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UREPORT



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A decade of strength, support and hope with Georgetown/Acton Walk for ALS

Over the past decade, members of the Georgetown/Acton community have rallied together to help people and families living with ALS make the most of every moment, raising \$1.6 million for ALS Canada funds that provide help to those living with the disease today and hope in the form of research investment for a future without ALS.

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Susan Anderson is one member of the community who can attest to that collective spirit and determination. Since living through the ALS journey with her late husband, Scott, Susan will be participating in the WALK for ALS for the seventh year in a row.

"When Scott was diagnosed with ALS in 2010, the first thing he did was reach out to the WALK for ALS co-ordinators and they immediately embraced him," she recalls. "As a man who had strong roots in Georgetown, he was supported by both the WALK committee and the ALS community at large."

After witnessing and benefiting directly from the warm embrace of the community,

Susan decided to give back by volunteering on the committee - something she says has helped her to honour Scott's memory.

"The No. 1 thing about the WALK for ALS is that it gives families the opportunity to rally around one another. It allows us all to feel like we can do something for a disease that often leaves people feeling powerless."

One such family is the Grosso family. Catherine Grosso will be walking on June 9 with "Team Walk N Roll with Frank," bringing together a large crowd of supporters in honour of her husband Frank, who recently passed away.

"From the moment Frank was diagnosed, we felt so supported by the Georgetown/Acton community," says Catherine. "Every year, our neighbours host a holiday light display and they decided to pledge a portion of their donations to us for the past two years. One year at the WALK, we had 150 people show up to support and walk with us."

Both Catherine and Susan agree that the WALK for ALS has brought the community together by giving people the opportunity to do something meaningful for a disease with few treatment options. As an event that is almost exclusively run on donations from local

businesses, the success of the Georgetown/Acton WALK for ALS can be attributed to the sense of community and generosity in the area.

"There is a strong energy in our small town that is always at the WALK," says Catherine. "The volunteers are wonderful and there are smiles all around."

As we approach June 9 and the tenth anniversary of the Georgetown/Acton WALK for ALS, Susan continues to reflect on the life lessons she has learned along the way.

"Everyone starts their personal ALS story on a different chapter," she shares. "Scott's life with ALS has given me an appreciation for the community. It's so humbling and comforting to know that there are people to support me even after Scott has passed on."

"It's not just about the money they donate," she continues. "It's about the time, thoughtfulness and kindness they have extended to myself and other people and families living with ALS. The local generosity of the Georgetown/Acton community is beautiful."

The WALK for ALS takes place in over 90 communities across Canada until September 2018. Register or donate to a WALK near you at www.walkforals.ca. Donations for all WALK for ALS events are being accepted until Dec. 31, 2018.