

## Cancer survivor spreads message of hope through bike tour

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Kelly Power saw the finish line as a new start.

On May 23, she entered the half marathon portion of the Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon in Halifax just two days shy of scheduled surgery that was aimed at saving her life.

Power had been diagnosed just a few weeks earlier with pancreatic cancer — solid and papillary epithelial neoplasma of the pancreas, to be precise.

The Whipple Procedure, an invasive surgery that physicians consider to be the only possible cure for pancreatic cancer that involves the removal of significant portions of several organs, was Power's lone hope for a new lease on life.

And Power saw completion of the half marathon as being symbolic of her determination to be a cancer survivor.

"There were times that I got discouraged but you sort of have to pick yourself up and keep going because I felt like if I gave up and I quit the marathon that day I was quitting on cancer and on life — and I knew I couldn't let it beat me," she said.

Power completed the race in two hours, 21 minutes and change, then rested her weary bones for two days before going under the knife.

Biopsy results that came back on June 30 suggest she is winning the race of her life. All key indicators came up negative. She has a clean bill of health.

"As of right now, I'm cancer free," says Power, 38, of Halifax, who is married to native Islander John Griffin.

Power says she wanted to go into the surgery with a healthy body and a healthy mind. She believes her good physical condition was "instrumental" to quick recovery from surgery that saw her released from hospital within one week.

Now she is spreading a healthy message of hope that brought her to the P.E.I. Cancer Treatment Centre Friday as part of the Craig's Cause Maritime Bike Tour.



Dr. Mark Walsh of the QEII Health Sciences Centre performed successful surgery on cancer survivor Kelly Power. The pair are joining numerous other cyclists on a tour to eight hospitals in the Maritimes to take part in information sessions about pancreatic

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"I really want people to know that it is not always a death sentence," she said of the disease.

Power has been riding in a van on the bike tour but now feels strong enough to join other cyclists who began pedaling on Wednesday from the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax to travel throughout the Maritimes to stop at eight hospitals in New Brunswick, P.E.I. and Nova Scotia.

Information sessions will be held at each hospital for physicians, patients and caregivers. Hospitals will also be provided with Canada's first information booklets and DVD's on pancreatic cancer.

Stefanie Condon-Oldreive is the force behind the campaign. Condon-Oldreive founded the Craig's Cause Pancreatic Cancer Society in 2006 to pay tribute to her father Craig Condon of Porters Lake, N.S. - an active man and avid cyclist who succumbed to the disease four years ago.

The inaugural bike tour, held in Porter's lake on the first anniversary of Condon's death, pleasantly "shocked" Condon-Oldreive with a strong turnout of about 80 cyclists taking part

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in the event, raising close to \$10,000 along the way. Since then, the event has grown to more than 150 cyclists and raised more than \$26,000 last year for pancreatic cancer awareness.

Condon-Oldreive says roughly 3,800 Canadians are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer each year with only about 100 surviving the disease.

"It has the highest fatality rate of all cancers," she said.

"It's the fourth leading cause of all cancer deaths but yet it receives the least amount of funding."

To learn more about the bike tour and pancreatic cancer, visit [www.craigscase.ca](http://www.craigscase.ca).