

Terry Fox exhibit on display at Scarborough Civic Centre

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Thirty-one years ago Terry Fox arrived to a crowd of thousands at the Scarborough Civic Centre and made one of his most memorable speeches.

Until Sept. 30, there is now an exhibit at the civic centre paying tribute to the courageous young man who embarked on his Marathon of Hope across Canada to raise money and awareness about cancer. The exhibit of photos, video and memorabilia, some from the City of Toronto archives, from Fox's visit to Scarborough is on display in the rotunda of the civic centre.

Scarborough Terry Fox Run organizer Ken Pearson and Scarborough-East Councillor Paul Ainslie helped make the exhibit a reality.

"He stopped here and one of his most memorable speeches was given here," Ainslie said.

Ainslie thought once the motion was passed by Scarborough Community Council it would be easy to get the exhibit off the ground, but it took six months and some work.

Pearson saw it for the first time Tuesday evening.

"It's terrific," he said. "There's pictures I've never seen before."

It also features a T-shirt given to Fox when he arrived in Scarborough the morning of July 11, 1980 and a platter he was presented by then Mayor Gus Harris. Those items were loaned to the exhibit from the Terry Fox Foundation. It also features news footage from the day, including a part of his speech where Fox said, "Even if I don't finish, we need others to continue. It's got to keep going without me."

Pearson said those words are included on the certificate received by every Terry Fox Run participant at events across the country.

"When he came in here he couldn't get over how it was packed. He'd never had anything like that at an indoor event," Pearson said. "It was in this space that he gave his most famous speech."

Fox was greeted by thousands as there was a huge crowd outside in Albert Campbell Square, and people filled the rotunda and staircase in the civic centre. One member of the crowd gave him a giant cookie with the words, "Terry Fox you are the greatest," written in chocolate icing.

City staff were also excited about the visit from the 21-year-old from British Columbia. Adrienne McLennan recounted the visit in the employee newsletter.



Terry Fox exhibit on display at Scarborough Civic Centre. Scarborough Terry Fox Run organizer Ken Pearson, left, and Scarborough East Councillor Paul Ainslie look over a photo exhibit in the Scarborough Civic Center rotunda that depicts Terry Fox's visit to Scarborough during his Marathon of Hope run in 1980. *Photo/KHUSH BHANDARI*

"Early in his remarks his voice broke and tears flowed," she wrote. "So many eyes in the audience became moist that a rainbow appeared for a brief moment over the central space as Terry Fox won the hearts of all present."

Many believe it was the stop in Scarborough that started the momentum that gave the Marathon of Hope widespread attention and kick started fundraising. He later made his way to Nathan Phillips Square and by the end of his Toronto visit he had raised \$100,000 in a single day.

The exhibit also features a guest book that includes several comments just a day into the exhibit being open, showing how his legacy lives on.

"Terry, you've been an influence to thousands of people and have touched many hearts...Your message will never die and will always live with every Canadian," wrote a Grade 10 student.

The Sunday, Sept. 18, run organized by Pearson featured 335 participants and raised \$23,000.

The exhibit runs until Sept. 30, but Ainslie is hoping to change that.

"My next step is now that it's here, it has to stay here," he said. "I like the idea that it is out in the open being viewed by people instead of stuck in a box."

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