

Physical Therapy – Adding life to your days!

Some people seem to know from the day that they are born what they want to do for a career, others find their direction. Danny Halpin found his way to a career in Physiotherapy while attending University in Saskatchewan. Danny was a strong student in high school with studies coming easy to him. Initially he thought that he wanted to be a gym teacher, following the footsteps of his father. This direction changed through conversations within the university environment with friends. These conversations led him to a rewarding career as a Physiotherapist. It was in university that Danny found his direction towards his career as well as a love for running. He was inspired by both of his parents wanting a career including caring and movement. Physiotherapy is a perfect blend of his mother's career as a registered nurse and his father's career as a physical education teacher. In 2011, Danny graduated with a degree in Kinesiology and a Masters in Physiotherapy.

He was quickly recruited to become a team player in the NRHA physiotherapy department. At the time, he was single and uncertain as to where he wanted to work. The Pas seemed like a good place, as it was a short drive back to his home community of Flin Flon and he was familiar with a northern rural lifestyle. His initial reaction to the physiotherapy department was "impressive"! His work space was located within the Wellness Center. Often this type of service is available within urban centers but rarely seen in a rural community the size of The Pas. The Wellness Center and the NRHA negotiated a partnership operating some of their services from the Wellness Center when the structure was being conceived. The result is a state-of-the-art facility supporting a walking track, multiple exercise spaces, exercise equipment and stretching stations. The wellness center was created to support many community users, including the fit and all parameters of fitness. The physiotherapy department situated within the center was a bonus feature added to support the needs of those moving back towards mobility and improved health. There is a variety of props to assist movement and patient progress within the Wellness Center. Many clients that are referred to Danny have stated that this was their first introduction to the facility. Some outpatients are amazed and in awe of the services and the amount of equipment available within this space.

Danny works with people of all ages, injuries, diseases, and health issues. Daily he is involved with patients who are suffering from neurological conditions, (strokes, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's), and muscular skeletal recoveries associated with Injuries, accidents, and aging. He contributes to improved mobility and health of many referred and self-referred patients. One quality that helps Danny get through his work day is his personality. He is exceptional at building therapeutic trusting relationships. This skill is essential in any work environment but is ultimately the most important skill when treating those who are suffering. Danny has treated many out patients who have recovered. Many thank him for their path back to health. Each day that Danny shows up he creates a stronger connection with his patients and with community.

The global pandemic shut down the physiotherapy services at the Wellness Center due to the risk of transmission of the virus. Danny was reassigned back to the hospital during this time, continuing to work with acute care at the hospital physiotherapy services. These are stressful times for all people working on the front lines. The Corona Virus has taken away many of the freedoms that help keep us healthy. Danny and other front-line workers are coping day by day. They continue to serve those who are ill, requiring the services provided by the hospital. Each day they go to work, taking precautions to ensure that they stay protected and those entering the facility are protected. Some days are difficult, as

this has been ongoing for over a year now. Danny looks after his overall health through a supportive family, a regular outdoor running practice and volunteer work as a Kinsmen. He is a member of the #newpark623 committee to ensure that his children have opportunity. He is one of a few who are fully involved in youth infrastructures such as the outdoor rink and skatepark community initiatives.

Danny's regime to maintain his physical and mental wellness is through the sport of running. It all started in Saskatoon, with his interest growing exponentially towards marathon running. He became serious about the sport, studying and researching training techniques. His passion for running and marathon running is alive and a regular part of his healthy lifestyle commitment. This is one activity that Danny genuinely enjoys. It allows him to move into a freeing space outdoors, safe from the virus, and generating those good feel endorphins that carry forward into other aspects of his life. When Danny is feeling low, he ties up his shoe laces and heads outdoors to run. It is one practice that Danny uses to decompress and relieve daily stress. His interest in marathon running has brought him many friendships. He discovered ultra-marathon running which is a different type of running all together. This sport involves running 100 kilometers on various surfaces and elevations including farm fields, bushes, vertical changes, obstacles, and tree lines. It is a test of endurance, both mental and physical at an extreme level.

You may drive by Danny running on the side of Ralls Island Road and the Carrot Valley highway. He puts in the time and the miles. He runs regularly when he is in training. Typically, he will run 100 kms or more a week. Danny has participated in many half and full marathons across Canada and currently is running in virtual races. He has participated in Opasquia Indian Days 14 km race and won twice. He loves to run. He raced in the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service Half Marathon, Manitoba Marathon, multiple Saskatchewan marathons, the Clearwater Lake Half marathon and the Hecla Half marathon among others. He has raised awareness towards Cystic Fibrosis by running in Marathon by the Sea held annually in St. John's, New Brunswick. Danny is proud to have raised \$4000.00, donating it to Cystic Fibrosis Canada.

As he continued to run with a plan and routine, Danny's marathon times improve. He set a goal and met it. His run in the 2018 Saskatchewan Full Marathon qualified him to run in the 2019 Boston Marathon. The Boston Marathon is noted as one of the most difficult marathons to qualify for. This annual event is held on Patriot's Day (April 15) with runners having to meet a stringent qualifying time. There are over 500,000 spectators and 30,000 runners. You can imagine the energy created as you cross the finish line. Danny finished the 42 km race with an official time of 3:35:00. Overall, Danny placed 3583 in his division. The Boston Marathon is an incredible experience with so many emotions emanating from the event. Upon completion of the race, Danny felt like a Rockstar! Danny continues to set his goals, and trains regularly, involving his running lifestyle to support charitable health organizations.

Danny met his wife Emma Lees within the first year that he arrived in The Pas. They were both attracted to the community first through employment and then to each other through community events. He was immediately attracted to Emma's energy and enthusiasm. Within a short period, they were spending a lot of time together. Together they have built a strong healthy relationship, married, and have two young children. These girls have added much joy to their lives. Jillian is 2 years old and Natalie is 9 months old. Although the family has put a valiant effort into staying vigilant with the restrictions, it is becoming more challenging. The entire family is feeling the stress of disconnecting from friends, not

having regular play dates for their children, and the social void created by the pandemic. They do their best to entertain each other, but long for the days when things return back to normal.

Danny and Emma are both involved in community volunteer service groups. Danny has been involved with the Kinsmen for seven years. He enjoys the work of this group, stating that it contains a vast amount of knowledge and expertise within the membership. Their general meetings are twice a month involving food and a wonderful home cooked meal prepared by one of their members. There are multiple generations of men who have contributed to the success of Kinsmen community projects and Kinsmen success across the country. Together they support community projects, run the NMTF Dog Derby, hence the dog logo is imprinted on the Kinsmen jersey. Annually the Kinsmen contribute 1000-man hours a year to cover every detail of the dog derby and its success. They have pledged \$25,000.00 towards the skatepark, currently working towards fundraising for this pledge. Emma is involved in the Kinettes, a counterpart women's sector whose goal is to support and build community. There is always something going on in the community. Each of these groups welcome new recruits and volunteers. Danny along with other volunteers cannot stress enough the valuable work of volunteers. We can never have enough volunteers.

As you can see, each person in our community has so much to offer. Danny plays many roles and finds ways to maintain his health and those he encounters within his workplace. Danny is one within the health care system that works daily to care for those people who come to them in a time of physical distress. Danny is a supportive husband, a loving father, and a community minded individual. He gives his personal time to be involved in NMTF events, skatepark and Kinsmen. He is currently feeling the stresses of being under lockdown as are many other health care workers at the one-year marker. Thank you, Danny Halpin, for choosing The Pas NRHA to work and choosing to support the community in so many ways. You are appreciated!

Stay strong, be safe and cross our fingers for a speedy vaccination rollout to create that additional layer of protection from the Virus.

Written by Denise Duncan

Make Shift Happen.