

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Join the Dystonia Community to do Your Race – Your Way Freedom to Move: Run, Walk and Wheel for Dystonia Taking Place Across Canada June 1 – 30, 2023

*TORONTO, (April 20, 2023)* Dystonia Medical Research Foundation (DMRF) Canada is thrilled to announce that their signature community event, Freedom to Move: Run, Walk and Wheel for Dystonia will return once again with all proceeds benefitting the dystonia research and support programs.

Due to the dedicated support of the dystonia community, last year's virtual event raised over to \$70,000 for dystonia research and support programs. This year's event will mark the first time the event will occur in a hybrid format with a virtual option and six in-person event opportunities across Canada, including the in-person Toronto event on June 11<sup>th</sup> at Downsview Park.

This year's Ambassador is Jirome De Castro- dystonia warrior and thriver. Jirome's dystonia journey began in 2015 after he was diagnosed with cervical dystonia. For him, this event represents more than an opportunity to complete a race. It's a special chance to unite with others in the dystonia community. The power of community became especially relevant to Jirome after he and his family moved from the Philippines to Canada in 2022. Finding great value in the bonds he formed with other members of the Greater Vancouver Dystonia Support Group, Jirome stresses the power of connection: "I am honoured to be this year's Ambassador. To all the dystonia warriors out there, always remember that you are not alone and acknowledge all that you have accomplished as you continue to thrive and live life with dystonia."

"We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back at our Toronto event as well as connecting with our new members at their first Freedom to Move event across the country. After hosting this event virtually for the past three years, it is inspiring to see our community connect in-person again and raise funds for one common cause – a cure for dystonia," shared Archana Castelino, National Director, DMRF Canada.

To date, the annual event has raised over one million dollars for DMRF Canada's research and support programs and is the organization's largest fundraiser.

Dystonia, the third most common movement disorder behind **Essential Tremor** and **Parkinson's Disease**, is a relatively unknown neurological disorder that causes uncontrolled muscle spasms, twisting and pain. Dystonia affects an estimated **50,000 people in Canada**.

DMRF Canada is the only organization dedicated to supporting the Dystonia community in Canada. With just two full time staff members, the organization is tremendously resourceful, working with dedicated volunteer board members, interns, volunteers, and impacted patients and families who are passionate about finding a cure.

To find out more about the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation Canada, and to register for Freedom to Move, visit: [www.freedomtomove.org](http://www.freedomtomove.org)

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