

**June is Brain Injury Awareness Month**  
***Brain Injury Can Happen to Anyone***

**For Immediate Release**

TORONTO, June 1, 2017 - More than one million people in Canada are living with a brain injury, and that number increases daily. In Ontario almost 45,000 people will sustain a brain injury this year.

During Brain Injury Awareness Month, brain injury associations across the country are putting a face to this epidemic through posters, events, and social media, **#IamTheFaceofBrainInjury** and **#BIAM17**.

Hailey Harms is one of those faces. When Hailey was 16 years old, her competitive skating career was cut short after she sustained numerous concussions. Doctors told her she would never be able to skate again. The risk of a more serious brain injury and severe consequences was just too great. Hailey's hopes and dreams for a skating career were crushed.

When asked what she would like the public to know about brain injury, 19 year old Hailey stated, "That it can happen to absolutely anybody, your neighbour, your mother, your daughter. All ages. Anyone."

Brain injury came close to Hailey again, when her high school friend, Evan, sustained a severe brain injury through a motor vehicle collision. When Hailey escorted Evan to his 2014 high school graduation, he was heading to university to study engineering. Three years have passed and he is working very hard to regain his ability to talk and walk. He dreams of returning to university and engineering, but his future is unclear.

Two talented young people from the same community. Two brain injuries. Different causes. Different experiences. Different outcomes.

"Brain injuries can range from mild to catastrophic, but all brain injuries can have lasting effects," said Ruth Wilcock, Executive Director of OBIA. Lives are changed in an instant. Hopes and dreams are often put on the back burner as is the case with Hailey and Evan.

Brain injury is 15 times more common than spinal cord injury, 30 times more common than breast cancer and 400 times more common than HIV aids. Brain injury is also the NUMBER ONE cause of death and disability WORLDWIDE among children, youth and those under age 44.

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#BIAM17

**Source:** Ontario Brain Injury Association  
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