



**Kidney March Marches from K-country to Calgary.
This morning, nearly 270 people began their 100 km, 3 day walk
for kidney disease and organ donation.
September 11-13, 2015**

Press Release

For Immediate Release

What: Kidney March, a 3 day, 100 km walk to raise awareness for kidney disease and organ donation, in support of The Kidney Foundation of Canada, kicked off this morning with a moving Opening Ceremonies at Millarville Racetrack.

Why kidney disease: Kidney disease affects 10% of the population. Sometimes hearing 10% doesn't accurately highlight the impact of kidney disease. The impact is that 3.5 million Canadians live with, and die from, this chronic illness. To bring that closer to home - for those with significant loss of kidney function, life is interrupted with specialists' appointments, renal diets, dialysis or transplant treatments, physical and emotional side effects, lost wages, and persistent feelings of being unwell. The Kidney Foundation of Canada provides for kidney disease prevention, lifesaving research and patient support programs.

Why organ donation: Nearly 75% of the over 4,600 Canadians on the wait list for an organ transplant are waiting for a kidney. The Kidney Foundation of Canada builds awareness for organ donation and advocates for processes to optimize organ donation in Canada.

Beneficiary: People living with kidney disease and other chronic illnesses requiring transplant through programs, support and research provided by The Kidney Foundation of Canada.

More information: www.kidneymarch.ca

B roll: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87516xbh5-M> with footage from previous years

Kidney March kicked off this morning with inspiring speeches and a warm sense of community at the Opening Ceremonies in Millarville. The entire Kidney March family, nearly 270 participants, then took the initial steps of their bold and powerful journey. Today, they are south of Calgary and tomorrow they march west of town. On Sunday the final kilometres of the 100 kilometre journey bring them in to Canada Olympic Park for a celebratory Closing Ceremony.

Jeff Nawolsky, who marches in memory of his wife Didja, choked back tears as he stood with daughter Cassidy and heartfully shared his family's connection to kidney disease during Opening Ceremonies. In 2009 when Didja first heard of Kidney March she was delighted to have an event that put a face and a story to kidney disease. A kidney patient herself, dialyzing 7 nights a week at home, Didja jumped on board to march in the inaugural Kidney March in 2010. This year, Didja had a dream to march again. Sadly, after a fierce battle with kidney disease where she endured and conquered the impossible, she lost her fight this past May. But her dream will not fade. Jeff, Cassidy, and 20 of her friends and family have come together and formed Team Didja.

That's what Kidney March is all about. It's for friends, family, medical staff and people living with kidney disease. This March becomes their outlet. Somewhere they can make a difference on par with the level of frustration, anger and despair they feel for the burden of illness. It is also their hope. Not only for early detection and a cure for kidney disease, but also for ground breaking advancements in organ transplantation.

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Media are invited to join Kidney March at Closing Ceremonies on September 13th. Interviews with participants can also be arranged along the route any day. Details on the route can be found at <http://kidneymarch.ca/route-maps-and-cheering-stations/>.

The Kidney Foundation encourages anyone who has a kidney connection or would like to take part in a transformative event to join us in the fight against kidney disease by donating to Kidney March 2015 at KidneyMarch.ca. Plus, registration for Kidney March 2016 opens on September 11th. Let the wave of Kidney March, and all the people who make up this great community, embrace you in making the biggest difference you've ever made. You can do this.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:
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Note: This press release will be followed by a press release prior to Closing Ceremonies on September 13th, 2015.

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