EASTER SEALS NEWS
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WITH EASTER SEALS HOPE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

When Tony was born doctors were concerned that he had low blood sugar. His situation was so dire that he was hospitalized for five months while doctors attempted to properly diagnose him.

When he was finally released his parents took their new bundle of joy to visit family in China. It was there that the family noticed he wasn’t reaching milestones similar to other babies his age.

Concerned, his mother, Zhang Min, took him to see a doctor and, after a series of tests, Tony was diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

“Nothing prepares you for this news,” says Zhang Min. “I was devastated. The doctors told me, ‘you have to love this boy more, because he won’t be like other kids.’ That was really hard for me to hear.”

At 13 months, Tony returned to Canada but the stress of raising a child with a physical disability began to show and take its toll on the family. Tony’s parents divorced and Zhang Min became a single parent.

When Zhang Min learned about Easter Seals things began to look up. “With the equipment Easter Seals helped us purchase, Tony’s life and mine really began to change,” she confesses.

Because of Easter Seals Tony was able to acquire a wheelchair, walker and a van lift. She credits the equipment Easter Seals helped purchase with helping to change their lives. “He can now go out into the community and is more independent,” says Zhang Min. “I really noticed how necessary the equipment was because it made it so much easier for us to leave the house.

“He’s 12 years old and 120 pounds now, so I wouldn’t be able to lift him if he didn’t have his van lift or his walker.”

Tony is grateful for the help that Easter Seals has provided, and this year he hopes to enjoy 10 days away from home at one of Easter Seals fully accessible camps!

Easter Seals Welcomes Kevin J. Collins as New President and CEO

On January 30 Easter Seals Ontario welcomed Kevin Collins as its new President and CEO. Kevin joins the organization from the Friends of We Care organization, where he was the Executive Director since 1999. Friends of We Care is a network of member sponsor organizations from the foodservice and hospitality industry dedicated to sending kids with disabilities to Easter Seals camps across Canada.

Kevin has a long-standing history of working with children with disabilities and Easter Seals. He was born with cerebral palsy and uses a walker himself for mobility. He was the Easter Seals Provincial Ambassador “Timmy” in 1976 and in 1991 joined the organization as Manager of Corporate and Special Events.

Commenting on his new role, Kevin says, “It is exciting to be part of the Easter Seals Ontario team, our supporters and volunteers as we work with all kids with physical disabilities across the province. Our goal is to help provide the services they need and to guide them to focus on their abilities not their disabilities.”

BE REMEMBERED FOR HELPING KIDS BE KIDS!

Consider giving kids with physical disabilities a brighter future by leaving Easter Seals Ontario a gift in your Will. Connect with Kayley Trumbley, Manager, Donor Relations, to learn how a gift in your Will can help give Easter Seals kids more freedom and independence.

Call Kayley Trumbley at 416.421.8778 ext. 361 or 1.800.668.6252 ext. 361, or e-mail ktrumbley@easterseals.org.
EVERETT – A BOY WITH A MISSION!

It all started when nine year old Everett saw funds being raised to send kids to camp on the Easter Seals Telethon. Everett, who has cerebral palsy, had been to Easter Seals camp and knew how great it was but wanted to give another child the chance to attend camp. He began by asking friends and family to make a donation to Easter Seals instead of giving him gifts for his 10th birthday. But that wasn’t enough for Everett. A few months later, he wanted to do more and, with the help of his mom, he mounted a t-shirt campaign. He wanted a t-shirt with a meaningful slogan, and after doing some research, Everett selected DON'T LET WHAT YOU CAN'T DO INTERFERE WITH WHAT YOU CAN DO, a message that meant a lot to him but also one to which everyone could relate.

Everett sold his shirts at Easter Seals events, through social media, and to people from British Columbia to Nova Scotia. He even rallied the support of the local Simcoe Sobeys store, whose staff bought t-shirts and organized a community BBQ to help Everett raise funds. Through his incredible determination, 11 year old Everett, with the help of his family, surpassed his goal, selling over 500 t-shirts and raising almost $10,000, enough to give four children 10-days at Easter Seals camp. Thank you Everett – mission accomplished!

For Kids Like Rozlyn, Easter Seals Camp is ‘Priceless’

Twelve year old Rozlyn can’t name what she likes most about camp because all the activities excite her. From fishing and canoeing to swimming and out-tripping, Rozlyn has the time of her life each summer at Camp Merrywood.

She says, “You don’t have time to feel sad being away from your parents because you’re so busy and you make so many new friends!”

Kathryn and her husband Jeremy adopted Rozlyn when she was two years old with the knowledge that she had spina bifida, a birth defect involving an incomplete closing of the backbone and membranes around the spinal cord.

It didn’t take long for Rozlyn to thrive in her new surroundings, and she has since excelled in her academic pursuits. She enjoys soccer, volleyball and horseback riding. As Kathryn explains, “She knows she’s slower than the other kids, but she’s okay with that. She’s happy to be able to participate and do the things that she loves.”

Five years ago Rozlyn attended the Discovery session at Easter Seals Camp Merrywood. She enjoyed her experience there so much that she has returned each year since.

“She loves it there and looks forward to going every year,” says Kathryn. “Maybe too much! The first time she went for the 10-day session her father and I thought, ‘Wow, this is what it was like before Rozlyn.’ After seven days, we desperately wanted her back!”

“Easter Seals is such an excellent charity,” continues Kathryn. “The staff at Merrywood are so helpful and I’m impressed that such a large portion of the funds go directly into programs and services. Camp is priceless, it really is.”
Join us for the 2017 province-wide Easter Seals Telethon on CBC!

Sunday, April 9, 2017 • 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Tune in and meet the children and families Easter Seals helps and find out why your donation is so important.

Regional Telethons:
- Sault Ste. Marie, March 26, Shaw
- Windsor-Essex, April 2, CTV
- Peterborough, April 9, TV Cogeco and CHEX TV
- South Eastern Ontario, April 24 – 28, CKWS on The Kingston Morning Show and The WS Daily
- Sudbury, April 30, Eastlink TV

Tune in and support Easter Seals kids!

EASTER SEALS HELPS MAKE DREAMS COME TRUE

In 2016, Wei Jiet Goh received the TD Scholarship for Easter Seals Youth, quite an achievement considering Wei Jiet’s humble beginning. “My parents brought me to Canada from Malaysia when I was nine months old to treat my brain injury,” he says. “They left me behind in Canada when they realized that I would not recover, so my aunt and uncle have raised me for the past 20 years.”

Wei Jiet has deficiencies in cognitive and analytic functions, and relies on a wheelchair for mobility. But this never stopped him from pursuing post-secondary studies. He is currently enrolled at George Brown College in the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Program. “In spite of being confined to a wheelchair, and without financial and personal support from my parents and lifelong learning difficulties, I have participated in numerous extracurricular and volunteer activities while striving for academic excellence,” says Wei Jiet.

Because his parents do not contribute to his financial needs, Wei Jiet relies heavily on the TD Scholarship for Easter Seals Youth to enable him to succeed. “My aunt and uncle do the best they can, but this scholarship helps lessen the financial burden placed on them.”

Through a great deal of work and determination, Wei Jiet has found the strength to overcome his challenges and to strive for success. Speaking of Easter Seals, Wei Jiet says, “I realized Easter Seals improves everyone’s life. I would like to thank the staff, their supporters, and especially TD Bank for making my dream come true.”

THREE CHEERS FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Debbie Smith is a long-serving volunteer in Peterborough, who has been the driving force behind many committees and responsible for the continued success of several fundraising initiatives in the region. She delivers focus to committee meetings and is a trusted sounding board for discussions, in addition to motivating others to strive for excellence. Always keeping the kids top of mind, she embraces our mission and represents Easter Seals’ brand with pride.

Debbie works tirelessly and deserves to be thanked again and again for her endless commitment to Easter Seals Ontario!

As the owner of SNAPd Oakville, Mary Feric has a very hectic schedule and yet she continues to give generously of her time to benefit Easter Seals on so many levels. She has been both a participant and a member of the organizing committee of Dancing with Easter Seals Stars, Halton for the past two years. In addition, she helped organize the SNAPd Oakville golf tournament and has volunteered as a Race Marshall at various Burlington road races in support of Easter Seals.

A big believer in what Easter Seals does, Mary is a very dedicated volunteer and is willing to help out in any way she can. You’re a star Mary – thank you!

Interested in volunteering for Easter Seals?
Contact Carmen Bazinet at 1.800.316.5730 ext. 2 or cbazinet@easterseals.org.
THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR GENEROUS DONORS

Recognizing donors who made a gift of $1,000 or more in 2016.

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We apologize for any inadvertent errors or omissions. If you have any questions about your membership or wish to join the President’s Circle, please contact Rachel Tymochenko: rtymochenko@easterseals.org, 416.421.8778 ext. 351 or 1.800.668.6252 ext. 351.

Easter Seals kids taking part in some of our fundraising events

Thank you to some of our major corporate and foundation supporters:

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