



CÉDRIC'S STORY

Written by Ryan Dreibelbis

Cédric's mother, Marie, was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2009. Today, she can no longer live at home with her husband, Alex, who has heart problems. The Heda family is originally from France, but Cédric is in here in Silver Spring for two years. Although he is no longer physically close to his mother, he carries her with him wherever he goes through his running and fundraising efforts.

In 2013, Cédric was running in a competition, wearing a shirt saying that he was running for his mother, who had Parkinson's. Another runner in the competition stopped him, told him they had Parkinson's, and thanked him for what he was doing. That was Cédric's starting point for Parkinson's advocacy - he realized he could raise money and get people talking through his athletic efforts. He knew that the symbolism would inspire people and hopefully bring awareness to his cause.

Cédric formed his own organization, "Vaincre Parkinson," or "Fight Parkinson's" in English, and began selling logo shirts. To date, he has sold approximately 1,500 shirts to people all over the world, including France, much of Europe, the U.S., and even further flung places like Hong Kong, Nepal, and multiple countries in Africa. The proceeds, as well as other donations totaling about 10,000 Euros every year, are donated to the research of Dr. Caroline Moreau of the Lille Hospital Center in Lille, France. Cédric also emphasized that the money he raises is not spent on administering the charity. Every euro goes to research.

Several things keep Cédric motivated while he is training and fundraising. For one thing, he reminds himself that his mother, Marie, did not choose to have the disease, but must deal with its pains and struggles every moment. Considering this perspective allows Cédric to continue running through exhaustion and pain. He is also motivated by the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "If you can't fly then run, if you



Above: Cédric at the end of a recent race in Washington, D.C.

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can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward." He repeats this mantra to himself as he moves through grueling events and training sessions.

Cédric isn't allowing his two-year stay in the U.S. to dampen or slow his efforts against Parkinson's. For one, he'll be running with us in October. For the more physically inclined, he is also running a 100-mile race through the Appalachian Mountains in honor of his mother, and would like to invite anyone willing to run different legs of the trek with him. I told him I was more of a five km type runner, but maybe some of you P4P marathoners would like to join in!

Cédric's efforts are truly inspiring, and show what motivated people like ourselves, joined against a common enemy, can accomplish. Cédric is excited to be partnering with P4P while he is in the U.S., and sees our organization as one made up of determined people with good hearts. If you see him at the race next month, please welcome him. If you're really brave, volunteer for the Appalachian run.

