

# UBC Medicine/Dentistry Spring Gala 2013 Charity: The Kelty Patrick Dennehy Foundation

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This year's UBC Medicine/Dentistry Spring Gala was proud to use its profits to support the excellent work of the Kelty Patrick Dennehy Foundation. The Kelty Patrick Dennehy Foundation was founded by Kerry and Ginny Dennehy in 2001 after their son, Kelty Patrick Dennehy, took his life at age 17.<sup>1</sup> Kelty suffered from depression, and in honour of Kelty's generous and sincere spirit, the Dennehys created the Foundation to help those who suffer from depression, as well as their families.<sup>1</sup>

The alarming statistics around depression make one wonder as to why the illness does not receive the attention it deserves. According to the 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey, 4.8% of Canadians suffer from major depression—only 0.2% less than the proportion of Canadians under the age of 75 with diagnosed heart disease.<sup>2,3</sup> Suicide due to depression is the second leading cause of death among teens in Canada, and as approximately 80% of suicides present with warning signs in advance, better education, intervention strategies, and further insight into the disease are warranted.<sup>4</sup>

The goal of the Kelty Patrick Dennehy Foundation is to improve the care, education, and research around depression, and to remove the stigma associated with mental illness.<sup>1</sup> In the 12 years since its creation, the Foundation has made enormous contributions to preventing depression-related suicides in Canadian youth. The \$4 million raised to date have contributed to the Mental Health Facility for Youth and Children at B.C. Children's Hospital, and to research initiatives at the UBC/VGH Centre of Excellence for Depression.<sup>5</sup> Another success of the Foundation is the establishment of Kelty Mental Health Resource Centres, the first of which opened in 2008 at B.C. Children's Hospital.<sup>5</sup> These centres provide education, resources and support to patients, families, communities and health care providers, thus bringing together everyone who can play a role in supporting and caring for those who suffer from depression and mental illness.<sup>5</sup> Other Centres will be opening at Lion's Gate Hospital and UBC/VGH.<sup>5</sup>

So what is next for the Dennehys? This summer, from May to August, Kerry and Ginny Dennehy will be embarking on an 8000 km bike ride across the country as part of the Enough is Enough campaign, with a goal of raising \$ 1 million for their Foundation.<sup>6</sup> Along the way, they will meet with communities to discuss the issue of mental health and what can be done to help those who

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suffer from depression.<sup>6</sup>

While speaking with Kerry Dennehy, he emphasized how proud he and his wife are of the accomplishments of their Foundation, particularly in creating facilities dedicated solely to mental health. The idea for these facilities stemmed from their own experience with their son; they did not know where to turn after their son took his life and felt ignorant about the dangers of depression. Through their Foundation, the Dennehys hope to warn other parents and sufferers about the dangers of depression and to remove the stigma associated with the illness, which keeps many people from seeking help. Their ultimate goal is to establish a Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre in each province and territory.

For more information on the Kelty Patrick Dennehy Foundation, the Enough is Enough campaign, or to find out how you can support the Foundation's work, please visit <http://www.thekeltyfoundation.org>.

## REFERENCES

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