



## Hope drives SuperWalk for Parkinson's goal of \$2.5 million

**TORONTO, June 16, 2008** – When 34 year old James Smerdon laces up his sneakers for SuperWalk for Parkinson's this September, it will be with determination and a great deal of hope that his efforts and those of over 12,000 walkers coast to coast will be getting one step closer to a cure.

The 19<sup>th</sup> SuperWalk for Parkinson's hopes to raise \$2.5 million that will help fund research, education, support and advocacy for over 100,000 Canadians living with Parkinson's disease.

Just over a year ago, James Smerdon, a resident of Vancouver, BC, was diagnosed with Young Onset Parkinson's disease at age 33. What was shocking was the fact that he had always thought of Parkinson's as a disease that affects older people. His response is to get out there and do something about it. "I'm hoping that science moves at a quicker pace than the disease. I realize that I need to play an important role in supporting research. That's why I am participating in SuperWalk," said Smerdon.

Parkinson's is a slow, progressive, neurological disorder that makes the simplest task, like walking or eating overwhelmingly difficult for someone who has the disease.

"At 34, I cannot look forward to 30 more years of work and raising a family followed by a long active retirement. It's just not in the cards for me," added Smerdon.

SuperWalk is Parkinson Society Canada's (PSC) largest fundraising event and will take place in more than 80 communities across the country.

"What started out as a seven person walk in 1990, has blossomed into a family oriented national event where everyone who knows someone with Parkinson's, either a family member or friend, turns up to support them," said Parkinson Society Canada President & CEO Joyce Gordon. "The walk is not a race but a show of support and a desire to find a cure and the cause," she added.

To register or to find out more, visit [www.superwalk.com](http://www.superwalk.com) or call 1-800-565-3000.

With a goal of \$2.5 million, SuperWalk is the largest national fundraising event for Parkinson Society Canada. This year's total will bring the total dollars raised over a five year period to more than \$10 million for research, education, advocacy and support for people living with Parkinson's.

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological disease. When cells in the brain that normally produce a chemical called "dopamine" die, symptoms of Parkinson's appear. The most common symptoms are: tremors or shaking, slowness in movements, muscle stiffness and problems with balance. Other symptoms may also occur for some people, such as fatigue, difficulties with speech and writing, sleep disorders, depression and cognitive changes.

For over 40 years, Parkinson Society Canada (PSC) has been the national voice of people living with Parkinson's disease. PSC has 230 chapters and support groups.

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