
Invisible No More - International Digital Health Tool Shatters Silence and Empowers Young Adults with Advanced Illness

(Winnipeg, Manitoba/Sydney, Australia, December 6, 2018) – Young adults and teens living with advanced illness have been virtually invisible in health care systems and online – until today. A new Canadian digital tool launching in Sydney, Australia is harnessing the unique stories of 14 young men and women living with advanced illness to help other young people in similar situations.

[LivingOutLoud.Life](#) features frank, deeply personal, often humorous video conversations and written vignettes by young Canadians. They share their experiences of pursuing education and their careers, navigating impacts on sexuality and fertility, managing relationships with family, friends and health care providers, raising their children and confronting end of life. Families, friends and health care providers will also gain a better understanding by viewing the stories.

The Canadian Virtual Hospice teamed up with young adults living with advanced illness, The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, The Thomas Sill Foundation, Young Adult Cancer Canada and Team Shan Breast Cancer Awareness for Young Women to develop [LivingOutLoud.Life](#), the world’s first online platform dedicated to support young adults and teens living with advanced illness.

Winnipegger Catherine Wreford Ledlow, a mother of two and former Broadway performer, was given less than six years to live when she was diagnosed with brain cancer at 32 years old. “How do I tell my kids why I’ll go bald and get tired so quickly when all they want to do is play?” Wreford Ledlow added, “Knowing that I’m not alone and can share my story with so many others, means the world to me. It’s OK to express how I feel and people will listen.”

Leading health experts from Canada and the US have also contributed content to help address a gap in trusted online content. Shelly Cory, Executive Director of the Canadian Virtual Hospice remarked, “The impact of teens and young adult diagnoses is being amplified by the fact that their needs aren’t understood or even recognized.” Cory added, “So we asked them to drive the process – they defined content, design and functionality. They’ve filled an international gap and given those living with advanced illness around the world a huge gift.”

“Cross-Canada surveys of adolescents with cancer conducted by the Partnership show that many don’t have access to resources and supports specific to their unique needs. As a result, and from what I see in my own practice, many younger patients have significant physical, emotional and practical challenges that go unaddressed during treatment or end-of-life care,” said Dr. Paul Grundy, Expert Lead, Pediatric, Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology at the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. “[LivingOutLoud.Life](#) is an important online resource that will not only provide quality educational resources, but is an interactive community that provides

support to younger people in their cancer journey. The Partnership is pleased to continue our work with the Canadian Virtual Hospice to identify and address gaps in care for this vulnerable patient group.” – The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

“We are pleased to be a supporter of the [LivingOutLoud.Life](#) project. It is our hope that this worthwhile initiative will have an impact on many young adults who are diagnosed with advanced illness by helping them cope with and guiding them through the questions they face going forward.” – The Thomas Sill Foundation

A French version of [LivingOutLoud.Life](#) will launch in May 2019.

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About the Canadian Virtual Hospice:

[Canadian Virtual Hospice](#) is a digital health care leader and the world’s most comprehensive online portal for information and support on advanced illness, palliative care and grief. It serves the information and support needs of people living with life-limiting illness, families and caregivers, health providers, researchers and educators. It operates: [VirtualHospice.ca](#), [PortailPalliatif.ca](#), [MyGrief.ca](#), [LivingMyCulture.ca](#), [Methadone4Pain.ca](#), [KidsGrief.ca](#), [DeuilDesEnfants.ca](#) and numerous social media platforms.

About the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer:

The [Canadian Partnership Against Cancer](#) is an independent organization funded by the federal government to accelerate action on cancer control for all Canadians. The Partnership’s model is unique to addressing cancer, cooperating and collaborating across jurisdictions and organizations.

About the Thomas Sill Foundation:

Mr. Sill was a chartered accountant and astute investor who lived his entire life in Winnipeg. He built a fortune which became the basis for the [Thomas Sill Foundation](#). In his last will, Tom Sill established the foundation which bears his name.