



Helping Kids with  
Physical Disabilities  
Succeed

# EASTER SEALS NEWS

VOLUME 18, Fall 2018

## Support Improves the Quality of Life for Five Year Old Stephanie

Despite doctors telling Cherry and her husband Andre that 'everything was normal' during Cherry's pregnancy, Stephanie was born with serious medical complications requiring her to be hospitalized for the first three months of her life.

At three months old, her parents were told she had congenital heart disease, vision and hearing loss, seizure disorder, complex gastro-intestinal issues and food intolerances and would need to be on oxygen and a g-tube for feeding for the rest of her life.

In an instant their lives changed.

"We couldn't understand it," says Cherry. "They had told us everything was normal and then they were telling us there was no cure for Stephanie because her condition is so complex. It was devastating."

Since then, Cherry and Andre have done the best they can but, with no family here, it's been a struggle.

"It was so difficult. We had no support and we asked ourselves many times 'Why is this happening?' Financially it's also very hard; there are so many expenses and things we need to buy."

With the help of Easter Seals and others, Cherry and Andre now have the equipment Stephanie needs and were trained on how to care for her at home. Through the support of our donors, Easter Seals was able to help Stephanie get a walker, a bath chair and a ramp for the family's van.

Although Stephanie can't stand on her own, Cherry says she is the most happy when she is in her walker "walking on her own".

Although people often stare at all of Stephanie's equipment, Cherry and Andre like doing things with her in the community. "We just want to be a normal family. She loves being around other kids and moving with them in her walker," explains Cherry.

Stephanie is now five years old but her condition is so fragile that whenever she is hospitalized Cherry and Andre fear this might be the last time they see her.

"We are very thankful for everyday with Stephanie. To all Easter Seals donors, we would like to say thank you very much. You have improved Stephanie's everyday life and our lives. We really appreciate everything you've done for our family."



### LEAVE A LEGACY OF INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM

You can bring meaningful change to kids with physical disabilities for generations to come by remembering Easter Seals Ontario in your Will. For more information, please contact:

**Jennifer Babbs at 416.510.5079 ext. 309**  
or 1.800.668.6252 ext. 309, or e-mail [jbabbs@easterseals.org](mailto:jbabbs@easterseals.org).



Wesley Magee-Saxton (front right) accepts his TD Scholarship for Easter Seals Youth from Kirk Pedersen, Account Manager, TD Commercial Banking (left), Easter Seals President & CEO Kevin Collins, and Chair of the Board John Herhalt.

## 2018 Easter Seals Scholarship Recipients

### Rose Brodie Provincial Ambassador Scholarship Fund

- ▲ Victoria Chen
- ▲ Sydney Weaver

### Hira Scholarship Fund

- ▲ Ian Steadman

### Sal Iacono Family Bursary Endowment Fund

- ▲ Logan Stewart

### TD Scholarship for Easter Seals Youth

- ▲ Emily Chan
- ▲ Emelie Cittadino
- ▲ Brandon Hoto
- ▲ Victoria Lacey
- ▲ Jessica LaGrandeur
- ▲ Leon Li
- ▲ Wesley Magee-Saxton
- ▲ Jeffrey Man
- ▲ Manya Nayak
- ▲ Benoit Pelletier
- ▲ Tyler Preece
- ▲ Jesse Scime
- ▲ Maaz Siddiqui
- ▲ Mackenzie Sponge
- ▲ Guannan Terry Song
- ▲ Kyle Ward
- ▲ Lara Wong

### Truelove Dell Scholarship Fund

- ▲ Sageth Ravendran

## Scholarship Recipient Shares How He Learned to be Thankful



I am very honoured to receive the TD Scholarship for Easter Seals Youth. Being with Easter Seals was truly a blessing to me, and I wouldn't be the same without them. You see, as a teenager with a disability, I faced a lot of physical and mental struggles. And, at a point in my life, I thought my disability would be the cause of my downfall and prevent me from reaching success.

I felt really hopeless and I began watching inspirational videos to cheer me up. I learned one very important lesson from those videos and that is to be thankful. It was hard for me to be thankful with my disability, but fortunately, Easter Seals was able to help me. After attending their family camp and then Camp Merrywood by myself, I realized that I have so much to be thankful for. Here is a good way to put it, let's just say without my disability I was able to do 1,000 tasks alright. With my disability, I can't run or jump, so that crosses 2 things off the list. I can still do 998 tasks and Easter Seals helped me learn to appreciate that.

*With that positive mindset, I began to strive for success and never let my disability drag me down. I began to volunteer, play adaptive sports, study harder and take more opportunities to reach out into my local community.*

One accomplishment was being able to participate in the Canada-wide summer enrichment program called **SHAD**. Now it's time for me to graduate high school, but I will keep on learning and trying new things at the University of Waterloo, where I will pursue a Math degree possibly majoring in Data Science. I then hope to work at Google, TD, or at another tech-related job so one day I can donate money to Easter Seals to help others like me!

*Leon, Easter Seals youth and 2018 TD Scholarship recipient*

# Mom's Strength Helps Son Adopt Can-Do Attitude

Thai and Tré were born exactly 2 minutes apart. Both babies were healthy until Thai was diagnosed with a heart defect. At only eight months old, he had open heart surgery. A complication from the surgery made it necessary for Thai to have a second surgery only one week later. It was this second operation that tragically left Thai paralyzed from the waist down.



*"It was incomprehensible," says Tara, the boys' mother. "This was a surgery that had been done a thousand times. How could something like this happen?"*

Although Tara was in shock, her "mommy instincts" took over. "I said to myself, 'He's here, and I'm going to do what I need to do and learn the skills I need to look after him,'" she continues.

As Thai got older he started to question why he was different from his brother. "I tried to help him understand that his wheels were now his legs and that he could do anything he wanted, he just had to try," Tara explains.

At 12 years old, thanks to Tara's encouragement and support, Thai has a positive attitude and doesn't let anything hold him back. He doesn't expect any accommodations because he has a disability. He loves basketball and swimming and attends regular camp. At school, he's determined to adjust to whatever activities the other kids are participating in. "If he can't do something, I encourage him to try it another way; it will help him be better prepared for the future," adds Tara.

It's clear Tara's strength has helped her son adopt a 'can-do' attitude and stay active.

Over the years Easter Seals has helped Thai get a commode chair, a bath board and a van lift. "I'm very appreciative of the support my family has received, especially since I'm a single mother.

**Thank you to all the donors for opening your hearts and for making it possible for kids to do more and get the equipment they need."**



## THREE CHEERS FOR VOLUNTEERS!



**Theresa Kerr** and **Ron O'Neil** from Century 21 B.J. Roth are volunteers who work tirelessly at numerous Barrie events, including volunteering at the golf tournament, the Pancake Breakfast with the Barrie Colts, the Dale Hawerchuk Golf Tournament, selling tables for Dancing with Easter Seals Stars and sitting on various event committees. They have huge hearts and have made the trip to camp and the Toronto Telethon to meet Easter Seals kids and families. We couldn't ask for two more dedicated volunteers and we are very lucky to have them working on our behalf. Theresa and Ron, thank you so much for all you do for Easter Seals.

**Interested in volunteering for Easter Seals?**

Contact Carmen Bazinet at 1.800.316.5730 ext. 2 or [cbazinet@easterseals.org](mailto:cbazinet@easterseals.org).



# THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY.

Recognizing donors who have made a donation of \$1,000 or more to June 30, 2018.

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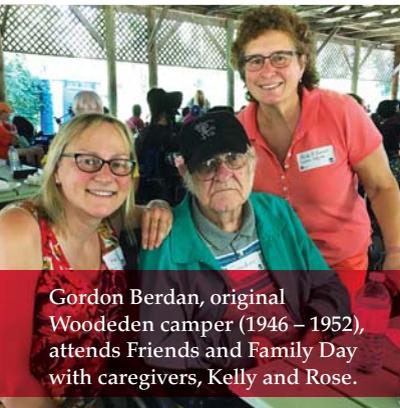
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We sincerely regret any inadvertent errors or omissions. If you have any questions about the President's Circle, please contact Rachel Tymochenko at 1.800.668.6252 ext. 351 or [rtymochenko@easterseals.org](mailto:rtymochenko@easterseals.org).



Gordon Berdan, original Woodedden camper (1946 - 1952), attends Friends and Family Day with caregivers, Kelly and Rose.



Suzanne Leonard from The Weather Network with counsellor, Natalie (rear left), and campers Kayla (front left), Tyler and Kalea.

## Supporters and Former Campers Enjoy a Day at Camp Woodedden

Donors, sponsors and other supporters joined us for Friends of Easter Seals Camp Day for a summer afternoon touring the camp to see first hand how their support is making a difference for kids. A few former campers, including one of the very first Woodedden campers, also stopped by for a visit.

## 2018 Celebrity Hockey Classic Tournaments



Get a team together for the chance to choose a former NHL player to play on your team and meet other NHL alumni at a draft party. Details available at [CelebrityHockeyClassics.com](http://CelebrityHockeyClassics.com).

Grey Bruce, Port Elgin, October 25 & 26  
Thunder Bay, October 25 & 26  
York-Simcoe, Vaughan, November 1 & 2  
Eric Lindros, Whitby, November 8 & 9  
Rick Vaive, Waterloo, November 22 & 23  
Brad May, Oakville, November 29 & 30

## CONTACT US

EASTER SEALS ONTARIO  
One Concorde Gate, Suite 700  
Toronto, ON M3C 3N6

Tel: 416.421.8377  
Toll-free: 1.800.668.6252  
Fax: 416.696.1035



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[info@easterseals.org](mailto:info@easterseals.org) | [EasterSeals.org](http://EasterSeals.org)