

## Spring Sprint in Support of Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada

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For Immediate Release  
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### **Medical Miracle Raising Funds for Brain Tumour Research**

(Calgary, AB, May 17, 2011) At just 28, Aaron Ramler has already been through a lifetime of hospital visits, tests and treatments and today he is a brain tumour survivor that doctors call a medical miracle. A photographer and apprentice electrician, Aaron was diagnosed with an advanced brain tumour in 2007. Today, Aaron has beaten the odds and is supporting fundraising efforts to advance brain tumour research with the June 12 Calgary Spring Sprint.

Aaron's symptoms began in the fall of 2005 when the couple was living in Vancouver, as headaches that were originally diagnosed as migraines. These continued for two years with a variety of doctors, including a neurologist examining him. Aaron began seeing a chiropractor and in January of 2007, he underwent laser eye surgery. By May the headaches were even worse and coloured spots began appearing in one eye, "I thought something had gone wrong with the eye surgery," Aaron recalls, "but they said it was the migraines."

By the end of July the headaches were so bad that Aaron was consistently missing work and Donna was missing school. They were in the emergency room every day. "Because they saw me every day, they flagged me as a drug seeker," Aaron remembers. On August 3, 2007, everything changed.

"We went to the hospital and the doctor said 'migraine' and 'chiropractor' and I blew up," says Donna. "I said I wasn't taking Aaron home and that they needed to admit him and (or) do an MRI." The next day Aaron had two CT scans and following the second one with contrast, Aaron and Donna were told of a mass in his pineal gland, rare in adults and in a difficult spot to reach with surgery. "I don't remember a whole lot from that day because it was so shocking and I was in so much pain," says Aaron.

Aaron's first surgery was Ventriculostomy to drain the fluid from around his brain and to obtain a biopsy – but it took two more surgeries to finally get a biopsy. The results of which were that it was malignant and serious –PPT of intermediate differentiation. Not longer after this, the cancer was found to have spread to Aaron's spine. Donna remembers, "I looked at Aaron and said, 'You're going to have to fight like hell. You're going to have to fight harder than you have ever fought for anything before. You need to get through this.'"

Following the diagnosis, Aaron and Donna moved home to Calgary and Aaron has undergone treatment at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre. Radiation began on his birthday, November 11, 2007 and finished just before Christmas on December 23. They then took a pre-planned trip to Europe: "My radio oncologist said that his patients who take a vacation do better than those who don't. We left January 24, 2008 and returned March 16," Aaron explains. Upon their return incredible news was waiting for them, "they told us to look at the MRI and it was gone." There were no tumours in Aaron's brain or spine anymore.

"It was shocking but at the same time I was expecting something to be wrong because I had been in so much pain for so long. I never expected a brain tumour or cancer – I was 24 years old," recalls Aaron. "My mom had a hard time believing it."



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Today life for the young family is returning to normal. They take great pride in their son Connor, who just turned one. Aaron's cognitive abilities continue to recover and in January 2009 he went back to school. The Ramblers are immensely grateful for the support they have received from family and friends. They're also grateful for the support they've received from Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. "Our neurosurgeon gave us the handbook. He said it will give us information and tell us about what's to come. "I knew nothing about chemotherapy and radiation before I read that book," says Donna.

Donna is motivated to help those affected by brain tumours by taking on the enormous task of volunteering as coordinator for the Calgary Spring Sprint. She says, "It will take time but awareness is everything. Knowing we were not alone in the aftermath of all the treatments helped too. Being able to rely on others for support and being informed is like gold."

When asked what piece of advice he would give to someone new to the world of brain tumours, Aaron says, "Just laugh and take a vacation." From someone who would come out of surgery singing Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, this survivor clearly practices what he preaches.

Calgary's Spring Sprint, Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada's national fundraising walkathon program, features 2.5km and 5km routes for walkers, joggers and runners and a 10km run route at North Glenmore Park. The event is run by a dedicated group of local volunteers who are determined to improve the lives of those affected by a brain tumour. The national goal this year is to raise \$1.5 million to fund research into the cause and better treatments for brain tumours. This includes research being conducted across Canada including in Alberta at Alberta Children's Hospital, the University of Calgary and the Clark H. Smith Brain Tumour Centre.

"The prospect for all of the research that will be conducted as a result of the funds raised is very exciting," says Susan Marshall, Executive Director of Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. "Our vision is to find a cure for brain tumours and to improve the quality of life for those affected and we all move closer to this reality with the efforts of Spring Sprint."

Donations also support important education, information, and support for the estimated 55,000 Canadians affected by brain tumours such as: the brain tumour support group that meets monthly at Wellspring Calgary on Home Road NW; and the annual Calgary Brain Tumour Information Day for patients and health care professionals. Patients benefit from the toll free information and support line, information such as Patient Resource Handbooks and the newly launched website [www.braintumour.ca](http://www.braintumour.ca). Care is improved through work with Health Care Professionals with workshops and in service presentations. These programs and services are run by Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada with the vision to find the cause of and cure for brain tumours while improving the quality of life for those affected.

**Event: Spring Sprint for Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada**  
**2.5km and 5km walk/run and a 10km run**  
**Dates: Sunday, June 12, 2011: Check-in: 9:00 a.m. & Start: 10:00 a.m.**  
**Location: North Glenmore Park Community Association, Calgary, AB**  
**Register: [www.springsprint.ca](http://www.springsprint.ca) or 1 800 265 5106**

**For more information, please contact:**

[www.braintumour.ca](http://www.braintumour.ca)



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### **About Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada**

There are an estimated 55,000 people in this country living with a brain tumour and 10,000 new cases are diagnosed each year, many of those are children. Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada provides information through a free, comprehensive Patient Resource Handbook, live and web-based annual education events, and support through a Canada-wide, toll-free 1-800 line, website ([www.braintumour.ca](http://www.braintumour.ca)), and 23 support groups that meet monthly across Canada. Brain tumour research is also supported through an annual grants-in-aid program. To date \$2.75 million has been directed to brain tumour research. Please visit Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada's website at [\*\*www.braintumour.ca\*\*](http://www.braintumour.ca).