

## The Yogen Früz Brain Project encourages Canadians to get a ‘head start’ on brain health

*Baycrest Foundation connects artists, celebrities and researchers to “change the future of brain health”*

**TORONTO – May 29, 2019** – The Yogen Früz Brain Project returns for a fourth year with a vigorous campaign to raise brain health awareness and advance groundbreaking research on dementia and aging.

With the generous support of this year’s title sponsor, Yogen Früz, The Baycrest Foundation is teaming up with local and international artists and celebrities to launch this year’s Yogen Früz Brain Project and transform 50 blank brains into thought-provoking pieces of art. The initiative is encouraging Canadians to get a “head start” on brain health from a young age.

Dementia is a public health concern worldwide. In Canada, more than 564,000 individuals are currently living with Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia. Despite popular belief, dementia is not a natural or inevitable consequence of aging and there are many ways to help reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

Baycrest scientists are leading research on early detection for dementia. In fact, [new research](#) by the University of Arizona and Baycrest’s Rotman Research Institute may have found an early detection method for some forms of dementia.

The study, recently [published in the journal \*Neuropsychologia\*](#), found that patients with a rare neurodegenerative brain disorder called primary progressive aphasia, or PPA, show brain function abnormalities in areas that look structurally normal on an MRI scan.

“If we can delay the onset of dementia by five years, we could reduce its prevalence in the population by about one third – that is a significant number,” said Josh Cooper, President and CEO of The Baycrest Foundation. “The Yogen Früz Brain Project challenges Canadians of all ages to learn what they can do now to delay the onset of dementia as they age. Meanwhile, the funds raised through this initiative will allow us to change the future of brain health.”

### Get a “head start” on brain health

Being educated, staying in good health and exercising can reduce your dementia risk by 28%.

Additionally, speaking two languages can delay the onset of dementia by four years.

### Several personalities, artists and creative minds are fashioning this year’s brains:

- **Cheryl Hickey** – Hickey is a well-known host at *ET Canada*. Since learning that her father had dementia, she has been an advocate for preventing its onset and reducing the effects of the disease.
- **Romero Britto** – Britto is a Brazilian artist, painter, serigrapher (silkscreen) and sculptor based in Miami. He combines elements of cubism, pop art and graffiti painting in his work, using vibrant colours and bold patterns.
- **Michelle Vella** – Vella is a Toronto-based contemporary artist whose work bridges fine arts and fashion.

- **Alex Runt** – Runt began his art career in Toronto’s underground scene in the early ’80s, drawing posters to hang around the Cameron House and eventually landing the gig to paint the now-iconic mural outside Lee’s Palace.
- **Tony Taylor** – Taylor is a Toronto-based artist. He creates renderings of well-dressed wild animals in human form. He draws inspiration from a variety of political and economic events, which frame his entire vision.
- **Emily Carriere** – Carriere is based in Toronto and creates intricate, cut out vinyl and acrylic artworks. She uses the natural progression of experimentation to produce abstract images which are up for interpretation.

### **Braininstallations – Where will they be?**

The artwork will be on display throughout the summer from July 2 to August 31, 2019 at various locations in Toronto, including the city’s iconic Nathan Phillips Square, The Distillery District, Brookfield Place, Union Station and other popular landmarks.

### **Where does the money go?**

The Yogen Früz Brain Project has an important public purpose. Through this initiative, The Baycrest Foundation aims to raise more than \$1 million this year, adding to the \$3 million raised to-date. Funds support brain research, patient care, education and innovation at Baycrest, a leader in the field of aging and brain health.

### **About the Baycrest Foundation**

The Baycrest Foundation supports programs and services that promote excellence in care, research, innovation and education in aging and brain health. As the charitable arm of Baycrest, the Foundation provides crucial funding for areas such as: ongoing programs and a continuum of care services for the community; innovative research into cognition, dementia and brain health; and local, national and international education that supports the vision of creating a world where every older adult enjoys a life of purpose, inspiration and fulfilment. For more information, visit [www.baycrestfoundation.org](http://www.baycrestfoundation.org)

### **About Baycrest**

Baycrest is a global leader in geriatric residential living, healthcare, research, innovation and education, with a special focus on brain health and aging. Fully affiliated with the University of Toronto, Baycrest provides excellent care for older adults combined with an extensive clinical training program for the next generation of healthcare professionals and one of the world’s top research institutes in cognitive neuroscience, the Rotman Research Institute. Baycrest is home to the federally and provincially-funded Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI), a solution accelerator focused on driving innovation in the aging and brain health sector, and is the developer of Cogniciti – a free online memory assessment for Canadians 40+ who are concerned about their memory. Founded in 1918 as the Toronto Jewish Old Folks Home, Baycrest continues to embrace the long-standing tradition of all great Jewish healthcare institutions to improve the well-being of people in their local communities and around the globe. Baycrest is helping create a world where every older adult enjoys a life of purpose, inspiration and fulfilment. For more information please visit: [www.baycrest.org](http://www.baycrest.org)

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Hashtag: #noblankbrains

Website: [brainproject.ca](http://brainproject.ca)

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