

Thousands to Join 24th Annual Meagan's Walk & HUG in Support of Childhood Brain Tumour Research

Event Highlights the Urgent Need for Pediatric Cancer Funding and Celebrates a Milestone in Life-Saving Research

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA, May 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Saturday, May 10th, thousands will come together in downtown Toronto for the 24th annual Meagan's Walk & HUG, a deeply moving event that unites families, students, healthcare professionals, and community members in support of children affected by brain tumours.

The day begins with a 5-km walk from Hotel X to SickKids, culminating in the Human HUG—a symbolic act of hope and compassion as participants join hands to encircle the hospital. This powerful moment is a visual reminder to children and families inside that they are not alone.



Bebenek and HUG participants waving to the children looking out their hospital room windows feeling the embrace and message of hope from onlookers below.

“

This event is about hope and standing together to send messages of love and strength to those who need it most.”

Denise Bebenek, Founder and President - Meagan Bebenek Foundation

Founded in memory of five-year-old Meagan Bebenek, who lost her life to a malignant brain tumour in 2001, Meagan Bebenek Foundation (MBF) has since raised over \$6.5 million to fund innovative research, fellowship programs, and new treatment options for paediatric brain tumours.

“This event is about hope and standing together to send messages of love and strength to those who need it most,” says Denise Bebenek, Founder and President of Meagan Bebenek Foundation. “We walk not only in memory of

Meagan, but in honour of every child and family impacted by this devastating disease. This year, we walk for Massimo — a one-year-old boy whose life was saved thanks to groundbreaking research funded in part by MBF.”

Massimo was born in May 2024 — big, bright-eyed, and full of life. But at just four months old, his parents received the unimaginable news: he had an aggressive, cancerous brain tumour (medulloblastoma) and a rare genetic disorder that predisposed him to cancer. His tumour was inoperable and spreading rapidly.

Under the care of Dr. Vijay Ramaswamy and the world-leading Neuro-Oncology team at SickKids, Massimo began a six-month course of chemotherapy — one that wouldn't have been possible without recent treatment advancements made through MBF-funded research. Today, Massimo is expected to be cancer-free just in time for his 1st birthday.

This year's Walk & HUG underscores a critical truth: funding for paediatric cancer must remain a priority. Childhood brain tumours remain the leading cause of cancer-related death in children, yet it continues to receive a fraction of overall cancer research funding. Thanks to donations from Meagan Bebenek Foundation, promising clinical trials are now underway at SickKids, offering real hope for better treatments and brighter futures. Continued support is essential to ensure that progress doesn't stall and that every child has a fighting chance.



Massimo will celebrate his first birthday in 2 weeks thanks to life saving treatment funded in part by Meagan Bebenek Foundation.



TORONTO / 2025

Brought to you by **MEAGAN** Bebenek Foundation

Event Details:

What: Meagan's Walk & HUG

When: Saturday, May 10, 2025

Who: Open to all ages – families, schools, corporate teams, and individuals

Key Activities and Photo Opportunities:

Hotel X

- Registration Opens: 8:30 am
- Opening Ceremonies: 9:30 am (includes Crane Ceremony, MBF Heroes, MBF Neuro-oncology Fellow & BTRC Speaker)
- Walk Begins: 10:30 am (photos include ribbon cutting by Team Massimo, aerial view of walk participants)

SickKids

- Participant Arrival: 11:30am
- Speeches: 11:55 am (speakers include Denise Bebenek, Dr. Ronald Cohn, President & CEO of the Hospital for Sick Children, Team Massimo)
- HUG: 12:15 pm (Human HUG of the hospital and a live performance by Sean Jones, Juno Award-winning artist)

Media are invited to attend the HUG and hear firsthand from families, researchers, and event organizers. Interview opportunities are available with Denise Bebenek, clinical researchers from SickKids, and families impacted by childhood brain tumours, including Team Massimo.

For more information or to register, visit meaganbebenekfoundation.org or jointhehug.com

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