

News Release

Ottawa Parkinson's researchers share \$205,000 - funds raised at SuperWalk

OTTAWA, ON, November 4, 2009 . . . Four Ottawa, Ontario scientists all share a common goal – moving closer to identifying a cure for Parkinson's disease. They will also share \$205,000 research funding from Parkinson Society Canada raised at SuperWalk for Parkinson's.

The diverse research projects are not merely about scientific curiosity. For Piotr Kolodziej (two year \$30,000 graduate student award), whose grandfather who was diagnosed with Parkinson's before he died, his work at University of Ottawa is very personal. Other PSC grant recipients include Dr. David Park (one year \$45,000 pilot project grant), Sarah Jean Hewitt (two year \$30,000 Harrison McCain Foundation graduate student award) and Dr. Marc Germain (two year \$100,000 basic research fellowship).

The four researchers are being recognized at a Parkinson Society Ottawa event at City Hall today celebrating this year's successful SuperWalk for Parkinson's, an annual national fundraising event that has been taking place in Ottawa for 14 years. This year, in Ottawa, participants and sponsors raised \$127,684.79.

"We are delighted to support Parkinson Society Canada's national Parkinson's research program through activities such as SuperWalk. It's exciting to see our local researchers receiving national recognition for the excellent work they do," says Dennise Taylor-Gilhen, CEO Parkinson Society Ottawa.

Over 100,000 Canadians have Parkinson's, a neurodegenerative disease. Currently there is no cure. Movement is normally controlled by dopamine, a chemical that carries signals between the nerves in the brain. When cells that normally produce dopamine die, the symptoms of Parkinson's appear. People can live with Parkinson's for years.

According to Joyce Gordon, President and CEO of **Parkinson Society Canada**, the organization has a long tradition of funding Canadian-based Parkinson's research. "Along with the support services, advocacy and education, we provide research funding that engages young Canadian talent to encourage them to pursue careers that offer hope for a better life for Canadians living with Parkinson's every day," says Gordon.

This year, **Parkinson Society Canada** is funding 28 projects across Canada totaling \$1,079,340 to encourage innovative ideas and foster emerging scientists who choose careers to further understand Parkinson's disease. Grant applications are peer reviewed by **Parkinson Society Canada's** Scientific Advisory Board comprised of Canada's leading neurologists and respected members of the scientific community.

Parkinson Society Canada, with its 12 regional partners, and over 235 chapters and support groups, is the only Canadian charitable organization dedicated to research, education, support and advocacy on behalf of over 100,000 Canadians living with Parkinson's. 2010 will mark PSC's 45th year of service in Canada.

-30-

Contact: Dennise Taylor-Gilhen
Parkinson Society Ottawa
613-722-9238
dtaylorgilhen@Ottawahospital.on.ca