

Nobody Wants to

Talk About It...

by Sheryl Bennett Wilson

He's the easy-going host and producer of Rogers Daytime. He emcees at countless charities and events throughout the year. He's a husband and father. And now Derick Fage is the Champion of The Canadian Continence Foundation, (TCCF). And for Fage it's personal. "I was born with high imperforate anus. Which means in lay-man's terms, I literally didn't have one," says Fage. "I had colostomy surgery at birth and 45 years ago that kind of surgery was major." Fage also had other complications that are not uncommon with this kind of malforma-

tion. Until Fage reached school age, he and his family had strategies for coping. But that all changed once he started school.

"My kind of incontinence is not easy to hide," says Fage, "so sure, kids noticed and I was bullied, a lot. I also had huge support from not just my parents, but teachers and good friends who stood up for me." Fage says that one family in particular, the Goodwin's, were his salvation growing up. Just about every weekend he and his family would head to the Goodwin's cottage. No-one talked about his condition and

their children never questioned it. It also gave Fage a stress-free environment so he could learn how to manage his condition better. "Here's the thing," says Fage, "I can name every one of my personal heroes, the people who helped me and were supportive. But I can't name one bully."

Fage has always been upfront and open about his condition. And sometimes that's not easy. "It's not exactly a topic people want to hear about," says Fage, "but I had to tell my work colleagues and I told my wife about it the first day we met." So when Jacqueline Cahill, the Executive Director of The Canadian Continence Foundation appeared as a guest on his TV show, he thought it was time to go public. The response was overwhelming. "My Facebook page exploded with messages of support," says Fage. "More to the point, people shared their stories of isolation with me. That was heartbreaking." Cahill had come on the show to talk about how incontinence affects millions of Canadians. She left the show with a Champion for the Canadian Continence Foundation. "Most people don't realize that at least 3.5 million Canadians are affected by urinary incontinence alone," says Cahill. "And that's a conservative number. Or that the cost impact for individuals, employers and the health care system is in the neighbourhood of \$8.5 billion dollars a year." As Fage knows whether it's fecal or urinary incontinence, the impact on a person's life can be devastating.

"The Canadian Continence Foundation has been around since 1986 providing advocacy for people



Derick Fage – Fight Announcer, Ringside for Youth

and patients,” says Cahill. “In all those years working as a charity with no government funding, we’ve been looking for a champion for our cause. And now we’ve found him.” Fage says he wants to give people hope, raise awareness of continence issues and help them find strategies to cope. “I attend two to three events a week. I host a daily TV show. Can I have a bad day? You bet,” says Fage. “I just want to demonstrate that if I can do it, you can do it too. And there is support through The Canadian Continence Foundation.”

You can reach Jacqueline Cahill, Executive Director of The Canadian Continence Foundation Toll-free at 1-800-265-9575, by email: jcahill@canadiancontinence.ca or by mail, P.O. Box 417, Peterborough, ON, K9J 6Z3. Visit the TCCF website at www.canadiancontinence.ca.

**Derick Fage and
Monika Fage-Palitz**

