

## Editorial

# Rest in peace, Eddy Nolan – the ‘Terry Fox’ of Roslyn School

Retired Roslyn School caretaker Eddy Nolan was well known in Montreal for his fervent and steadfast support of and participation in Terry Fox Runs, beginning in the very first year of their existence and through which he helped raise over \$1 million, including \$300,000 at Roslyn.

Eddy has himself been suffering from cancer since 2011 and was recently approved for medical assistance in dying (MAID). He chose April 12, the date that Terry Fox started his run across Canada in 1980. As he put it on Facebook, “I have followed his Dream since then.”

Others likely see it that way, too. In the minds of many, Nolan’s story will be forever linked to Terry’s, so let’s start there.

In my view, Terry Fox is the greatest and most inspirational Canadian ever. At a time when “runs benefiting...” cause X, Y or Z were not normal or even heard of, Terry took it upon himself to run across

the country – via consecutive marathons, at age 21, on one leg! – to raise money for cancer research. And it wasn’t just hard to explain the concept (apparently some laughed). It was hard logistically and culturally. On the roads, cars were king. Jogging was not a big thing. Dedicated spaces for exercise like bike lanes weren’t normal. “Kicking cancer’s ass” and “cancer survivor” were not expressions. Diseases were treated and discussed in hospitals and clinics, not schools or offices.

Terry had a major role in changing all that, including – most importantly – the outlook for countless cancer patients. For many, it has become a treatable or curable or liveable condition, not a death sentence.

Terry Fox impressed other people in Westmount too, one of whom – Eddy Nolan – has stood out for years in his dedication, perseverance and ..... example. Indeed, in my 17 *continued on p. 17*



2010

Eddy Nolan leading Roslyn’s kindergarteners on their own Terry Fox run September 23, 2010, his ninth run at the school. Earlier, then-grade 5 student Latrell Reid checked off the \$10,000 mark on that year’s fundraising results poster. By press time that issue, Roslyn had reported \$20,000 and counting. PHOTO: DAVID PRICE.

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## Swimming, tennis, pickleball follow on April 23

# City day-camp sign-up starts April 16, Rec. dept. needs soccer coaches

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The annual rush to sign up children for the city’s summer camp sessions is expected to start this week. This is when priority registration for Westmount residents opens April 16 for most of the Sports and Recreation summer programs, to be followed by swimming, tennis and pickleball registration April 23.

“It’s important for people to register on time,” said Sports and Recreation director Dave Lapointe in pointing out the priority schedules offered for local residents. “Many of the summer programs fill up quickly.”

Meanwhile, the city is in need of more soccer and baseball coaches for the start of their season April 27, he ..... added. *continued on p. 22*

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## Remembering Eddy Nolan in Westmount



**2011 – months after cancer diagnosis**

After being absent most of the year while receiving treatment for cancer, Nolan returned on September 28, 2011 to lead the children in the school's Terry Fox Run.

PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY



**2012 – a marathon year**

The entire student population of Roslyn and grade 5 and 6 students from Westmount Park School, numbering some 600 in total, gathered along Sherbrooke in Westmount Park to cheer along Nolan, April 12, 2012. Nolan ran his own 42-km marathon from Montreal West to Montreal East. He carried the Terry Fox flag and his purpose was “simply to honour Terry Fox.”

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON



**April 2013**

Hundreds of Westmount students braved the unseasonable snow on April 12, 2013 to cheer on Nolan as he marked the 33rd anniversary of Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope. Students from Roslyn and Westmount Park School were in attendance and lined Sherbrooke St. in front of Westmount Park, chanting “Go, Eddy, Go!”

PHOTO: MICHAEL MOORE



**September 2013**

On September 26, 2013, for the twelfth year, Nolan led Roslyn students on a fundraising run to collect money for the Terry Fox Foundation for cancer research. Up to that point, Nolan had managed to raise \$228,000 for the cause with the help of Roslyn School students.

PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY



## Roslyn honours Eddy Nolan – Student: ‘It is very sad’

*Eddy Nolan, cont'd from p. 1*

years at this newspaper, meeting Eddy was one of three or four stand-out positive experiences.

I hadn't expected it to be.

Despite my high opinion of Terry Fox, when I walked up the hill about 14 years ago to cover “this caretaker who has led Roslyn’s Terry Fox Run for eight years,” I looked at it as just an ordinary task that I didn’t have the time or budget to sub-contract to one of our professional reporters. By that time, Terry Fox Runs had been held for 30 years all over the world, country, province, metropolis and city.

I would take a photo and go.

And then this man appeared, very different from the school caretakers of my youth. He looked more like a gym teacher or athletic coach. He moved through the crowd of kids like a game show contestant high-fiving his way to the stage, or a rock star getting ready to perform.

And he spoke like a (genuine) inspirational speaker. I will never forget his short call-and-response style speech.

Nolan: “WHO ARE WE RUNNING FOR?”  
Kids, in unison: “TERRY FOX!”

It gave me my headline, and warmed the cold, cold cockles of this jaded editor’s heart.

\*

And then the tale got “better” as a newspaper story, and so much worse as a



Over 500 Roslyn students gathered April 12 to honour Eddy Nolan, a former caretaker who ended his life with medical assistance in dying (MAID) that day after 13 years of cancer. As the children walked around the school, they chanted: “Eddy, Eddy, Eddy.” Throughout his life, Nolan had been inspired by the courage and strength of Terry Fox. Principal Joanne Genovezos, centre foreground, and vice-principal Mireille Tehbelian, to the right of her, said when they had talked to some of the older children about MAID, one boy said, “It is very sad.”

human one.

After losing two sisters to cancer, Eddy was himself diagnosed with throat cancer soon after that 2010 run, giving poignancy to his longtime support of cancer fundraising. And he still showed up a year later for Roslyn’s run, despite having been off work for treatment in most of the intervening months. Wow.

And then he continued to run, year after year around Montreal, including a whole marathon from Montreal West to Montreal East that we were able to cover, until completing his final run just last year. Amazing.

\*

I am sure that Eddy had a similar inspirational effect on countless others, young and old. We will remember him.

And I am not forgetting the years to come. I hope at some future date to be at a Roslyn Terry Fox Run where someone asks the kids:

“WHO ARE WE RUNNING FOR?”

And they reply:

“TERRY FOX AND EDDY NOLAN!”

*David Price is the editor of the Independent.*

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