

Terry Fox Run Sunday

33 Years Running

Hundreds of thousands of people across Ontario are expected to participate in The Annual Terry Fox Run on Sunday, September 15th, a fundraising event now considered an autumn Canadian tradition.

In 2012, millions of Ontarians participated in 225 community Terry Fox Runs and 3,900 school events, raising close to \$12 million for cancer research.

In 1980, when Terry Fox decided to run across Canada on a prosthetic leg to raise funds for cancer research, he knew he faced an immense challenge. After running almost a marathon a day for 143 days, Terry was forced to stop when cancer recurred in his lungs. His Marathon of Hope came to an end but the spark he had lit in the hearts and minds of Canadians ignited into a cancer crusade that has lasted more than three decades.

There is no doubt that Terry's example of courage and perseverance lives on today in Terry Foxers of all ages. In 2010, Aimee Zeglinsky-Spinney of Ottawa, Ontario, was diagnosed at age 11 with osteosarcoma after her leg shattered on the soccer field. ?My world collapsed in an instant but thanks to Terry the course of cancer is changing, giving me the chance to rebuild. He ran to raise money for research, hoping that it would provide new treatments to reduce the painful effects of cancer and lead to a cure.?

Today, Aimee is a thriving 14-year old who graces the Terry Fox ?Thank You for My Life? poster that will be displayed this September in more than 8,500 schools across Canada.

She expresses gratitude for the health she now enjoys. ?In Terry's day I would have lost my leg and probably my life. Today, thanks to his vision, I have hope. I have my leg. I have my life. Terry's dream is now my dream: a cure for all cancers.?

Two things kept Terry going during the long, difficult days in 1980: the dollars donated for research and the supporters who encouraged him along the way. On Sunday, September 15th, hundreds of thousands of Terry Fox supporters, like Aimee and her family and friends, will participate in their favourite Canadian Fall tradition to ensure that cancer research continues to forge ahead. From coast to coast, we will be working together to outrun cancer.

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Terry Fox was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and raised in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, a community near Vancouver on Canada's west coast. An active teenager involved in many sports, Terry was only 18 years old when he was diagnosed with osteogenic sarcoma (bone cancer) and forced to have his right leg amputated 15 centimetres (six inches) above the knee in 1977.

While in hospital, Terry was so overcome by the suffering of other cancer patients, many of them young children, that he decided to run across Canada to raise money for cancer research.

He would call his journey the Marathon of Hope.

It was a journey that Canadians never forgot.

After 18 months and running over 5,000 kilometres (3,107 miles) to prepare, Terry started his run in St. John's, Newfoundland on April 12, 1980 with little fanfare. Although it was difficult to garner attention in the beginning, enthusiasm soon grew, and the money collected along his route began to mount. He ran close to 42 kilometres (26 miles) a day through Canada's Atlantic provinces, Quebec and Ontario. However, on September 1st, after 143 days and 5,373 kilometres (3,339 miles), Terry was forced to stop running outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario because cancer had appeared in his lungs. An entire nation was stunned and saddened. Terry passed away on June 28, 1981 at the age 22.

The heroic Canadian was gone, but his legacy was just beginning.

To date, over \$600 million has been raised worldwide for cancer research in Terry's name through the annual Terry Fox Run, held across Canada and around the world.