

## **“I feel really lucky to be here!”**

*Gab Rodrigues faces each day as a brain tumour survivor – a new perspective on life, he says*

**Sudbury, ON, May 30, 2016** – Gab Rodrigues, 23, says his life changed when at the young age of 7, he first realized his own vulnerability. As a young boy, Gab experienced double vision, night terrors, severe headaches and vomiting – symptoms that took he and his mother doctor to doctor, trying to find a reason for Gab’s debilitating health changes. By the time he was 8, after a trip to the optometrist produced unexpected results, Gab would undergo brain surgery to insert a permanent shunt to ensure his spinal fluid could flow properly, relieving the pressure behind his eyes. A second operation removed the cause behind all of the young boy’s problems: Gab had a large brain tumour, a teratoma.

Following these surgeries, Gab started rehabilitation for the effects of the procedures and tumour. An unexpected seizure right before his scheduled discharge delayed Gab’s return to life at home. Two months after he and his family had first learned of his brain tumour. It was a tumultuous time for the Rodrigueses, and Gab remembers the struggles his sister faced having to stay in Sudbury with relatives while he and his parents were out of town for his treatment and recovery. “My family, whether with me in person or in my heart, were always by my side. For that I’m forever grateful,” he says.

Over the next five years, Gab and his parents had to make regular trips back and forth to Toronto for check-ups and MRI scans, but aside from that, Gab says he’s been fortunate to not have too many other challenges because of the tumour or potential side effects. “Still, it was really hard going through something that traumatic at a young age. I understood my own mortality when I was 7!” he explains. That’s why, now, Gab takes part in the annual Sudbury Brain Tumour Walk, a fundraiser benefitting Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. “I’m a huge advocate for staying positive and fighting with everything you’ve got. I feel really lucky to be here, and if there’s any way I can give back, I want to.”

The 2016 Sudbury Brain Tumour Walk takes place on Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at Bell Park. 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.



# Media Release, cont'd

## About the Brain Tumour Walks

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 groundbreaking 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](http://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](http://www.BrainTumour.ca).**

**To interview Gab Rodrigues or for further information about the Sudbury Brain Tumour Walk, please contact:**

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