

PECSF helps one of our own

My name is Kelly Rapanos, and I work in the Deputy Minister's Office for the Ministry of Citizens' Services. Each year, I contribute to the Provincial Employee Community Services Fund (PECSF) through simple payroll deductions. This is an easy way for me to participate in a government-wide fundraising campaign while at the same time, donating much-needed funds to a charity I am very passionate about, the [Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada \(CCFC\)](#). I am a BC Public Service employee and I have Crohn's Disease.



Growing up, I was always one of the healthiest kids in the bunch. I rarely caught a cold or the flu, ate plenty of fruits and vegetables, and was competing around the continent as a national-level gymnast. I was the epitome of a happy, healthy, energetic child. I can clearly remember when all of that changed. At the age of 19, during a family trip to Ottawa, I started to notice strange symptoms. I was getting stomach aches regularly, had no appetite and lacked the endless amounts of energy I once had. At times, I was utterly incapacitated by pain.

Crohn's Disease is unpredictable and can affect any part of the gastrointestinal tract. It causes the intestinal tissues to become inflamed, form ulcers and bleed. Symptoms include severe abdominal pain, fatigue, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and weight loss due to mal-absorption. **Current treatment options are limited** to invasive surgeries or potent medications that cause severe side effects. There is no cure.

The CCFC invests its funds into the vital inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) research and education that is necessary if we hope to one day find answers. None of it could be possible without the ongoing support of the volunteers, CCFC chapter members and generous donors like you. Thanks to new treatment options and a commitment to healthy living, I have been in remission for more than 2 years. But, I still have my bad days and am more determined than ever to help find the cure.

Over 200,000 Canadian men and women have been diagnosed with some form of IBD. One of those individuals may work in the cubicle right next to you. This year, when making your PECSF donation, please remember the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada. Your donation will most-certainly help a co-worker, a relative or a good friend.