



Volunteer Who Has Raised More Than \$700,000 for Parkinsons Disease Research Wins Cash, Sweat & Tears Award

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TORONTO (November 1) — Peter Istvan, co-founder and organizer of Pedaling for Parkinson's — an annual bike ride that has raised more than \$700,000 for Parkinson Canada — is the winner of the 2016 Cash, Sweat & Tears Award, which honours Canada's top fundraising volunteer.



Istvan started the ride with friend David Newall in rural Parry Sound, Ontario, six years ago with a modest goal of using his love of cycling to raise money to fight Parkinson's disease.

During the first event, 18 riders came together to raise \$18,000. It has since mushroomed into a massive community event. In July, 250 people took part in the 3-day ride, raising more than \$200,000.

“Peter's commitment and vision are inspiring — and they demonstrate the amazing power that passionate people can use to help nonprofits raise money and achieve their missions,” said David Hessekiel, President of Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Canada. “He has helped create an event that brings together his small town each summer to make a difference — and, in doing so, he is helping to transform the lives of people with Parkinson's disease.”

The Cash, Sweat & Tears award honours an extraordinary volunteer who has taken on physical challenges or overcome tremendous obstacles to raise money for charity. The award was presented today in Toronto at the annual conference of Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Canada, which oversees the Cash, Sweat & Tears program.

Pedaling for Parkinson's is part of a growing trend in peer-to-peer fundraising — the explosion in the number of so-called do-it-yourself campaigns that are organized by individuals, rather than by nonprofits.



Parkinson Canada provides support for the event, but Istvan, a volunteer, does all of the heavy lifting — managing logistics, recruiting riders and volunteers, soliciting sponsors and collecting donations.

“Peter, and the whole team behind Pedaling for Parkinson’s, are a joy to work with,” said Jon Collins, associate director of events and partnerships for Parkinson Canada. “With dauntless energy, strength of spirit and compassion, Peter Istvan has built a community around a once-a-year bike ride in Parry Sound. His enthusiasm engages the community and serves as a powerful engine to support of our mission, through funding innovative research.”

While many Canadian charities organize large-scale fundraising bike rides, Pedaling for Parkinson’s is unique — in large part because of the work of Istvan and his fellow volunteers.

The ride has become a destination event for many avid riders in Ontario, largely because of its homespun feel. Istvan’s mother bakes cookies and gives hugs to weary riders. Riders receive hand made mugs from a local potter. A local butcher makes sausages for the post-ride barbecue.

“Despite our growth, we’re not looking to become a humongous event,” Istvan says. “We want to remain as grassroots, family, and personable as we can.”

Istvan says he also wants to make sure the event always maintains its connection to the cause by offering riders the opportunity to see the impact of their support and providing information about advances in Parkinson’s research.

“We work hard to connect the riders to the research and the research to the riders,” he says. “That’s an important connection to us. We want to make it clear to the riders where the money is going and why what they are doing is important.”

As the winner of the Cash, Sweat & Tears Award, Istvan will receive a \$1,000 cheque from award sponsor Blackbaud, as well as a trophy.



About the Cash, Sweat & Tears Award

The Cash, Sweat & Tears award honours the passion of the nonprofit world's most extraordinary volunteers — the people who take on physical challenges or overcome tremendous obstacles raise money from their friends, family, and colleagues for North American charities.

Each year, Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Canada invites the organizers of athletic fundraising programs in Canada to nominate one inspiring participant for the award. The winners are announced at the organization's annual conference in October.

About the Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Canada

Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Canada supports professionals who manage peer-to-peer fundraising events. As the sister organization of the Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum, P2P Fundraising Canada provides resources such as its annual conference, webinars, research, and a vibrant online community that help peer-to-peer fundraisers gain access to best practices and support.

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Pictured below - Pedaling for Parkinson's co-founders Peter Istvan (center) and David Newall (left)

