

ALS patient will 'slug away each and every day'

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was experiencing strange symptoms last spring. He had some involuntary twitching in his arms and legs, and during his weight-lifting workouts he appeared to be getting weaker.

On a five-day road trip for his then-job as director of training for Yum! Restaurants he noticed something with his voice.

"I felt my voice projection and strength was really waning and I felt a couple of days I was really jumbling my words up a little bit."

By mid-summer the avid golfer said his game really took a dive.

"I was losing distance, having problems getting the ball off the ground and making shots, things my buddies loved because I was playing crappy," said Murray.

He knew it wasn't because he hadn't been playing enough and made an appointment to see his family doctor who referred him to a neurologist.

Coping with the news has been difficult for him and his wife, as well as the rest of their family, but he remains positive.

"You've got to take it each day," said Murray. "We know the journey we're on now, we're slugging away each and every day."

"We have the blessing of two young children," Ben, 6, and Sarah, 3, he said.

He said the ALS Clinic at McMaster Hospital in Hamilton and the ALS Society have been "godsend."

Murray recently began taking medication that could add three to nine months to

his life expectancy. Since his diagnosis he's been coping fairly well, but there has been some deterioration of his arm and hand strength, his legs are wobbly and he's finding things like cutting food or getting lids off jars more difficult. There are also problems with his voice.

He doesn't think he will be able to work again.

'The most frustrating part of the disease is there is no timetable; everyone's different.'

He lost his job just a couple of weeks before he was diagnosed but he said his former company has been very supportive and helpful, "going to bat for me endlessly."

Murray doesn't know how quickly the disease will progress.

"The most frustrating part of the disease is there is no timetable; everyone's different," said Murray.

He and his wife are helping out with the Acton/Georgetown Walk for ALS set for Saturday, June 4 and plan to take part.

"They have been fantastic to us," said Murray of the local ALS group. They will be participating in the walk as part of the "Murray Machine" made up of family and friends who, to date, have raised close to

\$25,000.

"The outpouring from everyone has been fantastic," said Murray. "We have a huge contingent of family and friends attending the walk who have been nothing but supportive."

The third annual Acton/Georgetown Walk for ALS, a 5 km event, will be held at Gellert Community Centre at 9 a.m. June 4.

The first year more than \$250,000 was raised and last year \$155,000 was raised with more than 1,000 walkers taking part during each event. Organizers are hoping for the same level of support this year.

"Organizing this walk is truly a team effort with 15 people on this Walk committee, dedicated to volunteering their free time," said Mary Jo Knox, one of the Walk volunteers. "The walk gives us something concrete to do for a disease that often leaves us feeling so helpless."

Money raised goes toward providing equipment and support programs for those living with ALS as well as funding research for a cure. Donations can be made online at www.walkforals.ca or at an early bird registration Sunday, May 29 at the community room at Georgetown Superstore. Participants can drop off any money raised and pick up their Walk for ALS t-shirts as well as any incentive prizes they have earned.

To participate or donate to the Acton/Georgetown Walk for ALS contact Knox at mknnox2@cogeco.ca or go to www.walkforals.ca for more information.



Frog fun

The Royal Academy of Music recently held a family appreciation day at the Adamson farm in Glen Williams where students and their families enjoyed a variety of games. Here, 12-year-old Cameron McColl celebrates after landing a frog on the lily pad while 11-year-old Christian Holmes waits his turn to launch a frog.

Photo by Jon Borgstrom



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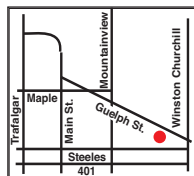
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