Manitoba and Nunavut at the Canadian Diabetes Association. “I support this nomination whole-heartedly.”

Dr. Sellers is a pediatric endocrinologist at the Winnipeg Children’s Hospital and an Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and Child Health at the University of Manitoba. She became acquainted with diabetes during her pediatric residency when she had the opportunity to attend CDA’s Camp Banting in Ottawa, which was her first interaction with the CDA and the deciding factor in her decision to become an endocrinologist.

The award was presented to Dr. Sellers based on her numerous professional and volunteer contributions to the Association. Some of these accomplishments include:

- In 2000, Dr. Sellers became the Camp Medical Director for Camp Birchbark (now Camp Briardale in Manitoba), and a member of the CDA Camp Committee. She won the 2008 CDA Regional Camp Award for her passionate leadership.
- Dr. Sellers has been a member of the CDA National Camp Medical taskforce since 2004, setting national standards for quality and safety in the camp environment. She also incorporates students in medicine, nursing, nutrition, and pharmacy within the camp environment.
- Being an Associate Editor of the *Canadian Journal of Diabetes* since October 2010, improving clarity and enhancing exposure of the journal.
- Being a member of the expert committee for the 2008 and 2013 CDA *Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Diabetes in Canada*, and serving as the Chair of the chapter on type 2 diabetes in children and youth for the 2008 guidelines.
- From 2005-2011, Dr. Sellers was Section Head of Pediatric Endocrinology and Medical Director of the Diabetes Education Resource for Children and Adolescents (DER-CA), working with the CDA to advocate for a provincial insulin pump program for children, which was approved in 2012.

John Murphy

“It is always a good thing to be recognized for what you do, but when you are volunteering and working hard for a cause you believe in, you never think of an award as one of the reasons for doing it. That said, I was surprised to hear that I was to receive this prestigious award. I am excited, thankful and humbled to be a recipient,” says John.

John started volunteering with the Canadian Diabetes Association in 2004 as a marathon trainer with Team Diabetes. In 2010, he organized the first “Run for Diabetes” in Winnipeg as a way to raise more awareness about diabetes and its effects on people. The event has grown since its inauguration, and Murphy looks forward to the day when it becomes a million dollar fundraiser.

“John has given more than 2,000 hours of his personal time to the Canadian Diabetes Association and continues to be a valuable member of our team in Winnipeg,” says Andrea Kwasnicki, Regional Director, Manitoba and Nunavut at the Canadian Diabetes Association. “John brings optimism, vigour, and a desire to succeed in his work.”

John also dedicates much of his time to other charitable organizations across the city when he is not running, traveling, or golfing.

Louise Yurchak

“Louise has proven to be an outstanding asset to the organization,” says Andrea Kwasnicki, Regional Director, Manitoba and Nunavut at the Canadian Diabetes Association. “By taking on multiple roles, including displays, presentations, advocacy, media opportunities, Run for Diabetes, and our residential campaign, she is helping to make a difference in the community.”

Louise retired from her position of Early Childhood Educator in 1997, and wanted to give back to people affected by diabetes in the Aboriginal community. She began volunteering for the CDA, sorting materials in the Winnipeg office library, and helping to create a collection of resources that would be valuable to Aboriginal members. When Louise was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in 2004, the CDA was there for her.

“When I found out, it was devastating,” says Louise. “But someone from the CDA came to talk to me after I found out, and that’s part of why the CDA is so special to me.”

Louise’s contributions to the CDA include:

- Creating a collection of resources that were helpful for Aboriginal members.
- Facilitating educational displays on behalf of CDA, as well as delivering educational presentations.
- Delivering Learning Series presentations, and helping to deliver children’s programs like “Growing up Well.” She continues to do several presentations each month.
- Spending countless hours manning display booths at numerous health fairs, and volunteering at diabetes expos.

“Teamwork is critical in the fight against diabetes. The awards presented demonstrate a true dedication to teamwork from individuals across the nation who are making a significant difference in the lives of the more than nine million Canadians living with diabetes or prediabetes,” says Rick Blickstead, President and CEO of the Canadian Diabetes Association. “The diversity of expertise of these individuals adds enormously to the strength of CDA as we hope to empower people living with diabetes. We are immensely grateful to these individuals and are stronger together in accomplishing our mission with their support.”

To learn more about volunteering with the Canadian Diabetes Association, visit diabetes.ca.

Diabetes in Manitoba

Today, more than 107,500 people in Manitoba are living with diabetes. By 2020, it is estimated that 10 per cent of the population of the province, or more than 139,000 people, will be living with diabetes. Adding those in Manitoba who are living with prediabetes, it is expected that 33 per cent of the population of Manitoba will be living with diabetes or prediabetes by 2020. Prediabetes exists when blood glucose levels are elevated, but not as high as type 2 diabetes. About 50 per cent of Canadians with prediabetes develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. In 2013, the combined direct and indirect costs of diabetes to the Manitoba healthcare system are \$544 million. It is expected these costs will increase by 17 per cent to more than \$639 million by 2020.

About the Canadian Diabetes Association

The Canadian Diabetes Association is a registered charitable organization, leading the fight against diabetes by helping people with diabetes live healthy lives while we work to find a cure. Our professional staff and more than 20,000 volunteers provide education and services to help people in their daily fight against the disease, advocate on behalf of people with diabetes for the opportunity to achieve their highest quality of life, and break ground towards a cure. Please visit diabetes.ca, join us on www.facebook.com/CanadianDiabetesAssociation, follow us on Twitter @DiabetesAssoc, or call 1-800-BANTING (226-8464).

For additional information or to arrange for an interview, please contact: