

# Veteran walking 100 km for medical research

By Julia Galt

He's walked over 80 kilometres of his 100-km goal so far, but there's no slowing down Newmarket's George Markow.

For the past four months, 99-year-old Markow has been steadfastly circling the grounds of his retirement home, unperturbed by poor weather and the blazing summer heat. By walking around the Roxborough Retirement Residence over 1,500 times (15 times per kilometre), Markow hopes to reach his fundraising goal, \$100,000, before his 100th birthday in April of 2021. All money raised over the course of his walk will be donated to medical research organizations, with 25% going to Southlake Regional Hospital Foundation's COVID-19 Action Fund and 75% to the Sunnybrook Research Institute.

Having already raised \$33,000, Markow is hopeful he'll get to see his goal reached.

"I'll just keep putting one foot in front of the other, and keep on going until I'm there," said Markow.

Inspired by England's Captain Tom Moore, who raised over \$40 million for the NHS by walking 100 laps of his garden, and his grandson Cameron, a front-line paramedic, Markow decided to begin his walk early April.

Sylvia Perkins, Markow's daughter, set up the campaign's GoFundMe shortly afterwards, blasting the fundraiser into the public eye. By June, Markow had walked 50 kilometres, half of his goal, and had his walk promoted by national news sites including CTV News, 680 News, and Breakfast Television. He had, as Perkins put it, "hit the big time."

"My father loves making puzzles, and framing them, and giving them to family members as gifts. He always says, 'this is what you're going to remember me by'." said Perkins. "But I don't think the puzzles are going to be what's remembered anymore! This walk is his legacy."

Markow is certainly no stranger to persevering through difficulty. Born in Russia in 1921, Markow was, at 19,

forcibly conscripted into the Russian Army. Captured by German soldiers on the battlefield, Markow was interred into a concentration camp where he endured starvation, beatings, and other tortures for three years. The end of the war meant his freedom from the camp, but Markow's difficulties were far from over. After witnessing the execution of wartime "traitors" by the Russian Army, and being interrogated on why he didn't fight for "Mother Russia" (despite his imprisonment), Markow knew it was time to flee. He escaped to Germany and immigrated to Canada, where he has lived for the past 70 years.

"I'm a happy old Canadian," said Markow. "And I'm happy to help other Canadians."

The hospitals Markow is fundraising for hold special importance to him. Several years ago, he received life-saving surgery for a brain bleed at Sunnybrook Hospital. Markow's late wife, Lydia, spent three years at Southlake's Residential Care Village, and Markow himself continues to have appointments there.

With the last of his 100 kilometres in sight, Markow says he intends to continue walking as long as the donations continue to come in. He finds strength to continue, he says, by being read notes of encouragement left by donors on his GoFundMe page.

"I'm very thankful they're on my side for a very good cause," said Markow. "I'd like to thank everyone that has given me support."

As of June, all donations made to Markow's GoFundMe will be matched by the Galt Family Foundation. To donate to Markow's fundraiser, and to have your contributions doubled, please visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/99-yr-old-walking-100-km-for-medical-research/>.



## Partners join to provide virtual vet care

The Ontario SPCA and Humane Society has partnered with Smart.Vet telehealth to give animal centre staff and volunteer foster families virtual access to veterinarians to ensure animals always have the best care possible, without the stress of travelling, regardless of their location, or the time of day when a health concern arises.

Through the Smart.Vet website, reaching a veterinarian is just a click or phone call away when health concerns arise after hours or on weekends. The telehealth veterinary service is designed to complement routine veterinary care.

The telehealth service will be used in Ontario SPCA animal centres across the province, and will also be accessible to volunteer foster families who care for animals in their own homes. Should a foster animal become ill, or if there is a concern for the animal's health after hours when veterinary clinics are closed, Ontario SPCA foster parents can access Smart.Vet and consult with a veterinarian without having to leave their home.

For more on the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society, visit [ontariospca.ca](http://ontariospca.ca)



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