More than 3,000 take to the streets of Port Coquitlam to raise cancer-fighting funds in Terry Fox's memory

By Kate Poole
Staff Reporter

More than 3,000 people dodged the drizzle on Sunday to make the Hometown Terry Fox run the most successful in 13 years.

The finally tally is expected to record between 3,000 and 3,500 participants - double, possibly triple the turnout of 1997.

It was the biggest run in B.C. for people numbers, according to the Terry Fox Foundation, but even with a projected $50,000 in money raised for cancer research, it's not the top grossing run. (In Prince Rupert, one man brought in $46,738 - 3,000 pledges from a town of 16,000.)

Darrell Fox said across the province participation and pledges were up.

“I don’t think people have forgotten Terry,” he said.

In part he credits schools and teachers for keeping the dream alive.

“There were runs in 484 schools this year, 100 more than last year, and all those students were not even alive when Terry was running across Canada.” He also said there’s a more tangible reason - more and more people are surviving cancer, “living proof that cancer research is paying off.”

Alitfe Vince, who has survived cancer, raised the Terry Fox flag on Sunday at 10 a.m.

Todd Perini, 13, was cheered across the finish line in appreciation for finishing the 8-km route on crutches. It was his fourth Terry Fox run.

Terry Fox Raven’s football coach Mike Ross had his squad out in jerseys, and 110 students came out in civvies as volunteers.

Ines and Francis Featherstone, 81 and 82 years of age, walked 70 km just as they have for the last seven or eight years. “We’ve always done the 10-k,” Ines said. “We’re used to walking and (downhill) skiing so we do it.”

She said it was the best run so far. “Compared to the other years, I thought it was very well organized - everything about it was better. It’s a feather in somebody’s cap.”

Many caps. This year for the first time, service club members from across Tri City pitched in to help the PoCo Kinsmen. “The key to this run was team work,” said Kinsmen Steve Wittluk, one of the organizers.

Help from Lions, Elks, Rotary, Kinettes, Scouts, schools, the Chamber and other groups and individuals pulled the event out of a spiral that bottomed out last year with 840 registered participants, (although estimates were that up to 1,700 had done the run but many didn’t register.)

Wittluk said the downward spiral has been reversed. “People have already said that they’re going to help out next year, we’re already getting feedback that they are excited about next year.”

Hayley and Jessica Whitlock passed the Terry Fox Run in relative ease, thanks to the efforts of dad, Bill.

Terry Fox coin in Canada’s future?
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