

# COUNT ME IN 4 tomorrow

Keeping you informed about Alberta's *Tomorrow Project*, a research initiative designed to discover more about what causes cancer and other long-term health conditions.

VOLUME FOUR - ISSUE ONE - SUMMER 2013

VISIT: [WWW.IN4TOMORROW.CA](http://WWW.IN4TOMORROW.CA)

## Thank You Alberta!

Participants from across our beautiful province continue to amaze us with their enthusiasm for our study. Thank you for your support.

This support has been even more evident in the recent wake of floods that have affected much of southern Alberta including our study centre at the Holy Cross in the Mission neighbourhood.

We'd like to start this edition of the newsletter by thanking you for being patient while we relocated our Calgary study centre on August 12, 2013.

We are now temporarily located at East Calgary Health Centre.

Since our last newsletter in 2012, we have enrolled over 3,000 more Albertans in the study. We have decided to extend our recruitment deadline because of this phenomenal response!

We have closed our Edmonton study centre, and will instead offer temporary study centres at various Edmonton and area locations.

We hope this approach will encourage even more of you to book an appointment.

If you have any comments or concerns that you would like to share with us, we would love to hear from you! Our contact information is below.

## Please Help Us Keep Our Files Up To Date

The *Tomorrow Project* is a long-term study and staying in touch with participants is important for the project's success.

Keeping current participant contact information reduces the number of participants who are 'lost to follow up'.

Please take a moment to contact us with any changes or additions to your contact information. Even if you move outside of Alberta or Canada, we can send you information and updates.

## Contact Us

Email: [tomorrow@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:tomorrow@albertahealthservices.ca)  
Toll free telephone: 1(877)-919-9292

Outside Canada:  
1(403)-476-2469 (call collect)

Mail: The Tomorrow Project  
AHS – Holy Cross Site  
Box ACB, 2210 2 St SW  
Calgary, AB, T2S 3C3

## Online

[www.in4tomorrow.ca](http://www.in4tomorrow.ca)  
[www.facebook.com/in4tomorrow](https://www.facebook.com/in4tomorrow)  
Twitter: @in4tomorrow



Left to right: Project Assistants Greg Flewelling, Lauren Roberts and Chelsea Leishman volunteering at a flood-affected neighborhood in High River. (July 2013)

In Partnership With



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“ I’ve been a participant for 6 years after losing my mother to cancer. I hope people have a look at this worthwhile research project, participate, and spread the word. ”

IAN RONNIE  
RED DEER, AB  
TOMORROW PROJECT PARTICIPANT

## The Tomorrow Project Joins Fit for Change to raise almost \$15,000

The *Tomorrow Project* recently joined forces with Zumba Fitness group *Fit for Change* to create a one-of-a-kind fundraising event at the Talisman Centre with all proceeds benefitting the Alberta Cancer Foundation. This year the *Fit for Change* team decided to focus their efforts toward a cancer fundraiser



Pictured (left to right): Pierie L. Danysh, Michelle Neufeldt, Cora Penner, Cheryl Martin, Tisha MacEacheron and Nikki C. Butcher of Fit for Change and the Alberta Cancer Foundation. (November 2012)

in Calgary. Many of the instructors had recently been affected by the devastating disease and contacted the *Tomorrow Project* about how they could help. They decided to host a two-hour Zumba Fitness class and silent auction. Nearly 200 volunteers and participants attended the fitness class and all silent auction items were sold. They raised \$14,764 for the Alberta Cancer Foundation.

## Partnering with Organizations to Expand Recruitment

The *Tomorrow Project* recently conducted two highly successful mobile study centres for Calgary Transit employees!

On March 20 - 21, 29 employees participated in the first mobile study at the Calgary Transit main office. Twenty-three participants attended the second study centre April 30 - May 1 at their Victoria Park location. Calgary Transit Manager for Safety and Security,

Stephen Hansen, and Calgary Transit’s Wellness Coach, Janet Boswell, were instrumental in ensuring both events were successful.

“Over the years, there have been a number of Calgary Transit employees who have been impacted by cancer,” says Hansen. “This was an opportunity for employees to contribute, in a proactive way, to a better understanding of the causes of cancer and, hopefully, to find a cure.”

The *Tomorrow Project* has conducted three other corporate mobile study centres in 2013. The first, at the Highwood Recreation Centre resulted in 36 new enrollments. We topped this at the Devon United Church with 40 residents enrolling. Our strongest response came from the Athabasca Healthcare Centre, where 100 residents enrolled. Thanks to all the attendees and organizers.

The *Tomorrow Project* has plans to continue booking corporate mobile study centres throughout the rest of 2013. Think you might have employees interested in joining the *Tomorrow Project*? If you can gather 25 co-workers, we will gladly come to you!

## Sitting Down with Dr. Paula Robson

*Recently, we sat down with our Scientific Director, Dr. Paula Robson, who shared with us her perspective on the study.*

**As Scientific Director, what is your role in the *Tomorrow Project*?**

To ensure that we are asking the right questions, and collecting information and biological samples that will actually support meaningful research in the future.

**What do you find most rewarding about working for this study?**

It is the feeling that we are contributing to something that will advance knowledge about the causes of cancer in the future.

Like just about everyone I know, I have lost good friends and family members to the disease, and I want to do something that will help us understand how to reduce risk in the future.



Dr. Paula Robson, Scientific Director for The Tomorrow Project, giving an interview with Alberta Primetime. (August 2011)

**When can *Tomorrow Project* participants who have come in for a study centre visit, and have filled out the latest survey, expect the next follow-up?**

Right now, we’re planning for a follow-up in 2016. While this might seem like a long time from now, we need to plan carefully to make sure that our protocols are of high quality. We are planning for online questionnaire delivery and completion, and harnessing newer technology like smartphones or tablets, in combination with our traditional pencil and paper questionnaires for those who are not so comfortable with technology.

**Are there any plans to ask participants who have already donated blood for a repeat blood sample?**

We are starting to understand that changes over time will be important in finding clues about why some people develop cancer (or other health conditions) while others do not. Taking one blood sample can tell us something about a person’s exposure to their day-to-day environment at that point in time.

However, what we don’t know is how that information relates to 5, 10, 15 or 20 years in the future. Collecting repeat blood samples from the same people should give us some insight into the importance of changes over time. We’re working on a plan for this.

**What do you foresee for the *Tomorrow Project* in terms of contributing to cancer research?**

For some cancers, we will be looking for interactions between genetic profiles and the broader environments in which people live. For example, nutritional



scientists are starting to understand that different people metabolize nutrients differently depending on their genetic profiles, and the same may be true for other exposures.

Those metabolic differences may have some implications for cancer risk, and this is one of the reasons why we are planning to ask about diet in our next follow-up. We also hope to use other sources of information to link up with the data that we get from participants' questionnaires.

For example, as more information concerning air and water quality becomes available on a provincial basis, we hope to link that kind of information to where our participants live to see if



Lab Assistant Omar El Shahhat with Tomorrow Project participant Denise Lister at the Calgary Holy Cross Study Centre (March 2013)

we can find any patterns that suggest differences in risk profile associated with broader environmental profiles. There may also be important information about occupational risk factors.

**Do you find yourself eating healthier now that you're the Scientific Director of a Health Research study?**

I am a nutrition scientist by training, and have always worked in the area of diet and health. Unfortunately, I don't always find it easy to follow a good diet all the time. Like many people, I have a busy life, and many other competing priorities can get in the way!

**You're originally from Ireland, so what was your reason for moving to Canada in July of 2004?**

My husband took up a fellowship in surgical oncology in Calgary in 2004 for two years. I took a leave of absence from my university job, and promised them I would return in July 2006. By that time, we had grown to love Alberta, and when my husband was offered a job in Edmonton, we stayed, and the rest is history!

## Who's Who in the Tomorrow Project

Marj Moon of Calgary has always been compassionate about the suffering that cancer causes. She saw her friend from first grade leave the classroom with a cancer diagnosis, never to return; watched her 57-year-old father succumb to the disease; and as well, her co-worker, a young mother of two; her brother-in-law; and recently, her 36-year-old son-in-law. All these losses underlined to her the devastation cancer brings to its victims and loved ones.

Marj first heard about the *Tomorrow Project* three years ago. The project resonated with her when her son-in-law was ill with cancer at the time. She and her husband saw an opportunity to help in some small way. They jumped at the chance to become a part of the solution to this prevalent, destructive disease.

Marj realized that she could do some good by becoming an ambassador, since she works at Foothills Hospital. Marj figured that it provided her with an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of this study and perhaps increase participation.

Every week when she is able to, Marj dons her blue *Tomorrow Project* t-shirt and engages her co-workers and visitors who are interested in learning about the study. She provides them with information, runs a video, or just listens to their stories. Recently, Marj arranged for the *Tomorrow Project* staff to be on-site at the Foothills Hospital in different areas, where on-



Photo Courtesy: Marj Moon

the-spot enrollment could occur. This went on for almost two months, with Marj getting a reminder email sent to all Foothill personnel each time, explaining the location and time of the booth. With Marj's cooperation, the *Tomorrow Project* enrolled over 185 new participants in a two-month period!

Marj feels that moving forward from the loss of loved ones can be extremely difficult, yet moving forward beyond sadness revives hope. She believes that one of the most precious feelings one has is hope and the positive steps we take toward an active participation to fight cancer will help the healing process.

Marj would like every eligible Albertan to become a participant and ambassador for the *Tomorrow Project*. Marj found *Tomorrow Project* staff to be sensitive, appreciative and very supportive of volunteers. She stresses that having ambassadors at other hospitals in Alberta and throughout the community can be immensely helpful for the study.

As long as everyone takes positive steps forward and participates, Marj feels there is hope.

**What do you love most about Alberta?**

The general 'can do' attitude to getting stuff done. Many Albertans just seem to have an approach to life that depends on rolling up their sleeves and pitching in – I really like that!



Tomorrow Project and Fit For Change host Zumba Fundraiser (October 2012)

“ I joined this project a few months ago. This project will provide very valuable information for cancer research in the years to come. The more people that sign up, the more value the study will have!

JEFF MADSEN  
CALGARY, AB  
TOMORROW PROJECT PARTICIPANT

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## Research Update

The *Tomorrow Project* team is expanding to increase the use of *Tomorrow Project* data and samples. These are some projects in progress:

*Analyses of the baseline data collected by Alberta's Tomorrow Project.*

In 2007, the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research published population recommendations on food and nutrition, physical activity, body composition and other modifiable risk factors known to affect the risk of developing cancer. This project is using *Tomorrow Project* data collected between 2001 and 2009 to explore the extent to which Albertans comply with the cancer prevention guidelines.

*Survival analysis to estimate the association between Albertans adherence to cancer prevention guidelines and subsequent incidence of cancer in Alberta's Tomorrow Project cohort.*

Using the adherence to cancer prevention guidelines described above and the number of participants in the *Tomorrow Project* who have been diagnosed with cancer since joining the study, we aim to investigate the association between the adherence to cancer prevention guidelines and respective cancer incidence.

*A review of screening behaviours of the Tomorrow Project cohort in Alberta.*

Cancer screening guidelines provide important information to physicians and patients regarding optimal practice in early detection of cancers. We are using *Tomorrow Project* data to explore the extent to which healthy adult Albertans comply with various cancer screening guidelines. To determine the trend of screening utilization in Alberta, both baseline and follow-up data collected in 2008 will be explored.

## The Tomorrow Project - By the Numbers!

89	>>>>	Number of <i>Tomorrow Project</i> mobile study centres to date (As of August 30, 2013)
247	>>>>	Number of <i>Tomorrow Project</i> ambassadors (As of August 29, 2013)
21,828	>>>>	Total blood samples collected (As of August 27, 2013)
33,509	>>>>	Number of CORE questionnaires returned (As of August 27, 2013)
35	>>>>	Companies that have hosted a <i>Tomorrow Project</i> Lunch & Learn (As of August 30, 2013)
98	>>>>	Average number of Albertans that visit each mobile venue
Onoway (5.7%)	>>>>	Town/city with most participants per capita

## Looking for Participants to Visit our Study Centres

Are you interested in booking a study centre appointment but don't want to go alone? Bring a friend along with you!

Our friendly and helpful staff will take basic measurements from you and your friend in our relaxed and non-clinical environment. We will also invite you to donate a sample of blood and urine to help our researchers obtain valuable genetic information. Both you and your friend can book back-to-back appointments by calling 1-877 919-9292 or visiting [www.in4tomorrow.ca](http://www.in4tomorrow.ca)

Our office is temporarily located at East Calgary Health Centre at 4715 8 Avenue SE. We are open Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and offer occasional weekend appointments as well.

The *Tomorrow Project* also has a mobile team that travels throughout major urban centres in Alberta to make it easier for residents outside of Calgary to participate.

So far, over 21,000 participants have booked study centre appointments and thousands of other Albertans have graciously provided saliva samples by mail. We are now asking all of our participants who have not yet visited a study centre or previously provided saliva samples to book a study centre appointment.

According to Dr. Paula Robson, Scientific Director of the *Tomorrow Project*, "Blood holds so much more value than saliva. We can get DNA from saliva as well as blood, but blood samples can also be analyzed to understand many different exposures."

We hope to see you and a friend soon!



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## The Tomorrow Project

CONTACT US:

VISIT: [www.in4tomorrow.ca](http://www.in4tomorrow.ca)

CALL: 1-877-919-9292 OUTSIDE OF CANADA 1-403-476-2469

OR E-MAIL: [tomorrow@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:tomorrow@albertahealthservices.ca)

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