



Did You Know Your Gift to Meagan's Walk Could be Doubled or Possibly Tripled?

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Year after year, more people join Meagan's Walk because they cannot imagine celebrating Mother's Day Weekend any other way. They walk with many who need this "hug" and the support of a community; with families and friends who remember someone they have loved and lost; with doctors and researchers who work tirelessly to find a better way, a cure for those who battle illness.

Meagan's Walk raises funds for SickKids Foundation in support of the Meagan Bebenek Endowment Fund and awareness, research and treatment of paediatric brain tumours.

In the news at Meagan's Walk

Meagan's Walk Newsletter | Summer 2013

Meagan's Walk is sharing the message of hope to increase public awareness about brain tumours and the devastating effects they have on children and their families while raising valuable financial resources for research into paediatric brain tumours.



The Bebenek Family: Sarah-Grace, Denise, Kevin & Matthew

This year's Meagan's Walk and Hug was the most successful to date! We raised more than \$329,000 and donations have continued to come in over these summer months. Over 110 teams walked this year which was the most teams ever registered.

This is what Meagan's Walk has always been all about: the many children who need our support and whom we want to honour. Their lives have such importance for all.

Funds raised assist the doctors and researchers at the Brain Tumour Research Centre here in Toronto. How important to remember that we are a mission of hope for these children with brain tumours, and their families who journey with them. We help them to realize they are not alone.

Meagan's Walk relies on the good will, dedication, and work of our 58 volunteers. We always strive to achieve the next level, to have greater success in this campaign to raise awareness about brain tumours, and to support that research that will benefit children everywhere. For these reasons, we continue to collaborate with everyone at SickKids to support the many children who need us.

Our Meagan's Walk and Hug on Mother's Day weekend remains the culmination of many opportunities to bring our message of hope and love to these children and to their communities.

I send heartfelt thanks to all of you who help Meagan's Walk to support the children and their families. United, we can make a difference in each one of these children's lives. They need us and count on us.

I am grateful for and humbled by your commitment to the Meagan's Walk mission of love. I hope that you have been enjoying a restful summer.

Denise and family

Save the date for the 13th Annual Meagan's Walk
Saturday, May 10th 2014
5km Fundraising Walk & Hug





Courage, Grace and Hope



On Mother's Day 2001, little Meagan Bebenek gave a special picture to her mom, Denise. She explained that the two people in her drawing were mommy and daddy, and the little angel floating above them was Meagan, there, always to be with them. It had been five months since Meagan's diagnosis of brain stem glioma, an inoperable and cancerous brain tumour.

A few weeks later, Meagan celebrated her fifth birthday and then, on Father's Day, quietly passed away, surrounded by her loving family. Meagan's story is one of courage, grace and hope. And it is her spirit that inspired Denise, with the help of a caring community, to found Meagan's Walk, a legacy of hope for all children living with brain tumours.

Help Meagan's Walk give comfort and hope to families of children with cancer. Visit www.meaganswalk.com

Meagan's Walk has Surpassed the \$3 Million Mark in Funds Raised to Support Paediatric Brain Tumour Research



At Fort York, the crowd starts on its way.



Dr. Bouffet & Evie



Denise and Meagan's Walk supporters after the "hug" at Meagan's Walk. Survivors in front, student ambassadors in back.

TEAMS make Meagan's Walk a huge success

Thank you to Sue McKechnie for being the Walk Teams leader. This year there were 110 registered teams, the largest number of teams we have ever had. They ranged from teams of 2 or 3 people to teams of well over 50.

Sue sends out emails throughout the year to the team captains and also ensures that they receive the newsletter. If you are a team captain, ensure that walkteams_meaganswalk@rogers.com is on your safe senders list and let us know if your contact information changes.

Please send us your stories and any questions. Can you tell us about your team? How do you raise funds for Meagan's Walk?



Salon Allure



Mary Mattias and friends have been participating in Meagan's Walk since 2003. When Mary heard about Meagan's story, she knew that Meagan's Walk was an organization that she wanted to support.

As the owner of Salon Allure, Mary was disappointed when Meagan's Walk had to change the event to Saturday, the day before Mother's Day. Walking from Fort York to SickKids was not possible for Mary because Saturdays are very important to her business. Along with master stylist, Joe Picariello, Mary decided to host a parallel event.

The stylists wore Meagan's Walk t-shirts and collected donations to Meagan's Walk. With support and applause from everyone at Meagan's Walk, Mary and Joe hope to create a challenge among the hair salons in the Bloor Street area for next year's Meagan's Walk. The challenge has been offered: Which business will be able to raise the most support for Meagan's Walk and contribute much-needed funds for paediatric brain tumour research?

Highlighting a Few of our Meagan's Walk Teams



Matthew's Maniacs

Matthew McFarlane

The McFarlane family joined Meagan's Walk in 2009. Friends created team t-shirts and came up with the name "Matthew's Maniacs". This year they walked in memory of Matthew. Over 100 family and friends walked as part of the team and raised over \$19,000 to assist with brain tumour research.

Matthew was born on September 17, 1993, the third child of Mary-Ellen and Michael McFarlane. He was first diagnosed with an anaplastic astrocytoma at the Hospital for Sick Children at the age of seven months. The tumour was partially removed and the family elected not to proceed with chemotherapy.



Matthew's Maniacs, this year's largest team

Matthew was constantly followed by Dr. Rutka and went on to have a very active, productive life. When he was sixteen, the tumour grew again. Surgery was followed by chemotherapy and radiation. During the summer of 2012, Matthew once again started to have headaches.

In January 2013, it was discovered that he had an inoperable glioblastoma tumour. Matthew passed away on March 8, 2013. Matthew was such a kind, courteous, and free-spirited individual who always had a smile and loved to be around family and friends. He looked forward to going to Camp Ooch, and would lead everyone in a campfire rendition of "Take me Home Country Roads".

The McFarlane family is very thankful to Dr. Rutka, his staff at the clinic and the nurses of the neurosurgery ward, along with Dr. Bouffet and the oncology staff. Being part of Meagan's Walk is a significant way to honour Matthew's memory and gather together to raise money for research.



Freckles & Fudgeeo's

Jeff Gibson

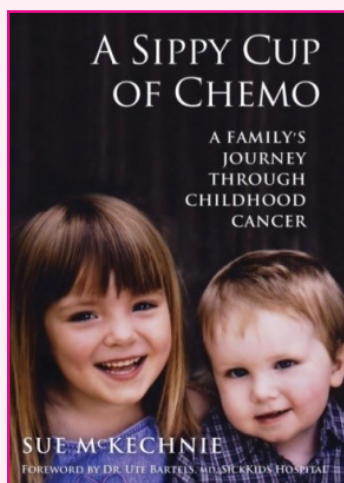
Each year, a garage sale is held in Stouffville in memory of Jeff Gibson, who passed away at the age of 18 in 2006 after bravely battling a brain tumour.

The "Freckles & Fudgeeo's" team, led by Jeff's mom, Heather, participates in Meagan's Walk every year. All profits from the garage sale go to Meagan's Walk and ultimately to SickKids in support of brain tumour research.





A Sippy Cup Of Chemo



Sue McKechnie, team captain of Shawn's Team, spent two and a half years penning a story about their family's journey with cancer. "We are honoured to have the proceeds of the book donated to Meagan's Walk."

"A Sippy Cup of Chemo" takes the reader through the entire journey with their son Shawn during his battle with brain cancer and the grief experienced after he died.

It is much more than a story about a little boy battling cancer. It is the story of a regular family dealing with the rollercoaster ride of diagnosis, treatment, terminal diagnosis, death and then exploring the possibility of life after death as many of us do when faced with the loss of a loved one.

A Sippy Cup of Chemo: A Family's Journey Through Childhood Cancer can be purchased on Amazon.ca. <http://www.amazon.ca/Sippy-Cup-Chemo-Familys-Childhood/dp/0991943902>

Highlighting a Few of our Meagan's Walk Teams



Team Isla

Isla loves tea parties, dancing, giving kisses, reading books and most of all following her two older brothers wherever they roam.

In August of 2012, 18 month old Isla was diagnosed with Anaplastic Ependymoma. She was treated with surgery to remove the tumour and then received daily radiation treatments to her brain for 7 weeks. Her parents, Paul and Liz, wanted to be part of an event that would give their friends, family and the local community a way to help. Naturally, when they heard of Meagan's Walk they were thrilled to learn that all of the funds raised go to paediatric brain tumour research.

Team Isla was created about a month before the walk and they hoped that at least a dozen or so people would join them. Their fundraising goal was \$2,000. Very quickly, about 20 families joined Team Isla, making a total of about 60 team members.

Two of their local businesses, Rowe Farms and Mercury Espresso Bar, sponsored custom Team Isla t-shirts and Rowe Farms also had a charity bbq. Over \$1,500 was raised between the bbq and a gourmet lemonade stand. Isla's Uncle Dave and his work colleagues donated over \$10,000. "Through Team Isla members' hard work and the generosity of many, many people, we managed to raise more than \$31,000! We can't wait until next year!" (Liz, Isla's mommy)



Team Jake

Jake was diagnosed with Anaplastic Ependymoma in October 2012. He had two major brain surgeries and was also treated with chemo and radiation. He had to re-learn how to walk and use his right arm and because he is unable to swallow, Jake is fed via a g-tube (gastrointestinal). Throughout this whole journey, he has always remained brave and strong with the support of his sister, Kiana, who is his best friend.

Team Jake's goal was very modest in the beginning but because they were so passionate about the cause, donations kept coming in and friends, family, and even strangers, wanted to be a part of Team Jake.

Jake's former classmate, Pippa, had a garage sale and a lemonade stand. Jake's school, Blantyre Public School, donated a portion of their parent social silent auction funds to Team Jake. Team Jake wrist bands were sold to generate funds for the walk.

Many of Jake's classmates came out to walk with Jake at Meagans Walk. They showed their support by proudly wearing the green t-shirts sponsored by a parent of one of Jake's classmates and Jake's Aunt and Uncle.

One of the therapy dogs at Bloorview, Trinket, and her owner, Sue, were interested in joining Team Jake because Jake has a very special bond with them. Trinket was sponsored by many of her four-legged friends and that financial support is deeply appreciated.



School Events

Throughout the school year, Meagan's Walk: Creating a Circle of Hope, encourages all young people to share the spirit of hope within their own school communities.

There are many ways to get involved, raise funds for brain tumour research, and to help children and their families who need support as they struggle with illness. A great way to be part of our circle of hope is to organize a school team to come out and participate in the annual Meagan's Walk. Some other ideas are listed on the website at www.meaganswalk.com.

Earlier this year, a student leadership event was held at Cardinal Newman High School in Toronto. Denise Bebenek shared Meagan's story and the purpose of fundraising for Meagan's Walk and paediatric brain tumour research. A sixth grader asked if she could donate her allowance, a loonie. This young student was motivated by the thought of the devastation her parent would experience if she or her brother were lost to childhood cancer. She wanted to give everything she had in order to further research.

We are all motivated to help. That's why we are part of Meagan's Walk. What motivates you? Thank you for helping.

Highlighting a Few of our Meagan's Walk Teams



Cosimo's Crusaders



Team Anthony

Anthony and his younger sister were very proud to participate in Meagan's Walk for their first time



Evie's Team

All ages walk to make a difference. Walking for Evie!



Team Johnny



We Need You! Volunteers Needed

Volunteers make the world go round at Meagan's Walk! We are always eager to work with individuals who can help Meagan's Walk pursue its goals of raising hope and awareness about paediatric brain tumours. Your support makes a difference and will help Meagan's Walk become an even stronger and more successful community based organization.

Currently there is need for helping hands in the following areas:

Mature individuals to **assist with the Meagan's Walk school programs**, to work with other volunteers in preparation of school materials, and assisting at presentations and workshops during the school year. Teaching experience is an asset.

Meagan's Walk needs a volunteer to fill the role of **Volunteer Co-ordinator** for the organization. As a member of the Meagan's Walk core team, the volunteer co-ordinator supports the organization in achieving its vision and mission. Experience working within a volunteer environment would be an asset.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at Meagan's Walk, please visit www.meaganswalk.com or phone 416.239.7843.

Volunteer Corner



Bruce Richardson

as a paramedic, to see happy, smiling faces, both young and old, all working together to defeat paediatric brain tumours. It's a chance to hug the hospital and be a part of something that keeps kids out rather than transporting them in."

Thank you, Bruce, for being part of Meagan's Walk every year! Watch for Bruce next year. He's the kind paramedic handing out water, juice and snacks from the ambulance.

"I began volunteering for the walk in its first year, when Denise asked if I would attend. I was fortunate to have been part of the crew who transported Meagan to SickKids on Father's Day 2001, and noticed how prepared and in control Denise had been. Having 3 children who have all spent time in SickKids, I knew how difficult that could be. Not having been able to have been much help to Meagan that day, I hoped that by volunteering I might assist the family and also do something for all the children who came after her with similar problems. I return each year because I cannot resist Denise's request. She is very motivating and I know that I can make a significant contribution that means so much to the walk, but requires so little of me. The walk is a chance for me,



Gordon Cheong

Thank you to the many photographers who have submitted their photos for the Meagan's Walk Flickr website. You can check out the photos at www.flickr.com/meaganswalk.

Gord has been a Meagan's Walk volunteer for many years. He has been generous with his time and talent, attending and photographing many Meagan's Walk events, compiling slideshows and videos. Gord's photographs of Meagan's Walk have also been featured in print publications, such as the International Brain Tumour Alliance (IBTA) magazine. Gordon Cheong www.with1goodi.com

You Never Know by Helen L. Marshall

You never know when someone
May catch a dream from you
You never know when a little word
Or something you may do
May open up the windows
Of a mind that seals a light
The way you love, may not matter at all
But you never know... it might.

And just in case it could be
That another's life, through you
Might possibly change for the better
With a broader and brighter view
It seems it might be worth a try
At pointing the way to the right
Of course it may not matter at all,
But then again... it might.



Support Meagan's Walk

If you are interested in supporting Meagan's Walk, visit www.meaganswalk.com, or phone 416.239.7843.


Keep spreading the word! Please pass the newsletter along to friends, family and colleagues who may be interested in volunteering or supporting Meagan's Walk.


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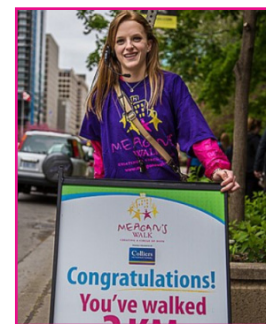
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Spread The Word!

Thank You to the over 190 "Hug Team" volunteers who made Meagan's Walk 2013 a huge success





A special thank you to all our generous sponsors and donors for your support in the 12th Annual Meagan's Walk


If you are interested in supporting Meagan's Walk, please visit www.meaganswalk.com, or phone 416.239.7843. Keep spreading the word! Please pass the newsletter along to friends, family and colleagues who may be interested in volunteering or supporting Meagan's Walk.





MEAGAN'S WALK
CREATING A CIRCLE OF HOPE
PROUDLY PRESENTED BY























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Zumba—Daena Ramsay

Proceeds of this event will be split between the Meagan Bebenek Endowment Fund and awareness, research and treatment of paediatric brain tumours at SickKids



www.meaganswalk.com

