

# Puck drops for marathon Sherwood Park hockey game

## Organizers look to raise \$1M for Cross Cancer Institute

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Published: Thursday, February 10, 2011

What do 800 volunteers and 10,000 man-hours of labour get you?

For optometrist Brent Saik, that's what it takes to put on the fourth edition of the World's Longest Hockey Game from Feb. 11 to 21 at his acreage just east of Sherwood Park.

Thirty-nine men and one woman, including Saik and his fiancée Jenelle Trenchuk, will lace up their skates and take to the ice in an attempt to break their own Guinness World Record.

More importantly, they also hope to raise \$1 million for the Cross Cancer Institute.

Saik has a lengthy relationship with the Cross Cancer. His father, Terry, and his then wife, Susan, died of cancer in 1994 and 2003, respectively. "The first game was in honour of my dad. When he was in the hospital and didn't have much time left he told me to do something to keep kids out of this place," Saik said.

Calgarian Sherwin Dziwenka played in the chaotic inaugural game in 2003. He hopes this time things will be less hectic so he can focus on the reason he's playing. "I will be thinking about people I've lost to the disease," he said. This year Saik required each player to raise at least \$5,000 to join the game. He has already topped that amount and hopes to add more as the game continues.

The first game raised \$150,000 for the Cross Cancer Institute, which bought a gene analyzer used in pediatric cancer research. "I heard that in one month after they got the gene analyzer, 11 kids' lives were saved," Saik said.

The 2005 game raised \$350,000, and three years later \$558,468 was raised. This year's money will go toward purchasing a new linear accelerator used in radiation treatment at the Cross Cancer. Saik said the rare piece of equipment is revolutionizing radiation treatment.

"When you undergo radiation treatment with this accelerator it only kills cancer cells, as opposed to killing cancerous and healthy cells," Saik said. "Patients will be under for only two minutes instead of 15 minutes."

The 241-hour game is expected to go through 2,500 pucks, 50 referee whistles and 800 cups of Tim Hortons coffee, but Saik said those figures pale in comparison to doing something that will help save people's lives.

"About \$250,000 is being spent putting on the game," Saik said. "It's going to be an unbelievable feeling to give them \$1 million."

Fundraising began in November, and as of noon Wednesday, more than \$270,000 had been raised. Donations can be made at <http://albertacancer.ca/worldslongestgame>

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