
Bungy Challengers Jump to Support MS Society **Winning Means not having to jump off the Bungy Bridge**

Catapedaphobia- Fear of jumping from high and low places

April 28, 2008: Fear can be an excellent motivator, especially when it's a fear of plunging 140 feet off of a bridge attached to an elastic band. That sense of trepidation is a driving force behind the Bungy Challenge in Support of MS, a month-long competition to collect the most donations to support the MS Society. Challengers are Tom Benson, owner of WildPlay Element Parks, and Jonathan Bartlett, A Channel's Nanaimo Bureau Chief. The "loser" will be Bungy jumping off the WildPlay Bungy Bridge on May 27 and competition is expected to be fierce as both competitors are adamant they will not be taking the plunge.

Though an owner of WildPlay Element Parks, Tom Benson is not a Bungy jumper. "I've been a climbing instructor for almost 15 years and it goes against all my training and experience to essentially fall off of something," says Benson. "My staff have been encouraging me to jump for two years. From what I understand they will be supporting my competitor."

Jonathan Bartlett is equally determined to be a spectator, not a participant, on jump day. "I've had more than a few adventures, including hanging out of a helicopter, but I have no desire to Bungy jump," says Jonathan Bartlett, A Channel's Mid-Island Bureau Chief. "I keep telling myself it's for a good cause."

Benson was inspired to support the MS Society of Canada by his mother, who was diagnosed with MS in her mid-thirties and has continued to live an active, vibrant life in part because of the support provided by the MS Society. "My mom has benefited significantly from the programs offered by the MS Society and The Bungy Challenge is a way for me to give back to that," says Benson.

Through the month of May, which is MS Awareness Month, competitors will be collecting donations in support of their desire not to jump. The results will be announced at 11:00 a.m. on May 27, "jump day", and neither competitor will have advance notice of who the winner is.

The majority of funds raised support MS programs on southern Vancouver Island and the remainder contribute to the MS research program, which is coordinated nationally by the MS Society of Canada. Programs offered at the Capital Region Chapter include therapeutic exercise programs, social and recreational programs and information, education and support. This year the MS Society of Canada commemorates 60 years of work in the fight against MS.

Donations can be made at www.wildplayparks.com where donors click the Make Tom Jump or Make Jonathan Jump button. Donations may also be dropped at the A Channel Bureau in Nanaimo at 82 Commercial Street or in Victoria at the A Channel offices at 1420 Broad Street. Donors are asked to clearly mark on their donation which competitor they are supporting. Donations for the Bungy Challenge will be accepted until midnight on May 26.

In addition, Benson is also offering "Zip by Donation" Sundays until May 24. Donors will have an opportunity to experience the Canyon Zip and contributions will support Benson's campaign to have Bartlett Bungy jump.

Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic, often disabling disease of the brain and spinal cord. It is the most common neurological disease of young adults in Canada. Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 15-40, and they will experience the unpredictable effects of MS for the rest of their lives. The MS Society provides services to people with MS and their families. Funds are also allocated to research to find a cause and cure.

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