Medtronic News

The Bakken Invitation Announces 2014 Honorees: 10 Inspiring People Who Live On and Give On

Medtronic Philanthropy Program Honors Ten Individuals Around the World with $20,000 Charitable Grants to Their Causes

MINNEAPOLIS - December 8, 2014 - Medtronic (NYSE: MDT) today announced the names of 10 people from around the world who will be honored as part of the Bakken Invitation, a global program launched in 2013 that celebrates and connects people who, with the help of medical technology, have overcome health challenges and are now making a difference in their communities.

The Bakken Invitation Award recognizes outstanding contributions of service, volunteerism, and leadership. Every year, Bakken Invitation Honorees nominate charities of their choice to each receive a $20,000 grant from Medtronic Philanthropy. The honorees also travel to Hawaii in 2015 for a community service and celebration event where they meet Medtronic co-founder and program inspiration, Earl Bakken.

This year's Bakken Honorees serve communities around the world in many different ways, including fighting sex trafficking, providing access to scoliosis screening, and helping poor children in India get a good night's sleep.

"The stories of how patients are giving back remind us of the potential we have-big or small-to impact the world," Earl Bakken said. "When faced with a life-threatening health challenge, these individuals took the extra time they had been granted to do something great."

Bakken himself is a patient, with a pacemaker, coronary stents and insulin pump giving him "extra life," which he has used to give back through substantial community involvement.

Read the 10 honorees' stories below, and view many other stories of people around the world living on and giving on at the Bakken Community. On this site, anyone with a medical device can connect with other people who share similar health conditions, geographies or charitable passions. For every story shared, Medtronic Philanthropy will donate $10 to Project HOPE (Health Opportunities for People Everywhere) to help ensure that medical technology is available in underserved communities around the world.

For more details about each of this year's honorees, and to read their inspirational tips on living and giving, please visit www.LiveOnGiveOn.org.

The 2014 Bakken Invitation honorees are:

David Watkins, 43 of Snohomish, Wash., United States
"Start living your legacy."
Throughout his childhood and into early adulthood, David Watkins was living with an undiagnosed bicuspid aortic valve. By the time he was diagnosed, he was at risk of aneurysm, and made a difficult decision to undergo surgery to replace his heart valve. The last words he remembers thinking as he was being wheeled into cardiac surgery were, "How will I be remembered?" After recovery, he decided to start living the legacy he wanted to leave: using the power of sport to help others live their dreams through the IronHeart Foundation.

Samantha Petersen, 17 of South Windsor, Conn., United States
"Embrace what's difficult."
Diagnosed with scoliosis at the age of 11, Sami's young dream of swimming at the Olympics abruptly ended. At 13, she could she no longer swim. Even standing became extremely difficult after just a few minutes. In 2012, after her spinal fusion surgery

corrected the curve in her spine, then 15-year-old Sami turned her passion and new-found physical freedom into SHIFT Scoliosis, an organization she created to provide screenings and support for all people with spinal conditions.

Rajnikant Reshamwala, 77 of Mumbai, India
"Ask yourself: Can I help? Then why not do it?"
A lifelong volunteer, Raj was actively involved in helping poor children in Mumbai when blockage in his coronary arteries made physical activity very difficult. It became hard to keep up with his community work. In January 2013, he received coronary stents to remove the blockage. He found himself reenergized, and rededicated to helping Sleeping Children Around The World, an international organization that helps kids get a good night's sleep.

Gretchen Merritt, 35 of Hopkins, Minn., United States
"What makes you angry? Work to change that."
Gretchen Merritt has lived with type-1 diabetes most of her life. For her, diabetes did not hold her back from accomplishing her goals, but it made her carefully think about her health, and how she directs her passion. At 22 she began using an insulin pump, which she says made a difference in her quality of life. She pours her passion into fighting to free sex slaves in India through Freedom Firm.

Joan Talkowsky, 65 of Tel Aviv, Israel
"Take one little step out of your immediate circle."
Joan Talkowsky knows the power of small, personal interactions. She is a long-time volunteer (her time spent rocking babies to sleep in the hospital helped doctors catch her second-degree heart block and get her the pacemaker she needed). Now she works with asylum seekers, foreign workers and others who have no civil status in Israel through Physicians for Human Rights and similar organizations.

Lucilla Bossi, 64 of Milano, Italy
"Savor the fantastic gift of a busy day."
Lucilla has lived with Parkinson's Disease for nearly 30 years, struggling to learn how to move throughout daily life without attracting undue attention. Since 2001, after receiving deep brain stimulation, she has worked to improve quality of life for Parkinson's Disease patients in Italy.

Clint Benson Doyle, 27 of Kailua Kona, Hawaii, United States
"Creativity is a healing force."
Clint Doyle suffered brain damage from an early age when he experienced sudden cardiac arrest. Doctors told his parents he may not survive. But he has. And today, one brushstroke at a time, Clint helps children imagine their dreams and then turn them into reality. Clint, who now has an implantable cardiac defibrillator, leads art programs for children with special needs, where he inspires and challenges them to stay focused on their goals.

Krystal Boyea, 27 of Bridgetown, Barbados
"Sharing your story can change a life"
When diabetes is stigmatized and hidden, it can be even more deadly. Krystal Boyea has devoted much of her young life to sharing how she has lived a healthy, full life with diabetes and encouraging others. From her first online campaign to talks at the United Nations and TEDx, Krystal has become the face of diabetes in Barbados and the Caribbean. She also cofounded a groundbreaking diabetes clinic in Barbados. Her first project as a youth leader for diabetes awareness was to create giant posters of herself and others living healthy lives with the disease. Krystal has since cofounded a clinic and is a powerful voice for people living with diabetes.

Igor Chamilla, 59 of Sliac, Slovakia

"When you teach, you learn."

After Igor Chamilla's cardiac arrest, bypass surgery and pacemaker implant, he decided to learn everything he could about his disease and how to live a full life with it. But that wasn't enough for him. He now offers educational courses for 2,000-3,600 cardiac patients a year in Slovakia through his foundation, Kardioklub SK in Spa Sliac, which specializes in treating cardiac disorders.

Haruko Sato, 56 of Tokyo, Japan

"Bloom where you are planted."

In 2012, Haruko Sato underwent surgery to receive deep brain stimulation therapy to treat cervical dystonia, a painful condition in which the neck muscles contract involuntarily, causing the head to twist or turn to one side. She now works tirelessly to support dystonia patients as well as people with all sorts of disabilities in Japan.

For additional information and photos of the 2014 Honorees, visitwww.LiveOnGiveOninfo.com.

About Medtronic Philanthropy

Medtronic Philanthropy focuses on expanding access to quality chronic disease care among underserved populations worldwide, in addition to supporting health initiatives in communities where Medtronic employees live and give.

About Medtronic

Medtronic, Inc. (www.medtronic.com), headquartered in Minneapolis, is the global leader in medical technology-alleviating pain, restoring health and extending life for millions of people around the world.

###

Contacts:

Rich Fischer

Public Relations

+1-763-505-2975

Caroline Geiser

Exponent PR

+1-612-305-6194

---

https://news.medtronic.com/2014-12-08-The-Bakken-Invitation-Announces-2014-Honorees-10-Inspiring-People-Who-Live-On-and-Give-On