

Ensuring the Momentum Never Stops

Fourteen years ago, Sean Messing was in the mountains of Alberta taking part in a 100 km cross country ski event lead by MitoCanada co-founder, Blaine Penny. Blaine shared the heart-breaking story of his young son, Evan, who had been suddenly and severely disabled by mitochondrial disease.

The conversation resonated deeply with Sean. It was an experience that changed his perspective and introduced him to an incredible community that was in the process of establishing a national foundation that would impact thousands of lives.

Messing Ross Advisory Group is the Energizing Lives Sponsor of MitoSpin 2024, MitoCanada's largest annual fundraising event. When Sean Messing and Colin Ross, Senior Wealth Advisors for CIBC Wood Gundy's Private Wealth Management division that bears their names, were asked why they chose to provide such a generous gift, the response was delivered with clarity, compassion and kindness -- "When there is a friend in need, we answer. We never want another family to feel the hopelessness that comes when there is no one and no where to turn to."

While they offer professional expertise in investment management, spend a few minutes with this duo and you will quickly learn that their business actually is about respecting individuality, empowering ideas, being there for each other, and making dreams come true.

In 2017, MitoCanada was attempting to break yet another Guinness World Record. This time, the foundation that has become known for bringing communities and athletes together, was planning to run a full marathon with 112 people tethered together with surgical tubing. Sean was one of the runners.

There were hundreds of logistics to work through. Each member of the team had to dig deep into their physical, mental and emotional reserves. Everyone had to work together and not one person could be left behind when they crossed the finish line.

There was a critical moment about 32 kms into the race when most of the group believed the dream was over. With just over 10 kms to the finish line, the team was struggling. Time was working against them and one person didn't think they could continue.

Then, something unexpected happened. The sound of bagpipes reached the bottom of Mount Royal in Calgary and the energy began to shift. As the team began to tune into the sound, Sean saw Colin dressed in mito green as they approached 14th Avenue. The music and cheers of the crowd infused the MitoRunners with the energy they needed to finish the race, claim the world record, and secure a place in the news and history books for MitoCanada. The goal was always to simply finish – not finish fast.



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On that day, Sean and Colin recognized that they were involved with an organization that had a purpose that was bigger than either of them. They accepted that their connection to MitoCanada was a commitment to people everywhere because we are all impacted by the trillions of tiny mitochondria that fuel our lives,

Over the years, Messing and Ross have witnessed individuals working together to achieve what seemed impossible. They assert that it has been truly inspiring to see the foundation grow by leaps and bounds. They attribute this to the remarkable people involved as volunteers, board members and staff.

Sean currently serves as chairman of the board of directors for MitoCanada. He believes the work MitoCanada is doing to build awareness, support breakthrough discoveries, secure the attention of government, and, most importantly, support and save lives is critical, to the future health of all of us.

Sean's commitment is driven by a desire to be present when a cure for mitochondrial disease is discovered and strategies to protect healthy mitochondria are in place. He also wants to offer hope to families that are still waiting to get an accurate diagnosis and life-saving care. He doesn't want another person to experience that feeling of helplessness he heard during his ski 14 years ago.

The final words of the MitoSpin 2024 Energizing Lives Sponsor are simple and powerful, "We see our dollars going directly to support people who need it. We remain inspired because we've witnessed the difference local efforts can have on a global health issue and we never want to see the momentum stop."

Sean Messing and Colin Ross are Investment Advisors with CIBC Wood Gundy in Calgary.
The views of Messing Ross do not necessarily reflect those of CIBC World Markets Inc.