



Cancer Recovery Program | Programme de rétablissement à la suite d'un cancer

## Rebuilding Strength: Peter's Story

**"I firmly believe that the Stay Strong Program helped save my life," says Peter McDevitt, "it's so important, I can't tell you how positive my experience was."**

In December of 2016, Peter McDevitt was given the wonderful news that he had beaten stage 4 throat and tongue cancer. This marked the beginning of a long road of recovery for Peter, "when I was first diagnosed, I weighed 268 lbs. and when I finished my radiation treatments, I weighed 195 lbs." says Peter, "I lost all my muscle mass and felt very weak".

Due to the location of his cancer, eating wasn't easy for Peter, especially following his numerous radiation treatments. To assist in re-establishing Peter's nutrition, he was referred to Donna Warner, a Registered Dietician at the Saint John Regional Hospital. "If it wasn't for Donna, I would have never known about the Stay Strong Program," explains Peter, "she gave me the contact information, insisted I talk to my Oncologist about it, and encouraged me to enroll".

**"I was very nervous the first day," admits Peter, "I didn't know what to expect, or what I was getting myself into. It was a bit intimidating at first, but once I started talking to everyone, I found so much hope and inspiration. It's exactly what I needed."**

When Peter began the Stay Strong Program in December of 2016, he had a hard time making it around the Saint John Regional YMCA track, 4 times. "By the end of my program in February 2017, I had worked my way up to running 3km on the treadmill!" exclaims Peter, "I couldn't have done it without the amazing support and encouragement from Gina and Mary."

**"I've never been a great runner," Peter continues, "but I promised myself mid-way through my**



Peter McDevitt

**cancer treatments that if I made it through this, I would run a 5km race."**

With a lot of hard-work and dedication, Peter gradually built up his strength and stamina. Peter explains, "I knew once I worked my way up to running consistently for an hour, I could do a race." In April 2017, Peter crossed the finish line in his first race, the Brent Kelly Memorial 5 mile run. "It was very emotional for me," says Peter, "I have run a few more races since then and I know I'll never be first, but every finished race is another check mark on my list."

Peter is so thankful for the Stay Strong Program and believes every cancer patient deserves and needs the hope, support and guidance of this program. "It is just such a positive environment," says Peter, "I am a firm believer that everyone going through the end stages of their treatment should be told about the Stay Strong Program."

To learn more about the Stay Strong Program please contact Gina Spear-Burrows, (506) 632-5446. To make a gift to support this program, please call (506) 648-6400 or visit [sjrhf.ca/ask10for10](http://sjrhf.ca/ask10for10).

