

Acton woman prepares for cancer walk

Acton's Lisa Gareau-Booth didn't think she had it in her to complete last year's 60-kilometre walk to raise money for cancer research, but immediately after crossing the finish line she signed up for this year's walk in September.

"My Mom's best friend of 30 years had uterine cancer, and last year, I walked to help increase her chances of survival," Gareau-Booth said recently. "About a month after the walk, she unfortunately passed away, so now, I'm walking to help others that have to go through what we went through with the loss of her."

Now called the Weekend to End Women's Cancers – not just breast cancer – benefiting the Campbell Family Institute at the Princess Margaret Hospital – the 60-kilometre walk, and a new 30-kilometre walk, take place on the street of Toronto.

Gareau-Booth said last year's walk was stressful, emotional, exhausting and "the most rewarding experience I've ever had," adding her mother's friend, in the middle

of a chemotherapy treatment, called her while she was on the walk to thank her.

"There I was sobbing and she was my inspiration. This year, my jersey says 'In Loving Memory.' No one should have to go through what her family and our family did and this walk will help," Gareau-Booth said, adding it gave her comfort last year to see all of the pink T-shirts indicating the walker was a survivor.

"At the end last year my feet were swollen, I had blisters and I was emotionally overwrought, but I knew it was nothing compared with what a cancer patients would deal with," Gareau-Booth said she knows she'll go the distance again this year, helped by 4,000 volunteers who supply the participants with food and water, medical care, restrooms, and an overnight campsite with tents and hot showers at Downsview Park.

"The overwhelming feeling is joy, not sadness – you talk to the other walkers and hear their stories and there is so much hope,

Gareau-Booth said, adding she's in training for the event and is raising the required \$2,000 that each participant must collect.

She said every year it gets harder to ask people for donations, so this year, she's planning a pub night with a silent auction, raffles and prizes. The date and location for that event have not been finalized. Gareau-Booth is also going to hold a tag day at the LCBO in June.

Last year, Gareau-Booth did not do a lot of pre-walk training, but this year, she is trying to get in shape by the September walk.

"I try to walk at least 10-kilometres a week to get in shape and closer to the event I'll do 15 and 20-kilometre walks. The more you walk, the better you'll do. I'm by no means an athlete, but the adrenaline kicks in and no matter how sore your feet and body are, you just keep going," she said.

Gareau-Booth's participant identification number is 540032-0. For more information contact Lisa at lisa.gareau@bell.net

Skin Cancer Prevention Act introduced in Ontario

The Canadian Cancer Society supports the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, which was introduced on Tuesday in the Ontario Legislature by France Gélinas, MPP from Nickel Belt and Khalil Ramal, MPP from London Fanshawe.

"We congratulate MPPs Gélinas and Ramal for addressing this important public health issue," says Rowena Pinto, Senior Director, Public Affairs, Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division. "Indoor tanning among youth is troubling as melanoma skin cancer – the most

deadly form – is one of the most common forms of cancer between the ages of 15-29."

The private members bill to be introduced today will protect the health of Ontario youth by preventing youth under the age of 19 from using indoor tanning equipment as well as measures such as marketing restrictions and equipment registration.

For more than three years, the Canadian Cancer Society in Ontario has been advocating to all political parties to put legislation in place that protects public health by not permitting

youth to use indoor tanning equipment.

Studies have shown that indoor tanning before the age of 35 raises the risk of melanoma by 75%. In Canada, the incidence rates of melanoma are rising every year. Overall, skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in Canada and yet it is also one of the most preventable.

"There's no question that indoor tanning causes skin cancer," says Pinto.

In August 2009, the World Health Organization upgraded the classification of UV-emitting devices, including tanning beds, from

a probable carcinogen to a known carcinogen – in other words, from something that is believed to cause cancer to something that is known to cause cancer.

"We're also pleased that, as we understand, the Skin Cancer Prevention Act will include much-needed additional measures that will help protect the health of youth," says Pinto.

In addition to preventing youth from using indoor tanning equipment, Society volunteers and staff have been calling for measures such as:

Prohibiting the mar-

keting of indoor tanning targeting youth.

Developing and maintaining a registry of indoor tanning equipment in use in Ontario.

Comprehensive, Ontario specific training for all staff operating indoor tanning equipment.

Requiring signage placed in clear view of all indoor tanning equipment outlining the health risks of indoor tanning.

A poll commissioned by the Society in 2009 showed that 80% of Ontarians would support the provincial government putting legislation in place that

restricts use of indoor tanning equipment for youth under 18 years of age.

"There is proven public support for our call to action," adds Pinto.

The Canadian Cancer Society is a national community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is the eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer. When you want to know more about cancer, visit our website www.cancer.ca or call our toll-free, bilingual Cancer Information Service at 1 888 939-3333.

Virus may treat prostate cancer

Researchers in Alberta have recently successfully tested a new way of treating prostate cancer in a small number of men using a harmless virus called reovirus.

The cancer-fighting properties of the virus were originally discovered by Drs Patrick Lee and Peter Forsyth over 10 years ago with the help of Canadian Cancer Society funding. It's a discovery that Dr. Lee still describes as the most exciting of his scientific career.

When Drs Lee and Forsyth began their study, the researchers were hoping to answer the question: could a virus that commonly causes mild coughs and upset stomachs help people suffering from malignant brain tumours?

When this live virus was injected into experimental mice carrying human gliomas, the tumours either regressed completely or shrank significantly. The mice gained weight, seemed healthier and lived longer than similar mice treated with a dead virus. The reovirus also infected and killed all the cancer cells present in nine glioma samples that had been surgically removed from patients.

The current study, led by researchers in Calgary, involved injecting the reovirus in six prostate cancer patients, as well as mice models and test tube experiments to examine how well the approach worked. The virus destroyed a number of cancer cells and sent out copies of itself to attack more cancer cells, but did not spread to normal cells. The virus is very specific in which cells they attack, targeting cancerous cells and leaving healthy cells alone.

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