

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
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Jack Lynch always looked up to Terry Fox and admired what he did.

Little did the grade-schooler know he would have his own battle with cancer and the annual Terry Fox Run they did as a family, would take on new meaning.

This year's Terry Fox Run takes place Sept. 20.

In November 2011, at the age of six, Jack was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). It is a cancer of the bone marrow.

It started with a couple of bouts of hip pain. Then one night the pain became intolerable and five days later, Meagan and her husband Paul had to figure out how to explain to their rambunctious hockey-loving son he had leukemia.

"You get called into a room with a panel of doctors and specialists; it's a surreal moment. You don't really think it's happening," Meagan recalled.

But they knew Jack would be strong and determined to fight this.

"I had no clue what cancer was," Jack, 10, recently told The Sun-Tribune.

Meagan and Paul utilized an analogy most little boys could relate to — soldiers.

"There's a battle going on, he was going to need some medicine. He wasn't going to feel well for awhile, it was the reinforcements coming in," Meagan recounted to the Sun-Tribune of what they told Jack almost four years ago.

During one of their initial visits with the oncologist, they were being warned about the risk of infection. The doctor also noted in all her years practising, only one patient wasn't re-admitted during their course of treatment because of infection.

Meagan recalled how Jack whispered to his dad: "I'm going to be the second one." And he was.

Jack underwent intense treatment at Southlake Regional Health Centre for eight months and never missed a hockey practise or game. Some of his teammates never even knew he was sick, according to Meagan.

Despite some lingering hip pain, Jack participated in his first Stouffville Terry Fox Run in 2012.

He walked the 5K route with his grandmother and cousins. "We had a lot of time to talk about stuff," he said.

In 2013, the pain wasn't as bad, so Jack ran the 5K with his best friend and sister Claire. He also got to meet Terry's brother Fred. Last year, Jack met Terry's father Rolly and he once again ran the 5K.

Jack also takes part in his school's annual Terry Fox Run. He goes to Glad Park.

#### FAMILY EVENT

Without his knowing, in 2012 all of the students in Jack's class wrote his name on their shirt where it says "I'm running for". They continue to do it annually.

"I like it a lot because it helps me keep going. It just makes me feel like I didn't get the cancer; I'm just like all the other kids," Jack said.

Jack officially finished his cancer treatment this past January.

Terry did and continues to provide inspiration to Jack. "Even when his leg was hurting a lot he just kept on going. He helped me a lot to remember what he did. It kept me going if some part of my body was hurting," he said.

Terry Fox's journey across Canada was a Marathon of Hope.

"I think hope goes a long way," said Sandy Schell Ken-

# 'RUN FOR JACK'

*Jack Lynch looked up to Terry Fox — even before he was diagnosed with his own cancer*



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

nedy, chairperson of the Stouffville event.

This year's theme builds on that concept — Terry Had a Dream as Big as our Country.

"He was a dreamer. He was an ordinary guy, but he did something extra ordinary," Schell Kennedy said.

Since 1982, Whitchurch-Stouffville has raised \$1.593 million for cancer research through the Terry Fox Run. Although it's called a run, it's not a race.

"I really love that the Terry Fox Run is for all abilities," Meagan said, noting she and then her husband and now with their children, have been long-time participants. "It's a real community event."

The Lynch family — Meagan, Paul, Jack, Claire, 8, Graden, 6, and Ian, 4 — will all participate this year. Meagan is also leading the warm up.

You can walk, run, ride or rollerblade the 2, 5 or 10 km routes.

The Stouffville event had 148 participants and raised \$8,400 in its first year. In 2014, 1,500 people came out and raised more than \$122,000 with the schools adding another \$26,000.

"I don't always look at the dollars. I'm a firm believer it's

about people," Schell Kennedy said.

And the people have spoken, when it comes to the route.

The trails have been eliminated this year because they became too narrow and crowded for all the participants, according to Schell Kennedy.

#### SHELL KENNEDY LEAVING

The event still starts and ends at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Leisure Centre/Public Library.

This year will be bittersweet for Schell Kennedy. It is her last year at the helm of the local event.

She is retiring and moving north.

"Twenty six years has come and gone and it's time to look for fresh blood and new ideas," she said. "It's not a bad thing. I'll be handing it off with full confidence."

The Stouffville Terry Fox Run takes place Sept. 20. It starts at 1 p.m.

For more information on the Stouffville Terry Fox Run, go to [www.facebook.com/StouffvilleTerryFox](http://www.facebook.com/StouffvilleTerryFox). For route information go to [www.stouffvilleterryfoxrunmap.com](http://www.stouffvilleterryfoxrunmap.com). For any other information, contact Sandy Schell Kennedy at 905-640-4705.

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