

A Cross Country Journey in Support of Hospice Care

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On May 21 2015, 39 year old Ian Bos, alone and on foot with nothing but a backpack and a cell phone, embarked on an incredible cross country journey in memory of his late father, Ted Bos, in hopes of raising awareness and funds for hospice palliative care in Canada.

Bos is walking an average 40 km a day, stopping along the way to participate in local events and fund raising activities to generate awareness regarding the benefits of hospice palliative care. On August 5 and 6, Ian stopped in Thunder Bay and met with the local palliative care community to speak about his experiences. His stay here was hosted by Hospice Northwest. Hospice Northwest is a local non-profit organization dedicated to providing compassionate support to individuals and their caregivers as they face the challenges of living with a life-threatening illness.

Bos is encouraging Canadians to connect with him along the route and to support hospice palliative care in Canada by texting 'hospice' to 20222, making a donation via his website or donating to a local hospice organization such as Hospice Northwest.

Inspired to walk across Canada in honour of the hospice palliative care his father received before he passed away, Bos hopes to engage Canadians in the conversation regarding end-of-life care while raising \$25,000 to support access to care in communities across the country.

After his diagnosis January 2014, Bos' father Ted endured unsuccessful treatment and surgery before being referred to hospice care in Nova Scotia. Bos passionately describes the palliative care team's attention to his father's symptoms, fears and frustrations responding with respect, empathy and support. The team provided the "confidence and support we needed as a family to care for him while also giving him the ability to maintain his independence," says Bos.

Aside from raising money to support hospice palliative care, Ian hopes the walk will also draw attention to this service, which is vital to the local community and the country at large. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Research, only about 1 in 3 Canadians facing end-of-life illnesses have access to palliative care, which is defined as an approach to care focusing on the quality of life in the time remaining. With an aging population and diminishing resources in the Canadian medical system, this approach to service will only become more vital, as it allows people to stay at home longer.

During his stay in Thunder Bay, Ian got a chance to share his story with supporters at a reception on August 5th at Marina Park and on August 6th at the Terry Fox Memorial. He was joined there by Hospice Northwest staff and volunteers, along with other members of the palliative care community, including Dr. Geoff Davis, who cared for Terry Fox during his time in Thunder Bay. As Ian left the city this morning, a group of supporters walked him out to the highway and wished him well as he continues his incredible journey across Canada.

