

# The Governor General's Caring Canadian Award



## Daniel Richard Johnson

*Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia*

Daniel Johnson has been raising money for the blind and visually impaired for three decades. At first he did this by running marathons.

But his biggest claim to fame came when he sat down in his office chair to raise funds. In 1999, he set out to type the written form of the numbers between one and 1,000,000. He got this idea when he read about an Australian named Les Stewart, who had typed his way into the Guinness Book of World Records. M. Johnson thought he might do the same, using his typewriter to raise funds for the blind. He called his project the Millennium Typing Project and dedicated it to the memory of Helen Keller.

Along the way he went through 13 electric typewriters, 53 kilometers of typewriter ribbon and 20,000 pages of paper, until he typed his final number twelve years later on May 21, 2011. In so doing, he was able to provide almost \$130,000 for the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), just part of a total of almost \$340,000 he has raised altogether.

The money raised for children served by APSEA has provided funds for programs such as a new van for educational outings, closed circuit television and participation in a free summer camp for students. One of the best outcomes of the camp has been the opportunity for students to meet other children with similar disabilities across the Maritimes, establishing friendships that have lasted for years.

Flushed with the success of his initial venture, M. Johnson is now embarking on an equally ambitious project: that of typing numbers starting at 1,000,000 and going back to one. The many thousands of hours that M. Johnson has dedicated to helping the visually impaired is a testament to



his dedication, hard work, integrity and caring. He has paid a price in physical terms as well, at one point developing carpal tunnel syndrome forcing him to scale back his work for a time.

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M. Johnson shrugs off his achievement by saying that he “happens to enjoy typing and raising funds for blind children”, but these are modest words that do not do justice to his efforts, which exemplify what the Caring Canadian Award is all about. Despite his own commitments, M. Johnson has made time to help others less fortunate, not because he wants thanks but because he knows others will benefit.



The Caring Canadian Award was presented to Daniel Richard Johnson on April 17, 2012, at Rideau Hall. Sgt Ronald Duchesne 2012 © Rideau Hall