

kids
candidly

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK, TRANSFORMING
THE LIVES OF CHILDREN WITH CANCER

25
YEARS
+you | **kids**
cancer care

FALL 2019 ISSUE

kidscancercare.ab.ca



YOU TRANSFORMED ARCHER'S CANCER EXPERIENCE

With your support, Archer learned to
face his fear of medical procedures.

CEO message



Unique Perspectives Photography

25 YEARS +you

Thank you for supporting Kids Cancer Care with your generous gifts of time and money.

With your support, 532 kids attended camp this summer. What a life-changing experience it can be for these kids. In the story on this page, you'll see that camp changed everything for Henry. It gave him a sense of belonging and helped him to make sense of his brother's cancer.

Although camp is the cornerstone of our programs, you are supporting so much more than camp.

Archer's story highlights one of the many ways you touch the lives of children and families facing cancer. Thanks to you, we are bringing child life services into the homes of little cancer patients for the first time. What a difference it is making. By taking the time to familiarize children with medical procedures through medical play, this program has the power to transform a child's cancer experience.

With your generous support, we have been rebuilding young lives through life-changing programs like these for 25 years! Thank you. Everything we do, depends on you.

Sincerely,

Christine McIver, M.S.M., LLD (Hon), CFRE
Founder and Chief Executive Officer

camp

friendships ignited by you

You helped Henry find belonging in the chaos of childhood cancer

"After the first day of camp, I saw that Henry had finally found his tribe. This was a place where things started to make sense without there having to be a conversation.... We noticed a huge change in him after camp."

— Michelle Connor.

When Michelle Connor first heard about cancer camp, she admits that she wasn't totally on board with the idea. "Our oldest son Henry was four at the time and I didn't see the need for him to attend since he didn't have cancer and Michael was done his treatment," she says. "How wrong I was."

Looking back on Michael's cancer experience, Michelle realizes that his brother Henry "took the brunt of it emotionally." It was confusing for Henry. He was old enough to know something was wrong, but too young to really understand it. With Mom at the hospital 24/7 and Dad holding down the fort at home and at work, Henry spent a lot of time with friends and family. He missed his family routine.

Michelle and her husband Derek could see that Henry was struggling with his feelings. While they worked with him to help him navigate his feelings, you helped Henry in a totally different way. With your support, Henry was able to attend our SunRise day camp and it made all the difference.

"After the first day of camp, I saw that Henry had finally found his tribe," says Michelle. "This was a place where things started to make sense without there having to be a conversation... We noticed a huge change in him after camp."



"We noticed a huge difference in him after camp."
— Michelle Connor.

You helped Henry find his tribe at SunRise. Henry is pictured here with Ella, a little girl he met at camp who is battling brain cancer. Now, they're best friends.

Thanks to you, Henry found a sense of belonging at camp. He found his tribe — a group of kids just like him and his brother. They were also navigating childhood cancer either as a patient or indirectly as a sibling.

"Despite everyone's stories being different, these kids were making it," says Michelle. "They were having fun. They were supported. The cancer world is filled with so much fear and instability. Being surrounded by this, allowed Henry to finally find stability in the cancer world."

Thank you! You gave Henry a sense of belonging and stability in the confusing world of childhood cancer. ■

child life
at home

trust restored by you

You helped Archer turn his fear into fun

“He hated bloodwork the most. They couldn’t find his vein and they were in and out of his arm with the needle. Then they tried the other arm. Same thing. He was terrified and completely flipped out!” — *Jill Daniel.*



With your support, the medical world has become a world of curiosity and play for Archer.

When Archer first complained of a sore tummy in August 2018, Jill and Graham Daniel never imagined they would be helping their two-year-old son through cancer. Nor could they predict how terrified he would be in this strange new clinical world of needles, X-rays, CT scans and NG tubes.

Thankfully, you were there with your generous support, helping us to ease Archer’s fear and rebuild his trust through our new *Child Life at Home* program.

Child life specialists use medical play and kid-friendly language to introduce and familiarize children with medical devices and procedures. The goal is to reduce the child’s anxiety and provide a sense of control during medical appointments.

“The most important thing is to build trust and rapport,” says Winter Ghostkeeper, the child life specialist leading the new program at Kids Cancer Care. “Being able to do this in the child’s home is huge, because the child can truly be

comfortable. You have to work twice as hard to do the same thing in the hospital.”

First up, Winter and Archer tackled bandages. “He was afraid of bandages, so we started with stickers and put them all over our hands and feet. Then, one by one, we pulled the stickers off: ‘See, that didn’t hurt.’ And we worked up from there.”

After the bandages, they took on needles. It wasn’t long before Archer was using toy needles to draw blood from his stuffies. Next, they moved on to ECGs, using real ECG stickers with colourful plastic wires and clothespins for electrical probes.

With these procedures under his belt, Archer was ready to tackle the NG tube, a nasogastric tube that delivers food or medicine to the patient. It runs through the nasal cavity, down the throat and into the stomach. When they inserted the NG tube the first time, Archer was sedated, but as the sedation wore off, he had a terrible reaction to it.

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“The support from Kids Cancer Care has blown me away. It has been like the biggest hug possible in this whole nightmare of a journey.” — *Jill.*



Archer cleans his baby’s face with an antiseptic wipe as he prepares to give him a needle.



L-R Winter and Archer during a *Child Life at Home* session.

how to help

5 ways you can help



DONATE MONTHLY

With the cost of a \$5 coffee each month, you can join our **League of Super Heroes Monthly Giving Program** and make a lasting difference in the lives of children with cancer.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Giving from the heart brings meaning to a life well-lived. Ask your financial advisor about **leaving a gift in your will** today.

BE BRAVE

Make a bold fashion statement and shave, cut or colour your lid, while raising funds for children with cancer. Join us at the **Big Brave on Saturday, November 2 at Southcentre Mall.**

FUNDRAISE

Whether it's a Christmas craft sale, a bake sale or garage sale, every dollar counts. Share **your fundraising ideas** with us today.

CELEBRATE

Give kids with cancer a **lifetime of birthdays** by asking for donations in lieu of gifts on your birthday, graduation, wedding or other milestone celebration.

Donate, register or learn more at kidscancercare.ab.ca today.

child life at home

Cont. from page 2

This time, thanks to you, Winter was there to help Archer do the procedure without sedation. "We did lots of play with the NG tube, so he knew it was really important," she says. "We started by squirting water from a real NG tube. Then we fed the NG tube through an animal cut-out straw." Each time, Winter reminded Archer to take a deep breath before quickly pulling out the tube. She told him it was okay to cry too.

With your support, Archer aced the NG tube procedure. When asked how it went, he responded confidently, "I cried, but it was okay."

"The difference in Archer is like night and day," says his father Graham. "All of this medical stuff is so ordinary now. We call the NG tube his tubey, because it's not like a medical instrument anymore. It is a playful thing, a toy."

"The support from Kids Cancer Care has blown me away," says Archer's mother Jill. "It has been like the biggest hug possible in this whole nightmare of a journey."

Thank you for making Child Life at Home possible. It has transformed Archer's cancer journey. 🍀



kids cancer care

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