



*For Immediate Release*

**March of Dimes Canada Invests \$1.5 million to Advance Research in  
Acquired Brain Injury at the University of Toronto**  
*Establishes March of Dimes Canada Early Career Professorship*

Toronto, ON, June 18, 2014 – Today, March of Dimes Canada and the University of Toronto (U of T) signed a \$1.5 million agreement to advance research in recovery from brain injuries and stroke, making the donation to the University the largest made by the national charitable organization in its over 60 year history.

Brain injuries and stroke affect 80,000 to 100,000 Canadians every year and are the leading cause of disability worldwide. Survivors often have difficulties with daily activities and participating in their communities due to mobility, communication, cognitive and perceptual impairments, and only about half are able to return to work. With this donation, March of Dimes Canada is acting on its mission to “maximize the independence, personal empowerment and community participation of people with physical disabilities” by establishing the ***March of Dimes Canada Early Career Professorship*** in U of T’s Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy.

“This is the first major partnership we have with a university and we are excited at the prospect of working with the selected faculty member, with graduate students and with the wider university network to benefit Canadians with disabilities as it relates to our mission,” said Andria Spindel, President and CEO of March of Dimes Canada.

The ***March of Dimes Canada Early Career Professorship*** will provide a faculty member in the early stages of her or his research career with a well-established framework for investigating interventions and pathways to increase the independence and social integration of brain injury survivors. The professorship will also provide research evidence to enhance existing March of Dimes Canada programs, which serve more than 60,000 Canadians annually.

“We are thrilled and proud to be the recipient of this landmark gift by March of Dimes Canada,” says Dr. Susan Rappolt, Chair of U of T’s Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. “This professorship creates tremendous capacity for new scientific evidence to improve the quality of life and productivity of individuals with acquired brain injuries and their families through new opportunities for training students and collaborating with our partners across the Rehabilitation Sector.”

The University of Toronto’s rehabilitation scientists and practitioners work collaboratively to translate new research evidence into therapies that help individuals with brain injuries capitalize on their post-injury strengths to get them out of the hospital and back into their roles in their communities. The Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy is an

international leader in research on acquired brain injuries at the individual, community and societal levels.

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(Back row - L-R) Darina Landa, Mickey Milner, Susan Rappolt, Catharine Whiteside, Deborah Pal, Katie Rock  
(Front row – L-R) Andria Spindel, Jerry Lucas, Blair Roblin

### **March of Dimes Canada**

March of Dimes is a nationally registered charitable organization providing support services to people with disabilities, their families and caregivers across Canada. Our goal is to enhance the independence and community participation of people with physical disabilities every day through a wide range of programs and services across Canada. For more information, please visit: [www.marchofdimes.ca](http://www.marchofdimes.ca) or call 1-800-263-3463.

### **Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Toronto**

In 1918, the University of Toronto became home to the first ever Canadian academic program in occupational therapy. The Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy currently has more than 20 core faculty, and over 300 clinical faculty with status appointments, all dedicated to the education of our 160 professional students. Our vision is to develop innovative occupational therapists who are essential contributors to health while demonstrating their skills in, and commitment to, research. For more information, please visit <http://www.ot.utoronto.ca/index.asp>.

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