

## Brain Tumours are Thieves

This month, 837 Canadians will hear the words, “you have a brain tumour.” And they will add their voice to the 55,000 survivors across this country desperate for an increase in awareness of this little-known disease.

But even more importantly, every one of these people need understanding about the extreme impact of a brain tumour. They are silent and sneaky thieves stealing personalities, livelihoods, abilities – and ultimately, far too often, lives.

For one young mother, an aggressive brain tumour took her husband and the father of her children. “I am left a single mom with five dependent children after almost a year of caregiving at home.” The loss of this young man is devastating to his entire family, robbing them all of safety, security and independence. With an estimated five Canadians dying every day from a brain tumour, this is far too common.

We also know that a brain tumour changes the way you think about life and your ability to live it. It changes you physically, emotionally and mentally. Those who survive a brain tumour are often left with severe side effects. One survivor told us, “My brain tumour changed my whole life. My career, my family life, my relationship ended; financially, cognitive problems caused me disabilities not allowing me to return to work.” Your life turns upside down when you or a loved one has a brain tumour.

October is Brain Tumour Awareness Month in Canada. For the patients and families that I connect with every day, it means together we are shouting about the disease and its impact. We need every Canadian to know the unique complexity of brain tumours and the crisis it creates for families.

And we need them to know their help is necessary. It’s only through gifts, volunteers and advocacy efforts that we can ensure those affected never feel alone, that patients can gain access to their best health care, and that we can advance research towards better treatments and a cure.

I encourage you to join us in our effort to continue to provide hope to the 837 families whose lives will change not just this Brain Tumour Awareness Month, but every month of the year. Together, we can lift the burden of a brain tumour.

*Author: Carl Cadogan, chief executive officer of Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada.*

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