

“My mantra – hakuna matata, no worries – was something that really carried me through the past few years!”

Patrick Bélec faces each day as a brain tumour survivor – a new perspective on life, he says

North Bay, ON, May 30, 2016 – Patrick lives every day with Kevin. Well, the effects Kevin had on Patrick’s life, that is. Kevin changed Patrick’s life forever, and it all started three and a half years ago in 2012. Kevin is the name Patrick gave his brain tumour.

It was early during Patrick’s university education that he started having severe headaches. Vision troubles were checked but an optometrist couldn’t find a reason for Patrick’s sight changes. When Patrick woke up from a nap one day, sobbing uncontrollably, he says that was the final push to go to the local ER. Together with his mom, Patrick went to the hospital and was admitted for an MRI scan booked the following day. From there, he explains, things happened quickly. “It was so abrupt. The doctor came in shortly after my scan, telling me I had a brain tumour and that I needed to get to another hospital for immediate treatment. It was a massive shock.”

Three brain surgeries over three months were the recommended first course of action against Patrick’s brain tumour, followed by radiation. Previously a varsity swimmer and promising student, Patrick had to make some major life changes because of Kevin as something as simple as a sneeze could send Patrick back to the hospital. “I couldn’t do anything that would create pressure in my brain – not even drink through a straw!” he remembers. It was during Patrick’s third operation that doctors could see how invasive the brain tumour really was. What was a typically non-malignant type of tumour, a craniopharyngioma, for Patrick was acting incredibly aggressive. As his surgeon explained, Patrick’s case was the most complicated he’d seen in his 13-year career.

Today it’s been three and a half years since Patrick learned about Kevin, and in that time he’s had to adjust to a new normal. Blind in his left eye and on at least 4 different medications for the rest of his life, Patrick’s enthusiasm and determination hasn’t waned. He even sees his experience as an added benefit to his future nursing career, given his first-hand understanding of what some patients may be going through. Patrick also wants to help other people diagnosed with a brain tumour stay positive and motivated to get through their journey. “My mantra – hakuna matata, no worries – was something that really carried me through the past few years. It helped me live in the present and one day at a time. If there’s any way telling my story can help someone else, I’m happy to share.”

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Media Release, cont'd

About the North Bay Brain Tumour Walk

The 2016 North Bay Brain Tumour Walk takes place on Sunday, June 5th at North Bay Museum & Kate Pace Way. Opening Ceremonies and Brain Tumour Survivor Recognition begin at 9:45am. Online registration is encouraged; there is no entry fee to participate. Brain Tumour Walks are family-friendly and non-competitive, and feature 2.5km and 5km routes for all abilities.

Every day in Canada, 27 people are diagnosed with a brain tumour. That's 10,000 new diagnoses each year. By signing up and fundraising as part of a Brain Tumour Walk, patients, survivors, family and friends join the nationwide movement to end brain tumours. Their efforts support Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada's specialized resources that empower patients to be their own best health care advocates and fund the ground-breaking research that will find a cure for the disease. For more than two decades, Brain Tumour Walks (formerly Spring Sprints) have been the community event to bring together thousands of Canadians in tribute to and in memory of people affected by a brain tumour. **For more information about the 20+ Brain Tumour Walks taking place across Canada in 2016, visit www.BrainTumourWalk.ca.**

About Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada

Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada is the only national charity that offers information and support to patients affected by any kind of brain tumour – be it cancerous, non-malignant or metastases. The organization also funds research across North America and, since 1982, has dedicated more than \$4 million to finding a cure for the disease and improving treatment for brain tumour survivors. **Learn more at Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada's website: www.BrainTumour.ca.**

To interview Patrick Bélec or for further information about the North Bay Brain Tumour Walk, please contact:

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