

## In this issue

- Pg. 1 President's Message**
- Pg. 1 Mission**
- Pg. 1 OPACC Challenges**
- Pg. 1 OPACC Board**
- Pg. 1 What's Happening**
- Pg. 2 The Solution**
- Pg. 2 Profiles of the Board**

---

---

### OPACC BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

**Dave Munro:**

President/Chair-Director

**Deirdra Redden:**

Treasurer-Director

**Teresa Reardon:**

Director

**Susana Malowaniuk:**

Director

**Maryann Istiloglu:**

Director

**James Thomson:**

Director

**Barbara Johnson:**

Recording Secretary (member)

If you have any questions regarding this board or wish to become a member of OPACC, please email Barbara Johnson at [info@opacc.org](mailto:info@opacc.org).

### **WHAT'S HAPPENING!**

**November 10, 2006 OPACC received Not-For-Profit Charitable Status**

**November 17 and 18<sup>th</sup> OPACC will be an exhibitor at the POGO Symposium**

### **President's Message**

I am so very pleased to be the President and Chair of Ontario Parents Advocating for Children with Cancer (OPACC). Even though OPACC has been around for a while and I have been involved for about six years, this past year has been a very exciting time for us.

In February 2006, OPACC became incorporated as a Not-for-Profit. In March, our board of directors was elected, and soon after OPACC filed for registered charitable status and on November 10, 2006 we received notification that we were granted our charitable status (status number pending). These were important steps for our group to take and will help us move forward in order to help our families deal with the many aspects of the Here and Now of childhood cancer.

As an organization, OPACC knows many of the most important issues families face when dealing with childhood cancers as almost all the current board members have travelled that agonizing journey.

OPACC has a mandate to have in place Parent Link positions throughout the province. The role of the Parent Link will be to be there for our families to assist them in finding the resources they need so they can better care for their families. These roles are nothing new, as some may remember there was a volunteer in that position at the Hospital for Sick Children a few years ago. There are also established positions in other parts of Canada and the United States.

As both OPACC's Board President and a parent who has travelled the journey of childhood cancer, I encourage all families of children with cancer to become members of OPACC. Since we've all paid dearly through our own personal childhood cancer journey, there are no membership fees.

One or two of us can yell, but together, as a provincial voice, we can have a truly louder voice that will be heard. Help us help our families.

Always,  
Hannah's Dad

Dave Munro  
OPACC Board President & Chair

---

---

**MISSION:** OPACC is the provincial voice of families and parent support groups dedicated to helping families touched by childhood cancer.

**OPACC'S CHALLENGES:** A diagnosis of childhood cancer is a long and difficult journey for families. There are many issues to deal with from the requirements of treatment to emotional ups and downs, the need for information and how to navigate the system, financial, employment and schooling concerns to name just a few. While the health care teams are invaluable in helping parents through this difficult time, many parents also find it helpful to have contact with a parent who has been through the experience and can help them cope with some of the many issues they may face.



---

**THE SOLUTION:** In keeping with our mission, OPACC strongly believes that in order to address the challenges that parents encounter in their journey of childhood cancer, the role of a parent link will be established so families throughout the province of Ontario will be able to have at their hands the resources and services available to navigate through the road of childhood cancer. The role of the parent link is intended to compliment existing resources or fill the gaps where there is a lack of services.

---

**PROFILES:** This month *parentlink* will showcase the profiles of three of our board members. Dave Munro, Teresa Reardon and Deirdra Redden.

**Dave Munro:**

Dave is OPACC's Board President, Chair and the father of eleven-year-old Hannah. Hannah was eighteen-months-old when she was diagnosed with stage IV neuroblastoma. Dave watched as his daughter struggled with her treatment and learned from her the courage and conviction to fight childhood cancer. He has used that conviction in his community and the province to try and help families of children and teens with cancer.

Dave is a parent contact for Candlelighters Simcoe Parents of Children with Cancer and represents Candlelighters Simcoe on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Simcoe County District School Board. He has also assisted with the Paediatric Oncology Group of Ontario (POGO) in developing their next five year plan for the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) as Co-Chair of the Parent Cluster. Dave has done fundraising activities for Candlelighters Simcoe, the Childhood Cancer Foundation ~ Candlelighters Canada and the Canadian Cancer Society.

On July 22, 2006 Hannah celebrated ten years off treatment, and has always been Dave's inspiration.

**Teresa Reardon:**

Teresa is an OPACC Director and a bereaved parent of Marcus. At age 7 Marcus was diagnosed with leukemia. Marcus went through 9 months of chemo, radiation and a bone marrow transplant and on January 14, 2004 at age 8 Marcus passed away. Marcus showed such strength and courage throughout his treatment, always showing concern for the other children struggling with cancer. When Marcus passed he left a void so deep within Teresa that she fills it by continuing with his wishes. Those wishes were to help other children and their families with cancer. Teresa helps with research at The Hospital for Sick Children, speaking with other families and giving support to those struggling with cancer.

Teresa joined OPACC as she wanted to be a part of an organization that put the children and families first.

Teresa began her own organization called FAMILIES TOGETHER-IN JOURNEY FOR LIFE in honor of her son Marcus. Her goal is to help newly diagnosed families by providing "care packages" that will help make those first days and weeks manageable.

Teresa is an RN, and worked on the oncology floor before moving to the Emergency Department. Teresa is familiar with both sides of cancer (parent and professional) Teresa is openly available to help other families who have been touched by cancer.

**Deirdra Redden:**

Deirdra is the Treasurer of OPACC and acts as our volunteer administrator/communications coordinator. Deirdra is also the parent of Virginia. In June 2001 Virginia was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia. During her treatment at Sick Kids, Virginia's strength, courage and endless energy garnered her the nickname "The Energizer Bunny". While Virginia's main treatment facility was Sick Kids, Credit Valley Hospital (a satellite of HSC) became their second home, and Virginia has served as Credit Valley Hospital's poster child for their regional cancer centre fundraising campaign since 2003.

Deirdra was also part of the Parent Cluster of the Paediatric Oncology Group of Ontario (POGO) in developing their next five year plan for the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC).

In 2004 Deirdra worked with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada on their inaugural Greater Toronto Area walk "Light the Night".

In September 2005, Deirdra decided to utilize her experiences and returned to school to gain a specialization in Public Relations and graduated from Mohawk College with a Post-graduate certificate in Public Relations in June 2006.

In October 2006 Virginia celebrated her 10th birthday as well as 5 years cancer free. Today, Deirdra continues to concentrate her efforts on providing information and resources to parents of children with cancer who are under-served or at risk.

---

**OPACC** needs new members from all areas of the province. If you are interested in OPACC membership or in a committee role, please visit our website at [www.opacc.org](http://www.opacc.org) or email us at [info@opacc.org](mailto:info@opacc.org).

**Newsletter Team:**

Barb Johnson and Deirdra Redden. Please send any story submissions to [info@opacc.org](mailto:info@opacc.org).