



For Immediate Release

Joining Forces With The Dystonia Community Nationwide For Greater Impact Freedom To Move: Run, Walk And Wheel For Dystonia Taking Place Across Canada June 1 – 30, 2024

Toronto, ON - April 15, 2024 - Dystonia Medical Research Foundation (DMRF) Canada is excited to announce the return of their signature community event, Freedom to Move: Run, Walk and Wheel for Dystonia, taking place this June.

The national month-long awareness and fundraising event aims to raise funds for dystonia research and support programs, making a difference in the lives of 50,000 Canadians living with dystonia and their families. With an in-person event in Toronto and a virtual option offered nationally, this event offers a variety of inclusive opportunities for participation. The in-person 2km/5km run/walk/wheel will take place on June 2nd, at Downsview Park in collaboration with fellow neurological health charity, Hydrocephalus Canada, for a more sustainable and impactful joint event. Virtual participants can complete their race anytime, anywhere, and any distance throughout June, regardless of age, abilities, or skill levels.

This year's Family Ambassador, Sumbul Zafar, is a mother of three, dystonia advocate, and Para swimmer. Despite facing challenges after a stroke and being diagnosed with dystonia in 2014, Sumbul re-engaged with swimming and discovered her potential as a Para swimmer. With the support of her family, she is now competing internationally and aiming for a spot on the World Championship team. Sumbul's story exemplifies the power of determination and a robust support network, including the unwavering support of her family, proving that anything is possible. "I am honored to be this year's Ambassador, and I hope you, your friends, and family join us," shares Sumbul. "Dystonia is a relatively rare disorder, but there's strength in numbers, and our collective impact is mighty. I know when we join together, our community has the ability to change lives."

Community involvement is crucial to the success of the event. The virtual event encourages people to turn their potential into support for the dystonia community and expand their social impact within their networks to help maximize awareness and research funding for dystonia. "Without government funding or widespread public awareness of our cause, our organization depends greatly on the generous contributions and support of our members and their networks," states Archana Castelino, National Director of DMRF Canada. "Over the past 40 years, this event has raised over 1 million dollars, directly contributing to advancements in research and support for our community. We are delighted to continue this four-decade strong tradition in Toronto while harnessing the power of our virtual option to unite the community across the country to raise critical funds."

The annual event remains the organization's largest fundraiser and in-person awareness event.

ABOUT DYSTONIA AND DMRF CANADA:

Dystonia is a neurological condition characterized by persistent or sporadic muscle contractions, causing abnormal repetitive movements or postures, at times resembling a tremor. Depending on the severity of the condition, patients are faced with varying degrees of disability or pain. Dystonia affects an estimated 50,000 people in Canada.

DMRF was founded in 1976 by Samuel and Frances Belzberg of Vancouver after their daughter was diagnosed with generalized dystonia. The mission of DMRF Canada is to advance research for more treatments and ultimately a cure; to promote awareness and education, and to support the needs and well-being of affected individuals and families. DMRF Canada is a registered non-profit Canadian charity governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

For more information and registration for Freedom to Move, visit: www.freedomtomove.org

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