



**SUDBURY** - For more than 15 years, Mike Prevost owned and operated a body shop and parking lot near the intersection of Regent and Armstrong streets. When he started losing strength and getting cramps in his arms and hands, he thought he had Carpal tunnel syndrome. Three years later, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, a paralyzing condition with no survival rate.

Since then, Mike has lost most of the use of his arms and legs. He has had trouble holding his head up and swallowing. Even breathing has become a challenge. Joint pain has kept him awake at night. He spends most of his time sitting in his living room, watching television.

To help Mike and others like him, people in more than 29 communities across Ontario are taking part in the WALK for ALS, a national fundraiser, throughout June — officially declared as ALS Awareness Month.

The event raises money to boost awareness of ALS, fund research aimed at finding a treatment and eventual cure and to provide support services for ALS patients.

The WALK for ALS will be held in Sudbury on Saturday June 21 at Delki Dozzi Memorial Park 3 Mary Street. With the help of volunteers the goal is to raise \$40,000.

The funds are badly needed; a family caring for a loved one with ALS will spend about \$150,000 during that person's lifetime.

“You have to get your house ready to accommodate a person in a wheelchair,” explains Mike, “and that means everything from building ramps to installing special toilets and even a track system to lift the patient off the bed.” Patients need wheelchairs, hospital beds, bipap machines, which provide breathing assistance, and other equipment.

At the time he was diagnosed with ALS, Mike didn't have disability insurance and, because he was self-employed, he wasn't entitled to a government pension. His wife, Gloria, became the lone breadwinner and his family could not afford to take care of him. If not for the services of ALS Canada, Mike would have been placed in an institution.

Mike hopes his story will help people “fully understand what ALS does, not just to the patient but also to the patient's family.” He's encouraging family members, friends and other members of the community to take part in the Walk for ALS.

The public can support the Sudbury WALK for ALS or other Ontario WALKS at [www.walkforals.ca](http://www.walkforals.ca) and share their story using #alshero

Other family stories will be told as participants are encouraged to post a photo or write on a featured memorial wall displaying loved ones who have succumbed to ALS.

The Sudbury WALK for ALS begins at 10am .

#### Schedule of events

- Guest speakers
  - Maryanne Walsh, Walk Coordinator
  - Brigitte Labby, Regional Manager
  - Glenn Thibeault, MPP
  - Joe Cimino, Councillor
  - Dr. David Taylor, ALS Canada Director of Research
  - Randy Carlyle, NHL Coach
- Ribbon cutting ceremony
- Then the LU Pipe band will lead the WALK
- A BBQ will be served
- A silent auction will available.

#### **About the WALK for ALS**

The WALK for ALS is a fun, family-friendly event occurring across the country in 90 locations. The goal is to raise \$4 million nationally and \$1.775 million in Ontario. The dollars will go towards providing equipment, support services and education for the ALS Community as well as fund world-renowned research to find a treatment and eventually a cure for ALS. This year WALK for ALS features Canadian Toronto Maple Leafs Coach, Randy Carlyle, who will be participating in the Sudbury WALK for ALS on behalf of a family member with ALS. To find a location, visit [walkforals.ca](http://walkforals.ca) #walkforals. The upcoming Ontario **WALK for ALS** Locations are:

June 21

- Wingham
- Durham Region
- Sudbury

June 22

- Scarborough

#### **About ALS Awareness Month**

David Tilson, Member of Parliament for Dufferin-Caledon introduced a private member's bill in 2011, designating June ALS Awareness Month. There are many Canadians who have little awareness of ALS, ALS Canada or the ALS Provincial Societies who work together to help clients living through this disease and fund world-renowned research to find a therapy and an eventual cure for ALS.

During ALS Awareness Month a month-long series on local heroes making a difference in the ALS community will be shared through social media at #alshero and activated through the national fundraising platform WALK for ALS.

### **About ALS Canada**

ALS Canada, founded in 1977, is the only national voluntary health organization dedicated solely to the fight against ALS and support for those with ALS. ALS Canada is the leading not-for-profit organization working nationwide to fund ALS research and, with the Provincial ALS Societies, working to improve the quality of life for Canadians affected by ALS. For more information visit [www.als.ca](http://www.als.ca) or follow us on Twitter @ALSCanada

### **About ALS**

ALS is a terminal disease characterized by progressive paralysis of muscles throughout the body. Ninety percent of ALS patients die within five years of diagnosis and some in less than one. An estimated 3,000 Canadians have the disease, yet there are currently no effective treatment options. ALS is caused by death of motor neurons, which connect the brain to the muscles. While the specific cause remains unknown, promising discoveries in recent years have provided significant clues that should pave the way for new therapies and an eventual cure.

For more information or to speak to Mike Prevost please contact:

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