

# The Toronto Sun

## Meagan's Walk helps sick kids; \$270Gs raised for cancer

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1. photo by Ernest Doroszuk, Sun Media

Denise Bebenek, who lost her 5-year-old daughter Meagan, inset, to a cancerous brain tumour, waves to kids inside the Hospital for Sick Kids after the 7th annual Meagan's Walk in Toronto. Yesterday's event raised more than \$270,000 for cancer research.

**Brain cancer stopped 5-year-old Meagan Bebenek from doing many things -- but it couldn't kill her passion for giving to others.**

Just months before she died in June 2001, Bebenek would scramble out of bed to give toys to other children at the Hospital for Sick Children.

Yesterday more than 2,000 people kept her memory alive, taking part in the 5-km Meagan's Walk, from Ontario Place to the Hospital for Sick Children, where she died of a brain tumour.

The event raised more than \$270,000 for brain tumour research. "With this walk we are targeting the No. 1 cause of cancerous deaths in children," said Meagan's mother, Denise.

Since Meagan's death, Denise Bebenek has been leading efforts to put on the annual walk which has raised more than \$1 million for brain tumour research.

"There are way too many Meagan's who need help," she said. "Even though it won't bring Meagan back, I feel responsible as a mother to help all these kids."

The walk was followed by a group hug where participants joined hands and made a circle around the Sick Kids' hospital. "I stand as one in the circle," said Bebenek. "The best medicine we can give to these kids when they are sick is human compassion."

Gillian Stapelton said that after her 3-year-old, Sara, was diagnosed with a brain tumour last October, she had to move from London to Toronto to ensure her child received needed medical treatment. "It's the worst news a parent can get, when they tell you to enjoy each day because we don't know what will happen," she said.

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