



Puppy Up!

By Stephen L. Brauns

Luke Robinson and his two dogs walked all the way from Austin to Boston. It took 826 days and they covered more than two thousand miles. Why? Because cancer had taken their best friend Malcolm, a Great Pyrenees. Luke had lost a loving friend and he wanted to know more about why Malcolm was gone. What started out to be a walk to create awareness about the similarities between canine and human cancer has become the 2 Million Dogs Foundation with a simple slogan: Cancer. Touches. Everyone.

Breast cancer in humans and mammary tumors in dogs have much in common. Robinson and 2 Million Dogs have helped to raise much-needed research funds and orchestrate studies that by use of comparative oncology—research learned about the common traits of these cancers in both human and dogs—may well lead to treatments for both.

“Collaborating with Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania is an intersection of great ideas and great expectations and we feel the research will provide us with invaluable insight into the most prolific cancer afflicting women in the United States,” said Robinson.

The loss of a dog...how can you even begin to describe that hole in your heart? When I lose a dog, it hurts more than losing other family members. It is because of that unconditional love, but also because my dogs have always been my family.

Cancer is cruel. Regardless of whether it attacks a human or a dog, it shows no mercy, it simply consumes life. There is much research into human cancer, and canine cancer research is being undertaken by such institutions as Colorado State

University and Texas A&M University and their renowned school of veterinary medicine. But until now, very little work has been done to understand if there is a common link between the two. Perhaps the cure for one will show the pathway for a cure for the other. Could it be that simple?

Robinson has brought together some very high-powered academics in his quest. A joint study involving the likes of Harvard, MIT, Mass General and Dana Farber Cancer Institute will involve comparative oncology studies between canines and humans. “It’s like we are going on a fishing expedition,” said Robinson. “If we fund enough of these comparative studies, we will find that big fish. I truly believe dogs hold the key to curing cancer in humans. Cancer is cancer. It touches everyone. Under a microscope, cancer looks the same whether it’s from a dog or a human.”

What started out as one man and two dogs walking two thousand miles has turned into 31 annual walks around the country to raise awareness and money for cancer research. Luke was sure that if he and his dogs could walk a few thousand miles, two million dogs could walk two miles each for the cause. Together, Luke and his supporters are building the largest human and pet cancer community in the world. Who says one person can’t make a difference?

The Second Annual Puppy Up! Denver Walk will be held on Saturday, November 3 at Stapleton Central Park in Denver. Registration will be from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. The two mile walk and opening ceremonies will begin at 10:00 a.m. There will also be a Puppy Up! Market and Festival that will include human and canine entertainment, food and drink vendors, pet related businesses and human and canine cancer-related organizations. Please come out and show your support for this wonderful organization. The entry fee is \$30 in advance and \$35 the day of the event. For more information, to register for the event or make a donation, please visit www.2milliondogs.org. We hope to see you and your furry friends there.



Top photo: Breast cancer heroes & survivors Wendy and Deli. Bottom photo: Participants at last year’s Puppy Up! Denver Walk. Photos courtesy of Two Million Dogs Foundation.