

For Immediate Release

A trailblazing Toronto family and their courageous brother are honoured by the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation Canada

The 2012 Freedom to Move Run/Walk for Dystonia is being named “Chuck’s Run” in memory of Chuck Saundercook – June 3rd, High Park, Toronto

May 3, 2012 (TORONTO, ON) -- To honour a courageous individual and his trailblazing Toronto family, the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation Canada (DMRF Canada) announced today its 2012 Freedom to Move 5 km Run/Walk will be called “Chuck’s Run” in memory of Chuck Saundercook who died from Dystonia-related complications in 1978 at the age of 17. Leaders in founding and fostering the Dystonia research cause in Toronto, the Saundercook family’s commitment to their brother Chuck and his legacy is an inspiring story of tenacity and bravery.

“Not only have the Saundercooks’ raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for research but their efforts have improved the lives of thousands of Torontonians who suffer from this life-altering movement disorder,” said Diane Gillespie, Executive Director, DMRF Canada. “Their outstanding commitment – which spans more than 30 years – is a testament to the power we all have to make a difference. “

With initiatives like founding the Toronto Chapter of the DMRF Canada; establishing the original Toronto Walk for Dystonia; mobilizing a team of volunteers to build a pool to give Chuck the freedom to move; and hosting a 24 hour swim-a-thon, the Saundercooks have worked tirelessly to raise awareness and funds for Dystonia Research. “Like many Canadians with Dystonia, Chuck suffered terribly,” says Bill Saundercook, Chuck’s brother and former High Park City Councillor. “Having first-hand exposure to something so debilitating is a powerful call to action and we simply couldn’t ignore it.”

Taking place on the scenic pathways and roads of Toronto’s High Park, Chuck’s Run is being held on June 3, 2012. The Run is a great opportunity for Torontonians to support an important cause while enjoying fresh air and exercise – at their own pace - in one of Toronto’s premier parks.

(More.....)

A presentation honouring Chuck is scheduled to be made to Betty Saundercook, Chuck's mom, who was widowed with nine children in the same year Chuck was diagnosed. With Chuck's physical challenges, she often carried him on her back around the house. "The Saundercook story is an amazing one and I for one am so grateful for their unwavering devotion to this cause," says Gillespie.

More than 50,000 Canadians suffer from primary dystonia, a neurological disorder that causes uncontrolled spasms, twisting and pain. Secondary dystonias, which can be caused by trauma,

drugs and other diseases, such as Parkinson's, Huntington's and Cerebral Palsy, account for over 200,000 cases in Canada. The third most common movement disorder behind Parkinson's disease and essential tremor, Dystonia symptoms range from mild to severe. There are treatments for dystonia making awareness and diagnosis all that more crucial. "While research has made progress, with no cure and limited treatment options, there's still so much to be done. We'll continue to do everything we can to help," says Saundercook.

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For more information on Chuck's Run – the 2012 Freedom to Move Run/Walk for Dystonia visit www.dystonia-canada.org or contact:

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désservant toutes personnes atteintes de dystonie