

HONOURING TERRY FOX'S MEMORY

FOUNDATION GRANTS GO A LONG WAY TO ADVANCING CANCER RESEARCH, NOTES HURST



JON HURST
Column

Sunday's the day. The 38th annual Terry Fox Run takes place at the Gellert Centre in Georgetown and at Acton High School, rain or shine.

In Georgetown, the event runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. with Mayor Rick Bonnette attending the opening ceremony. Participants can access a 750-metre fun run or take part in a 5-km loop. There will be free pizza and cookies, a raffle and silent auction.

In Acton, participants can arrive any time between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m., with the official opening ceremonies taking place at 8 a.m. with the mayor and the newly-crowned Miss Acton Fall Fair in attendance to cut the ribbon.

Commemorative Terry Fox T-shirts will be on sale at both locations. Visit the Terry Fox website at www.terryfox.org to register as a participant, donate or sponsor a participant.

The Terry Fox Run is held in close to 700 communities all across Canada, with each individual run completely led and organized by volunteers.

The Terry Fox Foundation provides all of the necessary promotion and event materials, advice and support directly to each run site.

In addition, each year the foundation conducts an organizer workshop, with special guest speakers and presentations that

aim to inform and inspire those in attendance.

This past spring I attended the workshop along with Stephen Dame and Sean MacDonald from the Georgetown Terry Fox Run. Among the many great presentations were two that were exceptional, given their topic. The first was from Dr. John Irish, a surgical oncologist, who was a 20-year-old first-year medical student in 1980 when Terry was running his Marathon of Hope.

Irish is currently the chief of the department of surgical oncology at Princess Margaret Hospital/University Health Network and Mt. Sinai Hospital. In January he and his research team received a Terry Fox grant totalling \$6.6 million for research focused on the use of nanoparticles to improve the treatment and visualization of tumours, in particular prostate and thyroid.

Irish showed a video which highlighted the new advanced cancer care technologies that have been developed in Canada and are being used around the world.

He ended by thanking all in attendance for their fundraising efforts. The last emotional presentation of the day was preceded by a video of the announcement of Terry's passing, by nurse Alison Ince, who was the deputy director of nursing at Royal Columbia Hospital.

She was the situation manager and media spokesperson, helping the Fox family through Terry's final days. She was very close to Terry, and never left the hospital

during the last week of his life.

With her emotions barely held in check, she slowly and lovingly announced the following:

"Terry has completed the last kilometre of his marathon. A short time ago, at approximately 4:35, B.C. time, he died. He died surrounded by love - the love of his family, all of whom were with him, and the love and prayers of the entire nation. He has left us a legacy of hope, which I think will live and become part of our nation's heritage."

Most organizers in the room were unaware that the final speaker was in fact Alison Ince.

She wore a red Terry Fox T-shirt, an indication that she herself is a cancer survivor.

She described the Terry she came to know and love: stubborn, in the best sense of the word; a great sense of humour; an enormous appreciation of family; an incredible pride in the citizenship of Canada; most importantly, an unshakable belief that anyone who feels strongly about something should go out and do something about it.

She told many stories of Terry, some making us laugh, some bringing tears. She concluded by saying that Terry's journey was not a race, it was a relay, with Terry Fox passing the torch to us all.

Please join us this Sunday, as we continue Terry's journey of hope and honour his memory.

- Jon Hurst is a member of the Georgetown and Acton Terry Fox run organizing committee.

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