



Montreal advocate participates in the Walk of Hope for her sisters and takes a stance on genetic testing

Growing up with five siblings, it's safe to say France Dalpe earned a fair amount of resilience, but nothing could have prepared her for her family's journey with cancer.

"In my family we are one boy and four girls," says Ms. Dalpe. "I am the first daughter of the family, but the second child. We were always a close family."

When Ms. Dalpe was 16 she lost her mother to breast cancer. In 2011, her youngest sister was diagnosed with stage IV ovarian cancer. Her family began to wonder whether they carried genetic mutations that increased risk for developing these diseases.

"Following my youngest sister's diagnosis, the entire family went for tests for the BRCA gene mutations. My second sister was diagnosed with stage III ovarian cancer in 2012," she says. "Two years after that, I developed a breast mass, and biopsies showed that I had pre-cancerous masses."

Now with children of her own, Ms. Dalpe realizes the importance of genetic testing given her family history.

"People at the research center were reassuring and I knew I would be looked after if my results showed that I have the BRCA mutation," she says. "Some of my cousins have done the test and all those who did have tested positive for the mutation. My daughter has also had the test but she does not carry the BRCA mutation. My son has not been tested yet. "

By 2014, Ms. Dalpe and her two sisters were all diagnosed with either ovarian or breast cancer and a year later she lost her youngest sister to ovarian cancer. Her other sister's health has been stable for four years, but she faces recurrence.



France (left) & her sister Manon

It's for all these reasons that Ms. Dalpe is committed to giving back and to bringing awareness to genetic testing and its importance. She wrote to her elected representatives to appeal for support of improved access to treatment and helped organize an event where families and women living with ovarian cancer rallied to raise awareness.

"Ovarian Cancer Canada, in collaboration with Réseau Rose, organized a day of discussion and activities for women with ovarian cancer," she says. "I had been volunteering for Réseau Rose and they asked me to get involved in organizing this day."

This year, Ms. Dalpe is focused on bringing attention to ovarian cancer while honouring her family. On September 10th she is walking in the **Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope** in **Montreal** at **Parc Angrignon** to raise funds for important programs and demand a change.

"This is my first time walking. I'm participating in this walk in memory of my sister and in tribute to my other sister that is currently going through this," Ms. Dalpe says. "In addition, I think it's a great way to educate people about this disease."

Since starting in 2002, the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope has raised more than \$23-million to provide support, raise awareness, and fund research for ovarian cancer. This year the Walk will take place in over 35 locations across Canada.

Ms. Dalpe is the team captain of her Walk team, Arc-En-Ciel, and plans to rally her family and friends at a kick-off barbeque to encourage their participation and support.

"I am excited to walk with my family and friends. We will be a great team! I think it will be a very emotional day that will emanate an overwhelming energy and hope for women with ovarian cancer," says Ms. Dalpe "I wish for my team, Arc-en-ciel, to shine down on the Walk and illuminate the faces of the people affected and that this experience will continue on the years to come!"

Have the ladyballs to take action at the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope this September. Your participation helps ensure that more women with ovarian cancer live better, fuller and longer lives. For more information and to register, visit ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca



France, her sisters & father