



Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada  
620 Colborne St., Suite 301  
London, Ontario, Canada N6B 3R9

P: 1 800 265 5106  
F: 519-642-7192  
E: [mwinkler@braintumour.ca](mailto:mwinkler@braintumour.ca)

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

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For Immediate Release  
May 9, 2011

### **Young Survivor & Family Raising Funds for Brain Tumour Research and Support in Hope of a Cure**

(Saskatoon, SK, May 9) The middle child of Kirk and Kristen Friggstad, Kolbjorn (Kol) is eight-years old and is the only boy in the family of five children. Busy with piano, voice lessons, and home schooling, this Outlook, Saskatchewan family was unprepared for sudden change to their life when Kol was diagnosed with a brain tumour. Now, one year later, the entire Friggstad family is gearing up for the Saskatoon Spring Sprint to raise funds and awareness for Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada.

In April 2010 Kol was suffering from regular headaches and nausea. Initially Kirk and Kristen thought it could have been food sensitivities, so they began changing diet and looking for patterns. Concerned about the headaches, Kristen took Kol to the doctor but because Kol also had ear and throat infections, that was determined to be the issue. Then on May 25, 2010 the headaches became much worse and just wouldn't go away.

Then Kirk and Kristen became concerned about dehydration because Kol wasn't keeping anything in his system. So on the night of Thursday, May 27, 2010, they took him to their local Emergency Room. The doctor sent Kol to Saskatoon right away; they were concerned it was meningitis. Most of that night was spent trying different medications, even morphine at one point, for Kol's pain and nausea.

A CT scan was scheduled for 8:30 AM and later that morning, the Friggstads learned there was some form of mass in Kol's brain which was blocking the natural drainage of the ventricles. It was pressure from the build-up of spinal fluid that had been causing the headaches. An MRI followed that afternoon and Kol was immediately scheduled for surgery. It was 36 hours between seeing the doctor at the ER in Outlook and surgery in Saskatoon. The surgery was Saturday morning, May 29. It was the same day of the Saskatoon Spring Sprint in 2010.

A week later, Kirk and Kristen learned the term, Supratentorial Primitive Neuroectodermal Tumour (sPNET). "We were completely shocked when we learned that it was a grade four tumour of a very aggressive form of cancer," recalls Kristen.

Kol has since had 29 radiation treatments, which began July 7, 2010. Chemotherapy maintenance started in September with 28 day cycles times six, which just finished at the end of February. When asked what he remembers, Kol simple says, "My head really hurt. It's pretty much all I remember." He has returned to being an active eight year old where "Reading is my favourite and playing video games," says Kol. "My life has changed. I'm having a lot more new foods and being careful about what I eat."

While the ordeal was difficult on the entire family, "There was a lot of support from everybody. My parents cashed in their trip insurance and came home Sunday night," recalls Kirk who cautions other families in a similar situation to "Not panic. Don't be afraid to ask for help or accept help from those who offer it, and be willing to learn and do your own research. It's been quite a learning curve." One way the family has coped with the journey is by sharing it via their blog: <http://kolupdate.blogspot.com/>.

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



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While the Friggstads are grateful to friends and family for their support, including with their four girls, Julianna, Mari, Birgitte, and Annika, they are also grateful for the support they received from Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. "For us it's really been the handbook and the Saskatoon support group that have been most helpful, and are so important for those dealing with a brain tumour either themselves or with someone in their family. It would be much harder without the types of services Brain Tumour Foundation provides," explains Kirk. "By the end of the first support group meeting we felt that these were our people and they could identify with what we were facing."

Saskatoon Spring Sprint, Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada's national fundraising walkathon program, features 2.5 and 5km routes for walkers, joggers and runners at Meewasin 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 at several research centres across Ontario. The Friggstad's hope that anyone who is interested comes out to join them at the Saskatoon Spring Sprint June 5, 2011, "It seems like a good way to 'pay it forward'," says Kirk.

"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 in Saskatoon at Royal University Hospital; one-on-one phone support, and education opportunities including the upcoming Saskatoon Brain Tumour Education Seminar. Patient care is also improved with health care professional in-services and workshops at local treatment centres. 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. Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada was founded in London, ON in 1982.

**Event: Spring Sprint for Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada**  
**2.5km and 5km walk and run for walkers, joggers and runners.**  
**Dates: Sunday, June 5, 2011: Check-in: 10:00 a.m. & Start: 11:00 a.m.**  
**Location: Meewasin Park, North End, 150 Whiteswan Drive Saskatoon, SK**  
**Register: [www.springsprint.ca](http://www.springsprint.ca) or 1 800 265 5106**

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact:**

**Megan Winkler**  
**Marketing and Communications Specialist**  
**Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada**  
**Website: [www.braintumour.ca](http://www.braintumour.ca)**

**P: 1 800 265 5106 ext 232**  
**E: [mwinkler@braintumour.ca](mailto:mwinkler@braintumour.ca)**  
**Event Website: [www.springsprint.ca](http://www.springsprint.ca)**

**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

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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 and 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)**.

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**Mission Statement**

To reach every Canadian affected by a brain tumour through support, education, information and research.

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**Vision**

To find the cause of and cure for brain tumours while improving the quality of life for those we serve.