

Save Your Skin Foundation Recognizes National Cancer Survivors Day (Sunday, June 5th) with Greater Hope for Advanced Melanoma Survival

On the tenth anniversary of the Foundation, Cancer Survivors Day also marks a survivorship milestone for Save Your Skin Founder, Kathleen Barnard

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA (June 2, 2016) – On Sunday June 5th, 2016 the Save Your Skin Foundation will recognize National Cancer Survivors Day with greater hope for advanced melanoma survival. 2016 also marks the Foundation's 10th anniversary and represents a significant milestone for Save Your Skin's Founder, Kathleen Barnard.

In 2003 Kathleen Barnard was diagnosed with stage four melanoma and by 2005 she was given only six months to live. The grim prognosis was devastating for Barnard and her family, who continued to hold out hope for a final chance at survival. At this time a new melanoma drug was in its clinical trial phase and Barnard fortunately gained access to the treatment just in time. This treatment would save Barnard's life and by 2006 the remaining cancer would be surgically removed. Today, 10 years later, Barnard celebrates an incredible milestone as one of Canada's longest surviving advanced melanoma patients.

Until recently, there were no treatments available for advanced melanoma. "When I was diagnosed in 2003, the first thing I looked for was a sign of hope. For me, hope meant finding other survivors, but I couldn't find a single person," explained Kathy Barnard, Save Your Skin Foundation President and Founder. "Today's reality is very different. Today, there is real hope for melanoma survivorship thanks to the introduction of revolutionary new treatments in recent years".

The number of newly diagnosed cancer cases in Canada is increasing, but survival rates are also increasing¹, resulting in the need to draw attention to the ongoing unique challenges of cancer survivorship. After treatments are over, many people experience mixed emotions. People often feel glad, excited and anxious all at the same time. "While you're happy to be done treatment, it's normal to be concerned about what the future holds", said Meloney Edghill, 10-year survivor of stage four melanoma. "When I was diagnosed with terminal stage four melanoma, I did not think I would be here today. To me, survivorship means facing my fears and living each day to the fullest". A short video clip on Meloney's journey from diagnosis to survivorship can be viewed [here](#).

In 2015, the Save Your Skin Foundation launched the [I'm Living Proof](#) survivorship program and website, the first of its kind in Canada. The program provides a website for survivors to connect and offers a community of support and engagement. *I'm Living Proof* also brings hope and support to those newly diagnosed. As part of the I'm Living Proof program, a first ever melanoma survivorship video was also produced and can be viewed [here](#).

National Cancer Survivors Day is a celebration for those who have survived, and inspiration for those recently diagnosed, a gathering of support for families and an outreach to the community.²

About Cancer Survival in Canada

¹ Canadian Cancer Society cancer statistics <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-101/cancer-statistics-at-a-glance/?region=on>

² Official website of National Cancer Survivors Day (US) <http://www.ncsd.org/about-us>

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, survival is the percentage of people who are alive at some point in time after their cancer diagnosis. There are many different ways of measuring and reporting cancer survival statistics. Most survival statistics are reported for a specific time period, namely 5 years.

- Based on 2006–2008 estimates, 63% of Canadians diagnosed with cancer are expected to survive for 5 years or more after a cancer diagnosis
- Between 1992–1994 and 2006–2008, survival rates increased from 56% to 63% for all cancers combined
- In 2009, about 810,045 Canadians diagnosed with cancer in the previous 10 years were alive. This represents about 2.4% of the Canadian population or 1 out of every 41 Canadians

Source: Canadian Cancer Society³

About Melanoma in Canada

Incidence rates of melanoma have increased in both men and women over the past several decades, with recent increases of 2.3% per year in men between 2001 and 2010, and 2.9% per year among women between 2001 and 2010. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation through exposure to sunlight, tanning beds and sun lamps appears to be a major risk factor for melanoma. In its late stages, the average life expectancy for melanoma is just six months, with a one-year survival rate of only 25 percent, making metastatic melanoma one of the most aggressive forms of cancer and one of the deadliest forms of skin cancer. An estimated 6,800 Canadians were diagnosed with melanoma in 2015 (up from 6,500 in 2014). Melanoma is also one of the top three most commonly diagnosed cancers in young adults aged 15-29.

About the Save Your Skin Foundation

The Save Your Skin Foundation is a national not-for profit organization dedicated to the areas of skin cancer and skin disease with a focus on education and awareness, supporting research and ensuring equal and timely access to treatment for all Canadians. The Foundation was started in 2006 by Kathleen Barnard and her family. Please visit www.saveyourskin.ca for more information.

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³ Canadian Cancer Society Survival Statistics <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-101/cancer-statistics-at-a-glance/?region=on>