

Media Release

For Immediate Release

March 1, 2010

Brain Tumour Support Group Launches to Serve Greater Fredericton Area's Needs

(Fredericton, March 1, 2010) When Caroline and Julian Walker's 17-year-old son David received the shocking diagnoses of a brain tumour, their entire family had many concerns and questions. They became intimately involved in his fight by searching for information. This search led the Walkers to information and education programs offered by Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. This gave the family resolve and helped them to deal with David's diagnosis and treatments. Now, with her family behind her, Caroline is helping to launch the new Fredericton Brain Tumour Support Group.

Today David is 26, living in Vancouver and recovering well from a follow-up brain surgery. Caroline explains one surprisingly positive result of David's journey with a brain tumour, "Dave's amazing strength continues to inspire our family and friends, and because of this, I'm able to help in the community." As a result, Caroline is the volunteer Convenor to a new support group. Support groups are confidential environments for patients, family members, caregivers and friends to gain reassurance from others in similar situations while also enhancing coping skills. Caroline notes, "One focus for the group is to make certain that family and caregivers know they can attend the support group along with the survivor."

For over 15 years, Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada has been providing a national network of support groups for those affected by this devastating disease. Through discussions with the Fredericton community, including the dedicated fundraising volunteers who organize the annual Fredericton Spring Sprint, it was determined there was a critical need for a brain tumour support group in the Greater Fredericton area.

Led by Volunteer Facilitator Brenda Garnett, who works at the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation's Foundation Office, the support group will meet monthly and offer support, information and education to brain tumour survivors and their families. Brenda believes her background in grief support will be beneficial. "This support group will be a safe environment for everyone to be themselves," she explains, "where members can trust each other with their thoughts, feelings and fears."

Because of his 2007 diagnosis of a brain tumour, City Councillor David Kelly is excited about what the launch of this new group means for brain tumour survivors. David says, "Once I began to accept this shocking diagnosis," David says, "I turned to dealing with it and lots of contact with others has been so great for me." Thanks to treatment and support, today David is back to work as an insurance appraiser and is into his tenth year as a Fredericton City Councillor. He is monitored with an MRI every three months. "The 'not knowing' feeling is hard to deal with, but being able to attend the monthly support group meetings will help me to cope with this worry," David notes.

Because the brain is the centre of thought, intelligence, emotion and movement, brain tumours (both benign and malignant) can feel like an attack on an individual's very identity. Brain tumour support groups address all the associated features of this life-threatening illness including problems with behavior, memory, personality and speech and of course, overall health. As Trishna Wedemire, Support Services Specialist at Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada explains, "Support groups offer a unique opportunity for people with a brain tumour and their loved ones to share experiences and gain emotional support in a safe and relaxed atmosphere." They help to reduce anxiety and deal with feelings of loss of control, fear of the unknown, changes in family roles, and financial strain. Finally, support groups provide a unique social network that may reduce feelings of isolation and reinforce a positive hopeful attitude.

Current patients, survivors, family and friends are welcome to attend the first meeting of the support group on March 9, 2010. Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada offers 23 Support Groups across Canada and is affiliated with an additional eight groups. Individuals surviving with brain tumours and their families are welcome to attend any of these free support groups, regardless of where they live.

For Caroline, Brenda and David, establishing the Fredericton brain tumour support group to help the area's other brain tumour survivors, families and caregivers get the support, information and education they need, is an important step towards changing the lives of everyone touched by a brain tumour. "Resources like the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada have really made a difference for our family," Caroline explains, "I believe it will do the same for others in the Fredericton area."

The first meeting of the Fredericton Support Group is Tuesday, March 9, 2010

Fredericton Support Group Details

When: Second Tuesday of each month, 6:30 to 8:00 pm

Where: Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation, Room 1113-B
800 Priestman Street, Fredericton, NB, E3B 0C7

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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), 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 and a fellowship program and to date has donated \$2.5 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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