



Impact Statement

Melvin Yoo, Grade 9

Running Against Cancer, 2026

Gouache, colored pencil on paper, 15 x 10 inches

Chadwick International, Incheon, South Korea

Unsung Hero: Terry Fox

Every year, during community time, our school gathered on the soccer field to start the Terry Fox Run. I remember participating in this until last year, yet I didn't realize how challenging an effort he had made. Crowds of students, including me, ran and walked around the entire school just to commemorate one person: Terry Fox. Although the school does not hold the event anymore, the memories were worthwhile enough to remain in a corner of my head for a long time, even when I became interested in this contest and saw his name on the Unsung Heroes list.

As I delved into his story throughout this project, I found that he had made such a contribution that nobody could even dare to follow. Despite losing his right leg to bone cancer at the age of 18, he ran about 5,300 miles, which even a healthy person might struggle to accomplish. Not only did he show great perseverance, but he also raised a tremendous amount of money for cancer research. He raised over 900 million Canadian dollars, changing stereotypes about people with disabilities. Later, he was honored by the Canadian government with the Companion of the Order of Canada, given to people who demonstrate the highest degree of merit to Canada and humanity. He was also recognized as a hero worldwide, not only in Canada, with over 50 countries participating in the Terry Fox Run annually every September. Raising more than \$850 million since 1980 and bringing hope and health to millions of Canadians (Terry Fox Foundation), his goal to raise one dollar per Canadian citizen and his dream have remained over the course of decades.

My artwork portrays the perseverance, courage, and impact of Terry Fox during his Marathon of Hope, emphasizing how his personal struggle with cancer became a movement that inspired millions of people to support cancer research. Rather than depicting him as just an athlete running in a marathon, I exaggerated his posture and facial expressions so that they resemble his impressive achievements. I used gouache. The intensity of the paint not only highlights colors that resemble Terry Fox, such as red, but also makes the colors blend well to create a realistic appearance of him. This technique is developed throughout the awareness ribbon, with different colors blended in to convey a more realistic and outstanding ribbon.

The image directly connects to Terry Fox's background. Despite this life-changing disease, he decided to run across Canada in 1980 to raise awareness and funds for cancer research. The modernized artificial leg shown in the artwork highlights the physical challenge he faced and reinforces the significance of his achievement, also highlighting that his determination has been passed on to millions of people today. The

flag behind him connects to his personal identity and pride as a Canadian, reflecting how his run quickly became supported across the country. As he continued his marathon, Canadians followed his progress and contributed donations, transforming his individual effort into a nationwide cause. The red awareness ribbon swirling around him is portrayed as a finish line, symbolizing both his completion of the marathon and his fundraising to spread awareness of cancer. Furthermore, the cancer-cell-like shapes surrounding him relate to the purpose of his Marathon of Hope: raising funds to fight cancer and help future patients. The DNA symbol in the background suggests his resistance against cancer. Even though Terry Fox was forced to stop running when his cancer returned and later passed away in 1981, his story inspires people today. The artwork therefore represents not only the significance of his journey across Canada but also his influence as a symbol of perseverance, hope, and worldwide action against cancer.

Terry Fox's story motivates me by showing that weakness can be a driving force that motivates someone to achieve their goals. Running nearly a marathon every day while having lost one leg makes me rethink what perseverance really means. It further encourages me to approach challenges with more determination and bravery and prevents me from giving up without even trying. By sharing this artwork, I hope that it contributes to spreading awareness of cancer and the significance of Terry Fox's actions.