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Media Release

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Brain Tumour Survivor Dedicated to Brain Tumour Research and Support

(Edmonton, AB; May 16) Life can be demanding and full of surprises at every corner. For Michelle Chang, this cliché became reality when she started having double vision in January 2008. She did not realize that this single symptom would soon change the rest of her life, and that of her family. The symptoms eventually led to the diagnosis of a brain tumour and despite this, Michelle is now thriving. Today she is giving back by helping to raise awareness and funds for brain tumour research as part of the June 4 Spring Sprint walkathon.

Michelle's symptoms began as double vision which would come and go at the same time every day, while she was eating lunch, and would last only a few minutes. Gradually, it began to last for a few hours and would occur at any time of the day. This increase in the unsettling symptom prompted Michelle to book an appointment to see her family physician.

Her doctor had the foresight to have her booked for an MRI, which was scheduled for February 28, 2008 and by March 6 she had a neurosurgeon. Michelle very quickly realized that this University of Alberta neurosurgeon would play an important role in her life: he would be the one to remove the 3.5 centimetre Oligodendroglioma brain tumour that was discovered near the optic nerve.

Before long, Michelle underwent a successful craniotomy surgery, but since the tumour was in a vital area of the brain, not all of it could be removed. Soon after the surgery, Michelle found herself receiving radiation and chemotherapy in order to shrink the tumour to a more manageable size.

Despite the surgery and follow-up treatments, along with some residual problems with her memory, Michelle considers herself fortunate. "I feel that I have been given a second chance in life. I can't feel sorry for myself or wish this away. I need to make every moment in my life count, and that is what I am striving to do."

While in the hospital receiving her treatments, Michelle and her mom saw a Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada poster. From there, they spoke to someone who introduced them to the organization's Edmonton Brain Tumour Support Group. It has been these meetings and the ability to talk to others in the same situation that has helped Michelle and her mom cope with the diagnosis.

Michelle is thankful that an organization like Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada exists. "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have met other families that have experienced what we've experienced, and it's comforting to know that you're not alone. I've lost some friends to this disease, and it's important I fight back and help find a cure!"

Michelle began to give back to the brain tumour community in 2009, volunteering as a member of the Edmonton Spring Sprint committee. She also took part as a participant. She enjoyed the event so much that she has since had an active role in the committee.

On Saturday, June 4, Michelle, her family and brain tumour patients, survivors, caregivers and family members from the Edmonton area will come together at the Edmonton Sprint. The goal is to raise funds for research into 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

2.5 and 5km walk and run for walkers, joggers and runners.

Dates: Saturday, June 4, 2011; registration at 9:00 am, run starts at 10:00 am

Location: Hawrelak Park, Edmonton, AB

Register: www.springsprint.ca or 1-800-265-5106

Michelle feels fortunate that her family and friends have been there for her during surgery and treatment. "Honestly, I feel that I am one of the luckiest people to have great family and friends by my side!"

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About the 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), and national support groups that meet monthly in 23 cities. Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada also supports brain tumour research through annual grants-in-aid program and to date has donated \$2.75 million directly to brain tumour research. Please visit Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada's website at www.braintumour.ca

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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