

# Media Release

## 66-YEAR-OLD BRAIN TUMOUR SURVIVOR LACES UP FOR HAMILTON FUNDRAISER

**Hamilton, Ontario, 20 April 2015** – To say the past decade has been a challenge for 66-year-old brain tumour survivor Barb (Barbie) Gilbert is an understatement. After several years of searching for an answer to the severely declining health she was experiencing, an MRI eventually uncovered the cause: a large brain tumour. On Saturday, May 2, Barb and her loved ones join the Hamilton Spring Sprint as “Team Barbie,” where they will walk to show their support for Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada and the survivors and patients across the country, just like Barb.

After Barb’s diagnosis, the next few years would bring extreme change into her and her family’s lives. Previously the owner and CEO of a well-established local communications and security business, Barb and her husband had to shut its doors once problems arose with Barb’s brain tumour treatment. And what began with a frightening surgery statistic (Barb was told she’d only have a four per cent chance of making it through her grueling brain operation and could possibly awaken as a quadriplegic), was followed by almost two years of managing infections and health complications on a daily basis. Barb has had to re-learn everything, including how to button a shirt, tie a shoe, brush her teeth, and walk.

Although the brain tumour was non-cancerous, the effects of the mass and its treatment left Barb with serious impediments like a permanent feeding tube, brain shunt and tracheostomy for breathing. Despite this, Barb doesn’t let her health bring her down. “I’m glad to be alive and we just go from there,” she explains. “Even though I know this is only going to get worse for me – I’m 66 after all – I take things one day at a time.”

Today, Barb remains an avid sewer and cook, even though she can’t eat solids or drink anything ever again; she makes it a priority to keep her spirits up by keeping busy. “It’s been a struggle to get where I am today, but I guess it wasn’t that bad considering all I’d been through; I keep my days full,” she explains. It’s because of Barb’s daughter, Jennifer, that the family is connected to the Hamilton Spring Sprint, after she heard about it on their local news. This year’s May 2<sup>nd</sup> event will be the third time Barb walks in the fundraiser, and Jennifer’s fourth.

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### **About Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada**

Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada offers hope to those affected through education and a national network of support programs. Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada also funds brain tumour research through annual grants, fellowships and research studentships. All activities are supported solely by the dedication and determination of donors - individuals, corporate sponsors and foundations. Since the organization’s founding in 1982, more than \$4 million has been directed to brain tumour research. Learn more at Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada’s website: [www.BrainTumour.ca](http://www.BrainTumour.ca).

### **About the Hamilton Spring Sprint – Why do we walk?**

Every day, 27 Canadians learn they have a brain tumour. Right now, an estimated 55,000 Canadians live with this disease that can impair physical and mental ability and change personality or behaviour. Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada brings hope, education and support to everyone affected. 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 the specialized programs and 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 further information or to schedule an interview with Barb Gilbert, contact:**

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