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6th Annual Katie's Run Reaches Ambitious Goal for Epilepsy

Haliburton, ON – Haliburton Highlands Secondary School and the Gary G. Brohman Athletic Field turned purple on June 24. Purple is the colour for epilepsy and this was the 6th annual Katie's Run for Epilepsy. Runners and walkers from all over the province came out to show their support in the 2.5K, 5K and 10K events.

Organizers set an ambitious goal of raising \$33,334 from donations, race income, sponsorships, and a silent and "loud" auction. A partnership with EpLink, the Epilepsy Research Program of the Ontario Brain Institute, means that every dollar raised is matched by an additional two dollars from the Ontario Brain Institute, a research institute funded by the Ontario government. Reaching this goal would mean that \$100,000 would be invested into research to improve the lives of individuals living with epilepsy.

Mission accomplished.

The exact number depends on some post-event expenses and has yet to be tallied but organizers Geri Woudstra and Trudy Pogue are thrilled to announce that the goal has been reached. They will be working with EpLink in the coming months to decide on which specific research projects those dollars will be spent.

"An investment of \$100,000 directed towards EpLink from a single run is a remarkable achievement we should take pride in, as a community," says Tom Mikklesen, President and Scientific Director at Ontario Brain Institute. "Katie's Run illustrates the strength of a community and the pivotal role each of us plays in accomplishing a common purpose—optimizing therapies that reduce and eliminate seizures while improving lives of people and families impacted by epilepsy."

"EpLink was honoured to partner with Katie's Run this year," says Dr. Jorge Burneo, Co-Director of EpLink. "It was truly inspiring to see the community in Haliburton rally behind Katie and her family to support epilepsy research."

Katie's Run began in 2012 in honour of Katie Woudstra who had an "out of the blue" tonic clonic seizure in December, 2010 and was later diagnosed with epilepsy. The event brought in approximately \$16,000 in the first year and organizers prayed that somehow that money would be multiplied. A total of \$100,000 was raised in the first five years and now, in just one year, that investment has doubled.

"Fundraisers play a big part in our success," says Pogue. Prizes for the top fundraisers went to Andrea Mitchell (\$4,060), Grace Howe (\$2,300 and with her team, "Howe Graceful," a total of \$3,330) and Christina Hitch (\$1,675). Don & Geri Woudstra, Katie's parents and event organizers, also raised over \$4,500.

The event has created an epilepsy community and each year more stories are shared on the Katie's Run website and Facebook page. There were close to 200 participants this year and many are regulars who look forward to the event every year and bring a team of family and friends to run or walk together.

The mission is to one day uncover the brilliance that will end epilepsy—forever!

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