



Letting hope fly

Sales team member Dan Valade keeps son Andrew's legacy alive.

When faced with the death of a beloved family member, many of us find it difficult to cope with our grief. For **Regional Sales Manager Dan Valade**, the loss of his son Andrew inspired him and his family to turn a tragedy into a legacy of strength, hope, and a vehicle to raise awareness for a terminal illness.



On March 21, 2008, after a 16-month battle, Andrew succumbed to a very rare form of brain cancer called *Gliomatosis Cerebri*. Known affectionately by his friends and family as "AJ", he was just 23 years old.

"AJ was lively and a free spirit," said Dan. "He was a wonderful and loving son, grandson, brother, friend, and boyfriend. He meant so much to so many people and we're extremely proud of him."

During Andrew's stay at the Princess Margaret Hospital, his love for music and his talent for song writing helped him through his darkest days. He continued to write music until he could no longer play his guitar, and staff at the hospital made sure that music from his favorite band, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, always played during his radiation treatments.



Dan Valade and his family with their beloved Andrew.

Shortly after their loss, the Valade family looked for a way to honour Andrew's life. Together with the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation, they came up with a solution to use his story to inspire hope and raise funds to advance cancer research. A glass dove, signifying AJ's courage and his tenacity, was recently dedicated at the *Wings of Hope* ceremony on December 10, 2008. Dan and his wife Jacqueline were also asked to share Andrew's story for the 2008 *Wings of Hope* campaign.

"The reason we chose the Valades for the 2008 campaign is simple," said Amelda Fitzpatrick, Development Coordinator, Leadership Giving at the Princess Margaret

Hospital Foundation. “Here is a family that took their grief and turned it into a vehicle to help others, to raise funds, to educate, and to inspire people. They are truly keeping Andrew’s spirit alive.”

Dan and his family continue to share their son’s story in hopes of someday finding a cure. “My family is so grateful to be given the opportunity to share AJ’s story,” said Dan. “The *Wings of Hope* campaign allows us to continue his legacy of strength and hope and to inspire those still fighting cancer today.”

Gifts donated to the *Wings of Hope* campaign will help advance cancer research and treatment breakthroughs at the Princess Margaret Hospital, one of the top five cancer research centres in the world. To read more about Andrew’s story and the *Wings of Hope* campaign, visit www.online.pmf.ca/dove. Or, to find out more about what you can do to help end cancer, visit the Princess Margaret Hospital’s website at www.pmf.ca.

Dan Valade and his family are truly making a difference in our *Community*. Their story of strength and hope is an inspiration to us all.



About the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation

Working together with health care and research professionals, patients, and the community, the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation raises over \$60 million annually to support breakthrough research, patient care, and education programs at Princess Margaret Hospital.