



MEAGAN
Bebenek
Foundation

Creating a Circle of Hope

Start
fundraising
today

POST SECONDARY
SCHOOLS

MEAGAN BEBENEK FOUNDATION: CREATING A CIRCLE OF HOPE

Letter From the School Team

Hello everyone!

Thank you for expressing an interest in Meagan Bebenek Foundation: Creating a Circle of Hope. We are excited to welcome new members to our Meagan Bebenek Foundation family and to continue spreading our message of hope.

As a group of post-secondary students committed to the mission of Meagan Bebenek Foundation, we are part of a vast network of motivated individuals who have unique gifts to share!

Since 2001, with the support of volunteers and donors, Meagan Bebenek Foundation, has worked tirelessly raising hope and awareness about paediatric brain tumours and funds for ground-breaking research. We are inspired by their message, and invite you to join us! We want to make connecting with Meagan Bebenek Foundation as simple as possible, and have created resources to help you customize your institution's involvement with Meagan Bebenek Foundation.

We hope this package will inspire you. Together we can continue fighting for children and their families who are affected by paediatric brain tumours.



WHAT IS MEAGAN BEBENEK FOUNDATION



OUR STORY The story of Meagan Bebenek Foundation started with a beautiful, strong, and happy girl named Meagan Bebenek. Meagan was born on May 30th, 1996. On December 22, 2000, she was diagnosed with brain stem glioma, a malignant and inoperable brain tumour. Brain tumours are the leading cause of cancer-related death in children and young people up to age 20.

Despite this diagnosis, Meagan continued to live life to the fullest. She attended school when she was able, and showed strength and kindness to those around her. Meagan and her family were surrounded by a loving community at Our Lady of Sorrows School. Meagan never complained about her treatments, and made presents and drawings for her friends and caregivers. These gestures were her five-year-old way of saying thank you for the love and care, and perhaps even goodbye. Meagan passed away quietly on June 17, 2001 with her family at her side.

OUR IMPACT In 2001 Denise Bebenek, Meagan's mother, met with a small group of volunteers and experience, Denise knew that the statistics around paediatric brain tumours had to change, and that no family should have to walk such a path alone.

To date, Meagan Bebenek Foundation has raised over \$5.8 million dollars funding paediatric brain tumour research at The Arthur and Sonia Brain Tumour Research Centre (BTRC) in Toronto. The BTRC hosts the only program in Canada dedicated to paediatric brain tumour research.



OUR HUG Since 2001, Meagan Bebenek Foundation has hosted the annual "Meagan's Walk and HUG" event on Mother's Day weekend, raising awareness and significant funds for research. The event welcomes thousands from the GTA, across Ontario, and beyond, who gather at Fort York in Toronto, wend their way through the streets of Toronto, with the Walk culminating with participants joining hands in a "human hug" around The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids). The "hug" is a simple gesture of support for all: you are not alone.

Meagan Bebenek Foundation Neuro-oncology Fellowship

In 2013, Meagan Bebenek Foundation launched the Meagan Bebenek Foundation Neuro-oncology Fellowship to further clinical research and training in the subspecialty of paediatric neuro-oncology. This plays a pivotal role in working to achieve our goal of raising awareness and sharing a message of hope for all children who suffer from paediatric brain tumours. The Meagan Bebenek Foundation Neuro-Oncology Fellowship brings doctors from around the world to Toronto to work alongside the very best in the world.

Funding brain tumour research through the fellowship program empowers fellows to bring their knowledge and experience, as well as our message of hope back to their home countries.

Meagan Bebenek Foundation supports a “bench to bedside” philosophy, where whatever is learned in the research labs can be applied directly to the treatment of young patients and improving their care, quality of life and outcomes. Every Fellow has witnessed the power of our message and the “hug” and is eager to bring the Meagan Bebenek Foundation to their own countries.

To date, we have welcomed the Meagan Bebenek Foundation Fellows from Spain, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Brazil, Argentina and India (2).



“My neuro-oncology fellowship in Toronto was an amazing experience which had significantly helped me to improve my own skills but more importantly to change practice back here in Prague.”

Dr. Michal Zapotocky, Czech Republic

Our School Program – Kids Helping Kids!

The Meagan Bebenek Foundation school program celebrates the theme “Kids helping Kids” and empowers youth to make a difference and foster compassion within their school communities.

Kids Helping Kids has been embraced by many school communities across the GTA and throughout Ontario. Students are given valuable leadership opportunities and are able to share their gifts and talents to help those in need.

Every school has a “Meagan”, a student who could use our support and help. Each student, regardless of age, has the power within to make a real difference.

The Kids Helping Kids school program can look different in each school. Some schools join Meagan Bebenek Foundation each year, fundraising within their own community for our annual Meagan’s HUG. This may be through a school spirit day or bake sale.

Others host a “hug” of their own, bringing the power of Meagan Bebenek Foundation to their school communities. Meagan Bebenek Foundation values all of its school partners and works tirelessly to continue developing the school program, so together we can have as strong an impact as possible.



The Crane Ceremony

The school program, Kids Helping Kids, was inspired by Meagan’s own school community at Our Lady of Sorrows Elementary School. At the time of Meagan’s diagnosis and throughout her treatment, this school family rallied around Meagan and her family with an outpouring of compassion and support.

The inspiration for what became known as The Crane Ceremony came from grade 8 student, Margaret. Margaret read a historical novel titled *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, the story of a young girl who is a survivor of the bombing of Hiroshima.

Origami is the art of paper folding, and an origami crane is a symbol of hope. In the novel, Sadako sets out with a goal of folding a thousand cranes. In Japanese legend, if someone folds a thousand cranes, their wish will come true.

Inspired by Sadako, Margaret got to work quietly folding cranes, and it wasn’t long before the entire school community was involved. Having surpassed their goal of folding a thousand cranes, on a special spring day, students gathered in the school yard, surrounding Meagan in “a circle of hope”, and one by one, presented her with their colourful cranes with personal messages of hope and love written upon the wings.

Now every spring, in anticipation of the coming Meagan’s HUG event, Meagan Bebenek Foundation hosts The Crane Ceremony. In a demonstration of hope and support, students from partnering schools across Toronto, present thousands of handmade origami cranes to Meagan’s Bebenek Foundation Heroes, children affected by paediatric brain tumours. It reminds those children and their families that they are not alone.

DID YOU KNOW?

01

BRAIN TUMOURS ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF CANCER RELATED DEATHS IN CHILDREN

02

BRAIN TUMOURS IN CHILDREN ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN ADULTS AND ARE OFTEN TREATED DIFFERENTLY

03

ALTHOUGH AS MANY AS 60% OF CHILDREN WITH A BRAIN TUMOUR WILL SURVIVE, THEY ARE OFTEN LEFT WITH LONG TERM SIDE EFFECTS

04

CHILDHOOD CANCER IS CONSISTENTLY UNDERFUNDED ACCOUNTING FOR ONLY FIVE PERCENT OF ALL CANCER FUNDING RESEARCH IN CANADA TODAY

”

Meagan Bebenek Foundation funded a medical trial that included less toxic doses of chemo resulting in less side effects. We owe the quality of Mia's life to this trial.

Amy Amato,
Mom of Mia,
Meagan Bebenek Foundation Hero





School Spotlight

De La Salle College "Oaklands", the alma mater of Sarah Grace and Matthew Bebenek, Meagan's siblings, is deeply committed to Meagan Bebenek Foundation. De La Salle has made significant financial contributions to support Meagan Bebenek Foundation while simultaneously fostering a sense of purpose and compassion within the school community.

Every school can offer a unique value to Meagan Bebenek Foundation, and De La Salle can serve as an example of how to incorporate Meagan Bebenek Foundation's mission into your school community, and demonstrates that small acts can have big impact!



Fundraising

In recent years, De La Salle has hosted an annual Meagan's Week, full of activities and events to unite the school community around the two key objectives of raising awareness and funds. All activities are structured with these goals in mind.

During Meagan's Week, a unique activity takes place daily at the school: a donation drive associated with pink and purple dress day; and sports tournaments, to name a few. In addition, De La Salle conducts bake sales throughout the year with proceeds going to Meagan Bebenek Foundation.

To launch Meagan's Week a school leader addresses the community, ensuring that all understand Meagan Bebenek Foundation's mission and goals. Frequently a Meagan Bebenek Foundation Hero, a young person who has personal experience with a brain tumour, is invited to participate in the Meagan's Week celebrations.

De La Salle also organizes a school team every year, where students are encouraged to register for the annual Meagan's HUG event on Mother's Day weekend. The school community sets fundraising goals and sets out to meet their objectives. This makes collecting additional donations as simple as possible.



The School HUG

Each year, De La Salle hosts its own Meagan's HUG on the school campus. This HUG engages all students and staff members, and often includes a visit from Meagan Bebenek Foundation Heroes. The "hug" event usually is planned to take place on the outdoor playing field at DLS. Music plays as the "hug" begins, and students are encouraged to create and bring signs to show their support. The spirit of togetherness and community are truly embodied in this activity.

The Crane Ceremony

De La Salle supports Meagan Bebenek Foundation's annual Crane Ceremony. Time is set aside during Meagan's Week to encourage students to create origami cranes that are later presented at the Ceremony. This is in keeping with the tradition that started the Crane Ceremony at Meagan's school, each crane inscribed with a message of hope and encouragement. On behalf of the school, a select group of students attend The Crane Ceremony to present the gift of cranes.

Meagan Bebenek Foundation Committee

De La Salle has a school based Meagan Bebenek Foundation committee year round. This group of students plans Meagan's Week for the school, coordinating donations and ensuring student engagement. Their focus is planning events to raise awareness about paediatric brain tumours, raising funds, and encouraging students to join the annual Meagan's HUG event.

Meagan's HUG Event

De La Salle invites members of the school community to participate in the annual Meagan's HUG event on Mother's Day weekend. With its own team fundraising page, the DLS team welcomes all members of the community, as well as family and friends, to attend this event. It's a great way to honour the spirit of Mother's Day!

In recent years, De La Salle music students have volunteered to play the national anthem at the beginning of the HUG event, and provide music for all participants.

Overall, De La Salle is a prime example of the power of community and the powerful impact of motivated individuals, who have a common goal.

Each school is unique, and with its talented members and capabilities, can create its own Meagan Bebenek Foundation legacy! We look forward to witnessing your school community's special efforts in support of Meagan Bebenek Foundation!





Social outings are a great way to make friends and have some fun!

Gathering the school community at a favourite local bar, is a perfect way to raise money and awareness for Meagan Bebenek Foundation. Partner with a local establishment and host a night dedicated to Meagan Bebenek Foundation and explore the options!.

This may mean a portion of the admission fee is donated to the cause; or perhaps a percentage of each drink sold that evening can be a donation to Meagan Bebenek Foundation. Donation boxes could be set up at the venue for customers who would like to make additional contributions.

Selling tickets and wristbands for “free” admission or privileges to skip the line; or to enter into a raffle to win prizes; or raffle tickets

can be sold individually. These are all ways to generate funds for a great cause!. To find raffle prizes, students are encouraged to reach out to potential donors within the community.

Pick a theme! Dress up the bar with some fun decor!

Bar nights have successfully taken place at many schools, such as Western University, where students explored partnership opportunities with local bars to drive engagement.

While a bar is a great idea, any venue that would be willing to host a large group is perfect! This may include your local school restaurant or any entertainment space.

Make sure you market the event to ensure students are aware of how to participate and to raise awareness about the mission

Start a Meagan Bebenek Foundation School Chapter

Starting a Meagan Bebenek Foundation Chapter at your school is an awesome way to ensure continued involvement and commitment to making a difference.

If you are interested in creating a school chapter, you can incorporate many of the other fundraising activities listed into your annual activities. Although clubs can be structured in many ways, a typical team often includes:

This application process for a new club may vary at each school, so be sure to contact your student government for more information. To inquire about how to start a chapter with our support, please contact schools@meaganshug.com.

Sponsorship and Fundraising Team:

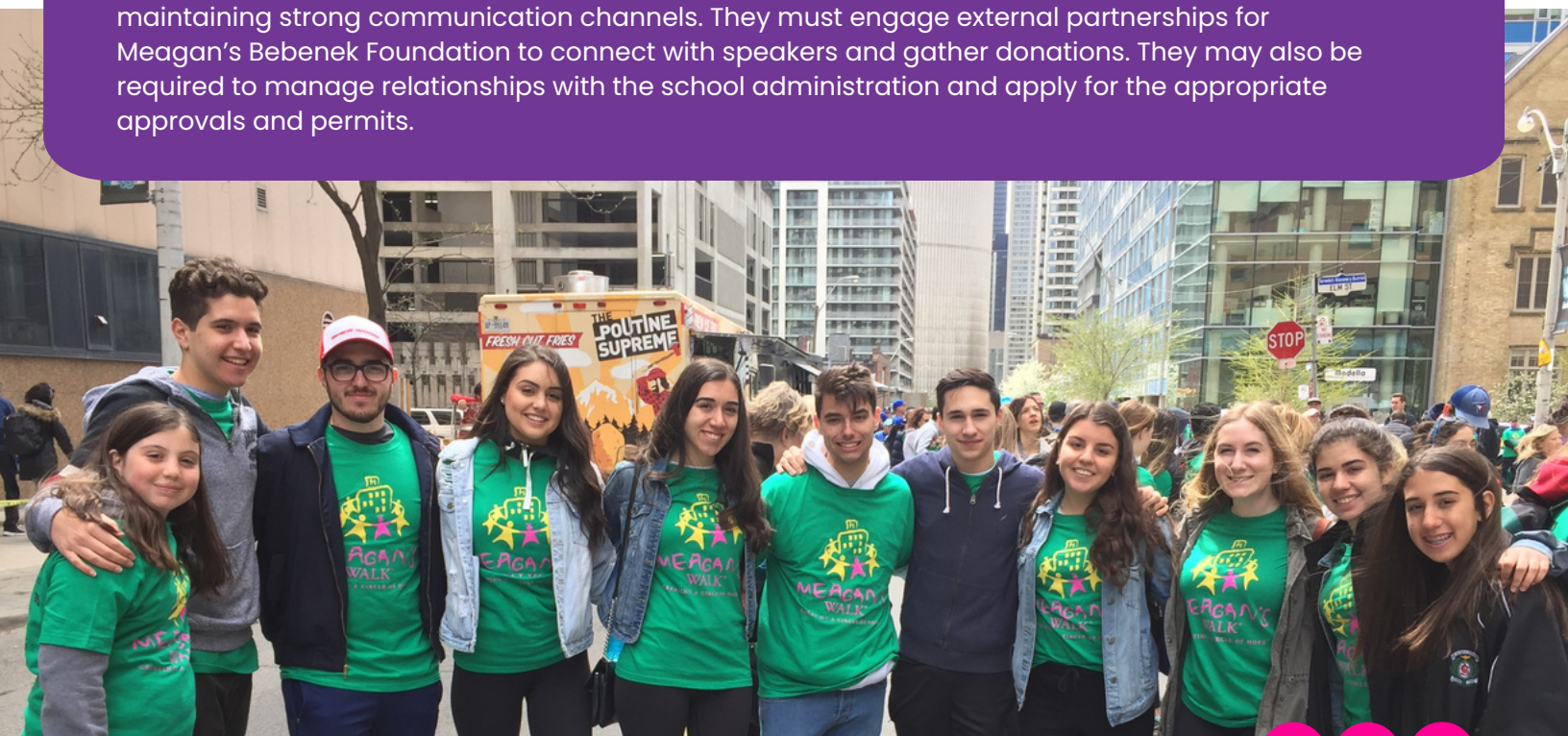
This group of creative and motivated individuals is responsible for organizing the school fundraising page and planning various events to raise funds for Meagan Bebenek Foundation.

Events Team:

This group is responsible for facilitating the fundraising events, such as The Crane Ceremony or school "hug", and creating the necessary promotional materials.

External Communications Team:

This team is responsible for contacting Meagan Bebenek Foundation ambassadors and maintaining strong communication channels. They must engage external partnerships for Meagan's Bebenek Foundation to connect with speakers and gather donations. They may also be required to manage relationships with the school administration and apply for the appropriate approvals and permits.



Host a Meagan's Week and HUG

A great idea to introduce Meagan Bebenek Foundation to your school would be to host a Meagan's Week. Each day of the week feature a different event, culminating in a School HUG at a prominent location or building on your school campus as an exciting finale for the Week!

Events could be for fundraising, such as a bake sale, raffle, carnival games, etc. Or for sharing a message of hope and raising awareness about the mission of Meagan Bebenek Foundation, such as presentations, guest speakers, etc.

In Toronto, many high schools host a Meagan's Week in early May, shortly before the date of the annual Meagan's HUG event. However, a Meagan's Week could be hosted at any time of year.

Here is an example of a possible Meagan's Week:



Raffle tickets can be sold all week. Other event ideas include selling donuts, hot chocolate, or succulents. Hosting a Meagan's Week may require permission from your university's student council and/or affiliation with a ratified school club.



Host a Paper Crane Making Class

The story of the Meagan Bebenek Foundation's Crane Ceremony is one of humanity, compassion and a call to action.

Origami is the Japanese art of paper folding. Hosting an origami crane making class is a great way to learn a new skill, gather as a community and show your support for those who are suffering from paediatric brain tumours. It is important to make sure participants understand the origin of the Meagan Bebenek Foundation's Crane Ceremony, and its connection to the beginnings of this organization.

Hosting an origami crane making class is simple! Gather a group of students with one instructor and learn how to make a crane. Use colourful paper, fold various sized cranes and leave messages of hope on the paper.

Here is a great link to share how to create the perfect paper crane:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Host a Sporting Event



Sports are a wonderful way to bring the school community together. Universities have so many incredible student sports associations, with intra-mural and extra-mural tournaments and competitions.

By charging a small admission fee to view sports events or to participate in an open tournament, schools can raise money to support Meagan Bebenek Foundation and share a message of hope with the broader community. Snacks and beverages can be sold at these events to benefit Meagan Bebenek Foundation.

JDC Central (JDCC)



JDC Central is the largest undergraduate business school competition in Central Canada. Countless business schools have JDCC chapters that compete each year to win the honour of Team of the Year.

A large component of JDCC is charity! Each school is encouraged to find ways to support their local community through charity events and fundraising activities. We encourage JDCC chapters to consider partnering with Meagan Bebenek Foundation. Event points can be gained by hosting a school hug and bake sale activities can contribute to donation points. There are so many ways to incorporate Meagan Bebenek Foundation into the charity discipline, giving your team an advantage while also giving back to your community.

Sample Email Templates

The best way to get other people involved with Meagan Bebenek Foundation is by reaching out!

Following are some email templates for you to use, for reaching out to Student Associations or Governments, and to potential sponsors. Use these templates as inspiration and edit and customize these for your contacts.

Student Association/Government

We are a campus club with the mission to raise awareness for Meagan Bebenek Foundation: Creating a Circle of Hope. As a student group, we are deeply committed to sharing the message of hope that is integral to Meagan Bebenek Foundation with our fellow students, and to bring this initiative to other universities across Canada.

The reason I am reaching out to you today is to express my interest in ratifying a Meagan Bebenek Foundation chapter at *insert university name*. Ratifying a campus club offers you access to resources and support throughout the year to get your Meagan Bebenek Foundation charter started.

Meagan Bebenek Foundation raises awareness about paediatric brain tumours, the leading cause of cancer-related death in children and young people, has now contributed more than \$5.8 million to paediatric brain tumour research, leading to significant improvements in the treatment, care of and outcomes for young brain tumour patients around the world.

Now in its 20th year, Meagan Bebenek Foundation is registered as a charity with the Canada Revenue Agency as the Meagan Bebenek Foundation, o/a Meagan Bebenek Foundation, charitable business number 774077473.

Meagan Bebenek Foundation fosters compassion within school communities across the GTA, with its school program, "Kids helping Kids". Through this program, students come together and support children in need, allowing students to feel empowered, contributing to the well-being of their community, while generating hope and awareness about paediatric brain tumours.

If you are interested in being involved and establishing a Meagan Bebenek Foundation chapter at your school, please feel free to contact us for more information. We would be pleased to help and can set up a meeting with your team.

And despite the challenges of the ongoing pandemic, our mission remains the same and our team is prepared to fulfill these goals, working remotely, throughout the year.

Our Meagan Bebenek Foundation team sincerely hopes that we can work together to create a valuable partnership that will further the Meagan Bebenek Foundation mission in universities across Canada.

You can email us at ...

Instagram: ...

Facebook: ...

We look forward to hearing from you! er people involved with Meagan Bebenek Foundation is by reaching out!

Sponsors

I am emailing you today on behalf of Meagan Bebenek Foundation: Creating a Circle of Hope. We are a university campus club that raises awareness and support for Meagan Bebenek Foundation and shares the Meagan Bebenek Foundation's message and mission with other post-secondary institutions.

Meagan Bebenek Foundation raises hope and awareness about paediatric brain tumours, the leading cause of cancer-related death in children and young people. Meagan Bebenek Foundation has now contributed more than \$5.8 million to paediatric brain tumour research, leading to significant improvements in the treatment, care and outcomes for young brain tumour patients around the world.

Now in its 20th year, Meagan Bebenek Foundation is registered as a charity with the Canada Revenue Agency as the Meagan Bebenek Foundation, o/a Meagan Bebenek Foundation, charitable business number 774077473.

As a student group, we are deeply committed to sharing the message of hope that is integral to Meagan Bebenek Foundation with our fellow students and to bring this initiative to other universities across Canada. I write today to express my team's interest in collaborating with *insert company/establishment name* to host a charity promotion on behalf of Meagan Bebenek Foundation.

We would be happy to review with you and *insert company/establishment name* information regarding Meagan Bebenek Foundation and discuss plans for a fundraising initiative, and how we can work together to help make your event successful. Additionally, we can provide you with infographics so that you can easily distribute them to interested individuals.

Please feel free to contact us for more information and we would be pleased to set up a meeting with your team. We look forward to working with you in creating a valuable partnership in support of Meagan Bebenek Foundation.

You can email us at ...

Instagram: ...

Facebook: ...

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sample Slide Show Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation is a great way to convey your message to your school community or administrators. Please contact schools@meaganbebenekfoundation.org and we would be happy to send along a customized presentation for your school.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ANNUAL HUG

Saturday, Mother's Day weekend

Registration opens each year a few months prior to our annual Meagan's HUG. There are many options to get involved.

You can register your school community online as a team, with your team's own participant page, inviting members to join. Individuals can also participate in the HUG. Or, if you are unable to actually attend the HUG, you can simply donate.

Members are encouraged to fundraise and collect donations for their teams or their individual profiles. And donations of \$20 or more can receive a charitable donation receipt from Meagan's HUG.



How to set up a fundraiser via Meagan's Hug website

+ Start a fundraiser



Fundraising is an incredible way to support Meagan's HUG and its mission to raise hope and awareness about paediatric brain tumour and funds for research.

Please be sure to contact us at schools@meaganbebenekfoun.com if you are interested in starting a fundraiser. We can provide you with the necessary information to help ensure it is a success!

Examples of fundraising events include a sports competition, art and fashion shows, a BBQ, bake sale, pub night, etc.

Upon registering your fundraising event, you will receive an email with a link to your personal fundraising page to share with your network as well as your login details for the Participant Centre. You can personalize your page to make it special for your group.

For more information on fundraising, please explore: <https://meaganshug.crowdchange.ca/>



THANK YOU!

This document was put together by a group of post-secondary students who are eager to share the message of hope that is integral to broaden Meagan Bebenek Foundation and to raise awareness about this organization's amazing work!

We are all excited to help you bring Meagan Bebenek to your school communities, and we would love to connect! Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.



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