

CIBC RUN FOR THE CURE

Runners inspire cancer victim

SUZANNE GOLDMAN
CALGARY HERALD

A sea of pink swept through the parking lot of Southcentre mall Sunday morning as 10,000 people gathered in hopes of creating a future without breast cancer.

The 16th annual CIBC Run for the Cure raised \$1.7 million for breast cancer research, education and awareness programs.

"I just had a life-altering experience up there," run director Heather Webber said after standing on a platform that gave her a view of the crowd.

"It was just row after row of people coming through — it was phenomenal."

The mother of three was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000 after finding a lump in her right breast.

A fitness buff and dancer, Webber underwent surgery,

chemotherapy and radiation treatments, but the cancer returned and spread to her bones and liver.

Now, Webber remains dedicated to the cause and the progress being made to fight breast cancer.

"The energy here is an inspiration for me to stay involved. I know these people care," she said.

Olympic and world champion speed skater Catriona LeMay Doan was on hand to lead the participants through a one-kilometre or five-kilometre course.

But 49-year-old Darcy Beckie was the first survivor to cross the finish line, a feat she also accomplished last year. Beckie was first diagnosed 1½ years ago after a routine mammogram revealed micro-calcifications — a precancerous condition, she said.

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Jenelle Schneider, Calgary Herald

Breast cancer survivor Tatiana Gutierrez gets a hug from grandson Nicholas Gonzalez, 2, at the CIBC Run for the Cure.

FROM BI CANCER

A biopsy returned the news that Beckie had cancer.

After having surgery to remove the cancerous tissue, the mother of four is now healthy.

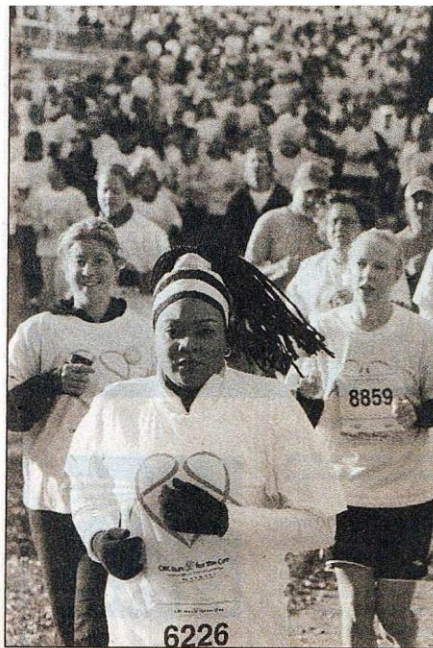
"The most important thing is to be a survivor," said Beckie. "Research says it will come back."

As a result, early detection is the key message to take away from such an event, she said.

The Run for the Cure is a nationwide event that was held in 53 sites on Sunday. Last year's efforts raised \$26 million across Canada.

Donations for the cause will continue to be accepted for another two weeks, organizers said.

For more information, visit www.cibcrunfortheCure.com



Jenelle Schneider, Calgary Herald

Thousands of people participated in the Run for the Cure on Sunday.