Medtronic News

The Medtronic Bakken Invitation Award Honors 12 Patients from Around the World for Giving Back

Live On. Give On: Medtronic Philanthropy Provides MedTech Patients with $20,000 Grant to Direct to a Charitable Cause of Their Choice

DUBLIN - December 14, 2015 - Medtronic (NYSE: MDT) announced today that 12 people representing 11 countries will be honored with the 2015 Bakken Invitation Award, which recognizes people who have overcome health challenges with the help of medical technology and are making outstanding contributions of service, volunteerism and leadership.

From educating students in East Africa and supporting a heart hospital in Nepal, to establishing a foster care organization in Spain and helping the homeless in Minneapolis, the 2015 Bakken Invitation Award Honorees use their "extra life" to support communities all over the world.

As part of the award, each Honoree nominates a charity to receive a $20,000 grant from Medtronic Philanthropy. The Honorees also travel to Hawaii in 2016 for a community service and celebration event where they meet Medtronic co-founder and program inspiration, Earl Bakken.

"This year's Honorees are so inspiring," said Earl Bakken. "After receiving medical therapy that gave them extra time, they selflessly shifted their focus to others when it would have been easier to focus on themselves. Their stories are a powerful reminder that we can all give back-no matter our current situation."

Bakken is no stranger to medical technology. In 1957, he developed the first external,artificial pacemaker, an invention that has saved millions of lives and led to the creation of Medtronic. Bakken is also 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.

Honorees' therapies and treatments include pacemakers, implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs), stents, heart valves, RF ablation, neurological stimulators and insulin pumps to treat conditions such as heart disease, Barrett's esophagus, Parkinson's disease, chronic pain, and diabetes. There is no restriction on therapy manufacturer.

Read the 12 honoree stories and their inspirational tips below, and view (or share) other stories of living on and giving on the Bakken Community.

For more information and images, visit www.LiveOnGiveOn.org.

Follow the program and stay inspired with real-time updates onFacebook.com/LiveOnGiveOn and on Twitter with the hashtag #LiveOnGiveOn.

The 2015 Bakken Invitation Honorees are:
Andrea Volfova, 37, of Prague, Czech Republic
Medical Condition: Cardiovascular disease
Therapy: Pacemaker

"Choose love and compassion, every single time."
Much of Andrea's early life was characterized by limitations from cardiac disease. In 1988, everything changed for Andrea when a doctor examined her and recommended a pacemaker. Today, Andrea channels her energy and optimism into helping others live their lives to their full potential. She helps students in East Africa obtain an education through the Kenya Education Fund.

Bhim Bahadur Mahat, 47, of Kathmandu, Nepal

Medical Condition: Cardiovascular disease
Therapy: Heart valve

"All cultures can understand the language of love."
Bhim was diagnosed with rheumatic heart disease and had open heart surgery to replace a damaged aortic valve in 1992. Immediately after his surgery, he became a lifetime member of the Nepal Heart Foundation and began working to help others with the same condition. Thanks to the efforts of Bhim and the foundation, Nepal now has a dedicated heart hospital.

David Simmonds, 62, of Prince Edward (Wellington), Canada
Medical Condition: Parkinson's disease
Therapy: Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)

"Wearing a burden with humor can inspire others."
David has lived with Parkinson's disease since 1993. His deep brain stimulator device allows him to function independently and devote his time and energy to helping others, specifically as a volunteer for Parkinson Society Canada.

Juan Carlos Hernandez Corredera, 42, of Salamanca, Spain
Medical Condition: Barrett's esophagus
Therapy: Radiofrequency Ablation

"Pay it forward."
After being diagnosed with high-grade dysplasia in Barrett's esophagus, Juan was treated with radiofrequency ablation (RFA), an endoscopic technique that cured the disease and enabled him to live a normal, healthy life. Because few people in Spain know about Barrett's esophagus, which is a serious complication of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), Juan founded Asenbar, with the goal of providing support and treatment options to every patient who needs it. He also serves as president of Asociacion de Familias de Acogida de Salamanca (AFASA), providing temporary housing for foster children.

Kerry Kalweit, 25, of Pretoria, South Africa
Medical Condition: Type 1 Diabetes
Therapy: Insulin Pump

"Education is empowering."
Kerry was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in 2004 and uses an insulin pump to manage her blood glucose levels. The pump helps her manage her disease, as well as an unpredictable daily schedule. This flexibility, combined with the assistance of her health care team, has allowed her to pursue her dreams. She first became involved with Youth With Diabetes as a camper and is now the general manager.

Lisa Visser, 42, of Orono, Minnesota, U.S.
Medical Condition: Sudden Cardiac Arrest due to a heart defect
Therapy: Implantable cardioverter defibrillator

"Work hard at creating goodness."
Lisa suffered a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) at the age of 26, leading to a diagnosis of arrhythmogenic right ventricular dysplasia, a congenital heart defect. She now has an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) to treat future SCA episodes. Grateful for the extra life she receives, she has volunteered time helping various organizations for the homeless in Minnesota.

Qi Zhang, 44, of Beijing, China
Medical Condition: Type 1 Diabetes

Therapy: Insulin Pump

"You are not alone."
Qi was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when she was only seven years old. Since then, she has struggled to live a normal life, but she has never given up. Qi started using an insulin pump about 15 years ago. Now, Qi works as a pediatric technician and volunteers with the Beijing Diabetes Prevention and Control Association. She established the China Type 1 Diabetes Caring Foundation, a first-of-its-kind educational organization.

Sheila Vasconcellos, 45, of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Medical Condition: Type 1 Diabetes
Therapy: Insulin Pump

"Love is a powerful remedy that everyone can share."
Sheila has had type 1 diabetes for 30 years. In January 2014, she began using an insulin pump. Determined to give back, Sheila started volunteering at Casa de Apoio, where she helps children diagnosed with cancer and serious blood conditions. Shelia believes that the insulin pump has given her an extra life, and hopes to live another 45 years loving and supporting others.

Dr. Thomas Okello, 36, of Kampala, Uganda
Medical Condition: Damaged heart valves due to Rheumatic Heart Disease
Therapy: Heart valves

"Treatment is a miracle."
At just 16 years old, Thomas received a double valve replacement as a result of severe rheumatic heart disease (RHD). Many of his fellow Ugandans with RHD, however, do not receive this life-saving treatment. Thomas, who is now a cardiologist, began working with Uganda Rheumatic Heart Disease Registry to raise awareness about RHD and inspire others to take care of their hearts.

Twinkle VanFleet, 47, of Sacramento, California, U.S.
Medical Condition: Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, Type 2
Therapy: Spinal Cord Stimulation

"When you think you can't, maybe you already have."
Twinkle was diagnosed in 2003 with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome/Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome (CRPS/RSD), a painful, debilitating and often progressive central nervous system disorder. A spinal cord stimulator has helped manage her pain. As advocacy director and executive board member for the Power of Pain Foundation, Twinkle works on policy efforts, patient awareness and many other aspects of chronic pain.

Vincent Browne, 80, of Galway, Ireland
Medical Condition: Cardiovascular disease, Heart Attack
Therapy: Coronary stents

"Keep busy."
Vincent had his first heart attack in 1989, which was treated with angioplasty and a triple bypass. Following his second heart attack, he was fitted with three coronary stents - and then three more after his third heart attack. He has volunteered for the past 18 years with Croí, the West of Ireland Cardiac Foundation, to help them raise money to bring heart disease prevention and recovery to tens of thousands of people in Ireland.

Tanya Hall, 38, of Melbourne, Australia
Medical Condition: Cardiac Arrhythmias, including atrial fibrillation
Therapy: Pacemaker

"Never give up on your dreams, no matter your circumstances."
Tanya was born with a hole in her heart and a heart murmur. She had open heart surgery when she was nine years old. At 21, she awoke to severe chest pain, her heart racing at two hundred beats per minute. Ultimately, she was diagnosed with a number of heart arrhythmias, and received a pacemaker. In 2011, frustrated with the lack of cardiac patient support groups in Australia, and at a loss for how she would spend the rest of her life, Tanya founded hearts4heart to fill both voids.

About Medtronic and Medtronic Philanthropy
Medtronic plc (www.medtronic.com), headquartered in Dublin, Ireland, is among the world's largest medical technology, services and solutions companies - alleviating pain, restoring health and extending life for millions of people around the world. Medtronic employs more than 85,000 people worldwide, serving physicians, hospitals and patients in approximately 160 countries. The company is focused on collaborating with stakeholders around the world to take healthcare Further, Together. 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.

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Contacts:
Rich Fischer
Medtronic Philanthropy
+1-763-505-2975

Caroline Geiser
Exponent PR
+1-612-305-6194

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