

Terry Fox Run organizers keep hope alive at Aurora Arboretum



Seana O'Bireck didn't hesitate when she was asked to help organize this year's Terry Fox Run in Aurora.

Her father, John, was a driving force for local healthcare as one of the founders of Mardi Gras for Southlake, an annual event which raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for Southlake Regional Health Centre for more than a decade.

Had John, who lost his battle with pancreatic cancer in 2023, still have been with us, his daughter says he would have been among the first to answer the call to lend a hand to the Terry Fox Foundation. So, when Seana got the call, she knew she had to answer.

?'Terry Fox is a great Canadian figure and I think everybody everywhere is touched by cancer somehow,?' she says. ?'It was one of those situations that if it was my dad who had been asked, he would step, up, so you've got to do that kind of stuff and fill those roles because volunteers are always needed and necessary ? and fundraising, of course, is important as well.?'

Seana was asked to join in organizing this year's Terry Fox event by long-time local organizer Karen Fulbrook. Fulbrook and O'Bireck are both active volunteers with the Aurora Community Arboretum.

This year's run will once again take place at the popular Aurora green space on September 14. Registration begins at 8 a.m. behind at the Run's start point, the Arboretum entrance behind the Aurora Seniors' Centre on John West Way.

Different routes for those looking for runs and walks with varying lengths have been plotted out to offer two different Arboretum experiences to participants.

Organizers behind this year's Run hope to raise \$12,500 on the day of the run, a figure which will come together with funds raised at similar events held in more than 600 communities across Canada the same day, with all proceeds bringing millions of dollars to the Terry Fox Foundation.

The Terry Fox Run takes place each year across Canada in memory of Terry Fox and his Marathon of Hope, which began St. John's, NL, in April of 1980, before he was forced to call off the Run in Thunder Bay on September 1 the same year when his cancer returned.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Marathon of Hope and on Monday, September 1, the anniversary of the Marathon's end ? and the anniversary of Canadians from coast-to-coast helping to carry on from where Fox's herculean efforts had to leave off ? Fox's sister and brother, Judith and Fred, led supporters on a hike through Sleeping Giant Provincial Park near Thunder Bay to pay

?tribute to Terry's determination and his relentless optimism.?

Locally, O'Bireck says they are always encouraging new registrations and notes the need for event day volunteers to help with set-up and registration.

In addition to the Run itself, O'Bireck says the start will include coffee and refreshments, live music, a Zumba-style warm up, and routes of 2 km and 5 km throughout the arboretum space.

?It's a gorgeous walk through the Arboretum, which is a hidden gem for Aurora that a lot of people, even now, still don't know that it exists,? she says, noting the new children's book, ?T Is For Terry?, has introduced a whole new generation to Fox and his enduring impact on Canada. ?Come on out, join us, and register online ? registering online is helpful because it then helps bring ease to the morning and everyone can get started on time!?

For more on this year's Terry Fox Run in Aurora, including how to register and raise funds, visit run.terryfox.ca/92771.

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