

## **“I went from thinking everything was fine to being told I could die at 35.”**

*Candace Graham faces each day as a brain cancer survivor – a new perspective on life, she says*

**Saskatoon, SK, May 31, 2016** – For the past six years, Candace Graham’s life has been full of ups and downs – a “real rollercoaster,” she says. But still, this 32-year-old doesn’t let her circumstances set the tone for her days. Candace is a brain cancer survivor and this is her incredible story.

What started in May 2009 with a numb toe on her right foot, didn’t cause Candace much concern at first; she even attributed the funny feeling to wearing too-tight shoes. When a summer getaway to the lake ended with Candace losing all feeling in one side of her body, that’s when things started taking a turn.

Over the next several years, Candace underwent regular MRIs to monitor her health, as an initial scan in 2009 had shown an unusual lesion near her brainstem, but there were no changes or growth to it according to her health care team. So on May 4, 2014, when Candace went in for her regularly scheduled MRI, she was not expecting to receive any news different than what she’d been hearing the past few years: That everything looked fine and there were no changes in her scan results. But what did happen was very different. “Two neurosurgeons saw me this time and they said that the lesion had grown significantly, and into the back of my sinuses and into my spine,” Candace, then 30, recalls. “I went from thinking everything was fine to being told I could die at 35.”

Candace would eventually be diagnosed with chordoma, a rare and invasive form of cancer. With limited treatment options, Candace decided to undergo surgery to remove the tumour – taken out through her mouth as it was less damaging than operating near her brainstem – and spent two months in the US getting proton radiation not available in Canada.

Today, Candace is celebrating being cancer-free and plans to lace up her sneakers as part of the 2016 Saskatoon Brain Tumour Walk, proudly wearing a t-shirt she’s made in tribute to the many survivors and patients she’s met on her journey and through a local support group hosted by Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. “These wonderful people are like my second family, they’re my brother and sisters, too,” Candace adds. “Losing them is just so tough. If raising awareness and doing the Walk can help in any way, I’m happy to do it.”

The 2016 Saskatoon Brain Tumour Walk takes place on Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at Archibald Arena. 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.

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# 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 Candace Graham or for further information about the Saskatoon Brain Tumour Walk, please contact:

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