

## Stopping Leprosy in Its Tracks

### *North York man runs ninth marathon to support disease research*

MARKHAM, ON (Sept. 26) – If you regularly walk, bike or run the trails around Don Mills and Lawrence, you may see a familiar face. From May to October, you'll catch a glimpse of the blur that is longtime North York resident Steve Price.

His purpose for running is to help people with leprosy, with this year's funds going toward leprosy research. Leprosy is an infectious disease that has been around for centuries. Six hundred people are diagnosed with leprosy every day, of which 50 are children. The disease causes severe, disfiguring skin sores and nerve damage and left untreated, leads to disability.

"People with leprosy have physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual pain," says Steve, who has lived in North York for more than 45 years. "Once diagnosed, many are no longer allowed to be part of the community anymore."

Steve will be participating in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon on Oct. 21 on behalf of effect:hope, a Markham-based organization that has helped people with leprosy and other neglected tropical diseases for 126 years. In 2009, Steve visited patients with leprosy in India and watched effect:hope teams provide care and perform surgeries.

Though the treatment for leprosy, Multi-Drug Therapy, has existed for decades, helping people access it can be problematic, as many affected live in impoverished, remote areas where doctors are not able to diagnose the disease. effect:hope goes into these communities and provides disease screening and treatment. For more advanced cases, the organization supports hospitals where patients can go for surgeries, therapy, and long-term care.

"There's still a lot we don't know about leprosy," says Steve, who is also effect:hope's manager of planned giving. "But if we can figure out how it's spread through transmission research, we can prevent suffering among a lot of people."

"Leprosy is such a cruel disease that disfigures and causes so much damage and if we are able to do something to improve the lives of those affected, we just need to do it."

For Steve, that means marathons - sometimes at cost to his own health. The physical excursion of training and meeting regularly with his physiotherapist makes him thankful for easily-accessible healthcare in Canada.

"This year I'm running so we can raise money to research answers to this debilitating disease and get one step closer to eradicating leprosy for good."

effect:hope ([www.effecthope.org](http://www.effecthope.org)) is a Christian development organization focused on curing and caring for people living with leprosy and other neglected tropical diseases. For more information, visit [www.effecthope.org](http://www.effecthope.org).

To interview Steve Price or for high-resolution photos, please contact:

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Steve (in foreground) participating in the marathon in 2015.



Nazma, 55, from Bangladesh has suffered from leprosy for more than 35 years. She has clawed hands, deformities on both feet, an ulcer on her left foot and no feeling in her limbs. effect:hope has provided Nazma with medical treatment and a small loan to construct her house and raise goats to sustain herself. (Photo by Tom Bradley)



Momodu Asan, 70, lives in Nigeria. He contracted leprosy at 20, shortly after he was married. At the time, he had been experiencing numbness in his right leg and ended up at the hospital. His feet and legs have been badly damaged by the disease as well as the top fingers on his left hand. effect:hope provided him with crutches and medical treatment and is working in his community to reduce stigma as people with diseases are sometimes bullied or mistreated. (Photo: Kevin Hawley)