

Student walks 20km and raises \$13,876 for cancer research

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WINNIPEG – When Noah Palansky learned that his mother Naomi was diagnosed with cancer back in early April of this year, his initial reaction was fear and shock.

It wasn't long before he changed his perspective.

"Once I got over feeling scared, I just knew that she would beat it and I'm sure that she will be okay," said Palansky.

Palansky, a Gray Academy of Jewish Education Grade 7 student, participated in CancerCare's Challenge for Life on Sept. 28, a 20km walk to help raise money for cancer research.

This year in Manitoba, more than 6,000 people have been diagnosed with cancer. The rate of cancer is projected to increase 50 per cent by 2020.

The CancerCare Manitoba Foundation puts on the walk, with the goal of improving public health, increasing awareness of all forms of cancer and rais-



PHOTO: COURTESY OF NAOMI PALANSKY

NOAH PALANSKY

ing funds for Manitobans and their families living with cancer.

Naomi, who said she is in ongoing cancer treatment, said she is "so proud of Noah. He always wanted to find a way to make a difference, even before we heard about the walk. As soon as he made up his mind to do this, he began fundraising – even going to a Goldeyes game, and asking [Mayor] Sam Katz for a donation."

The Mayor gave Palansky a cheque for \$180.

"With this, Noah learned that kids really can make a difference," said Naomi. "It's so important to be a good citizen and member of the community, and that's just what Noah is."

Palansky joined family and friends (including three of his aunts) on a team called SOS (Save Our Sisters). The SOS team came in second out of 10 teams.

Individually, Palansky raised \$13,876, ranking him as fourth-highest fundraiser. He also received an award and certificate for raising the most money in the Under-16 category.

This year was the first that funds raised from the CancerCare walk go specifically

towards cancer care and research within Manitoba (normally the money is distributed all over Canada).

"I think that's great," said Palansky. "If it stays local, then it will be going to help people I know."

Within 24 hours of starting his fundraising for the walk, Palansky hit the \$1,000 mark.

"I asked for help from my parents' friends, my classmates' parents, and went door-to-door for the two weeks leading up to the walk," he explained.

One of the conditions of the Challenge for Life is for participants to raise a specified amount of funds for CancerCare, and also for them to make their own personal, lifestyle changes as a preventive measure.

"My family and I already live healthily – like eating healthy and staying active," explained Palansky. "But we're trying to do even more. I plan to stay a non-smoker and to be active. If everyone changed their lifestyle, less people would have cancer."

To young people out there who want to make a difference, Palansky said, "This was a great experience for me and worth giving a try. It was great to see how many people were happy to help. And this isn't a one-time thing for me. I'm already collecting donations for next year's walk. Everyone can make a difference, either by participating or donating. If all kids would give just one dollar, that would be huge."

From his experience, Palansky has learned that cancer is serious, but "whatever happens, happens. All we can do is always look at things positively and spend time with our families. Cancer can be beaten."

For more information about the Challenge for Life, visit www.challengeforlife.ca.

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