



## YOU GAVE THEA A BREAK FROM FIGHTING CANCER

Because you cared, Thea and  
her sister Brynn experienced  
the magic of camp together  
one last time.

## CEO message



Unique Perspectives Photography

**25**  
**YEARS**  
**+you**

As we say goodbye to 2019 and welcome 2020, I remain grateful for your tremendous support.

Some 30 years ago, I found myself in a similar place as Lesley and Patrick Roelofsen. I too had lost a child to cancer. At that time, there were no programs or services for families facing this cruel and unremitting disease.

But together, we changed that.

Today, thanks to your generosity, families like ours find healing and support at Kids Cancer Care. Here, they are welcomed into a community of families who understand. Together, these families rebuild their lives through our year-round programs.

This edition of Kids Candidly, featuring our 2019 Gratitude Report, demonstrates the range of programming your support makes possible.

Please know that your generosity is making a difference in the lives of children and families every day. Thea's story is a rich illustration of this.

Thank you for believing in our vision of providing *A cure for every child and care for every family.*

With gratitude,

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

Your generosity touches the lives of our families in so many ways.

**2019**

**GRATITUDE REPORT**

## Lives you changed in 2019

### 883 happy campers

EXPLORING THEIR POTENTIAL AND REBUILDING THEIR LIVES AT CAMP

### 5 kids

CONQUERING THEIR FEAR AND ANXIETY AROUND MEDICAL TREATMENTS THROUGH CHILD LIFE AT HOME

### 76 kids

MANAGING THE SIDE EFFECTS OF CANCER TREATMENTS THROUGH THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE AT PEER

### 22 teens

GAINING THE SKILLS AND LIFE LESSONS THEY NEED TO BE TOMORROW'S LEADERS THROUGH OUR TEEN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

### 36 kids

BENEFITTING FROM 1,600+ HOURS OF TUTORING SUPPORT AND LESSON PLANNING

### 50+ parents

GETTING A MUCH-NEEDED BREAK THROUGH OUR PARENT PROGRAM

### 11 kids with cancer

GETTING THE EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT THEY NEED AT SCHOOL THROUGH CANCER IN THE CLASSROOM

### 811 pizzas

BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER DURING WEEKLY PIZZA NIGHTS AT THE HOSPITAL

### \$24K in scholarships

HELPING 11 CANCER SURVIVORS CREATE A BRIGHTER FUTURE THROUGH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

### Volunteers

GIVING 27,000+ HOURS TO MAKE OUR PROGRAMS POSSIBLE, SAVING THE FOUNDATION \$700,000+ OR THE EQUIVALENT OF 13 FULL-TIME POSITIONS

### 310 nutritious home-cooked meals

FEEDING 16 NEWLY DIAGNOSED FAMILIES THROUGH COOKING AND CARING



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camp

## You helped Thea to live life on her own terms

“Thea is a girl who could best be defined by her exuberance for life and her enviable ability to see only possibilities — to see the wonder and awe that surrounded her each and every day. With curiosity as her guide and her infectious energy, she celebrated every occasion, big or small, every relationship and every moment with a giggle and a Snapchat picture.” — *Patrick Roelofsen*

“Thea wasn’t going to let a little something like age, size or cancer get in her way.”  
— *Patrick*

You could say Thea came into the world with an extra dose of exuberance and a greater share of resilience. But then again life would demand a lot more of this little girl. She would need these qualities in spades.

Thea was seven years old when she was diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma, a rare bone cancer. Shortly after diagnosis, her parents Lesley and Patrick Roelofsen learned the cancer had spread to her lungs.

Thea endured 18 months of cancer treatments, including chemotherapy, radiation and surgery.

Thanks to you, the Roelofsen family found healing and support through our Pizza Nights at the hospital. Every Wednesday evening, they connected with other families on the cancer unit, sharing their fears and concerns, their hopes and dreams over pizza.

Six months into treatment, the doctors informed the Roelofsens that the tumours in Thea’s lungs were not disappearing.

They were, in fact, growing. The cancer was relentless and the treatments aggressive, but Thea never allowed any of it to slow her down.

With your generous support, Thea and her sister Brynn enjoyed a week of summer camp in 2016 and 2017.

Nestled in the Alberta foothills, Camp Kindle offered eight-year-old Thea a whole new world of possibility and adventure.



The Roelofsen family

Photo courtesy of Roelofsen Family

“Thea was immediately drawn to the impressive high ropes and zip line,” recalls Patrick. “When she inquisitively asked when they would be going on that, the response she got was that it was reserved for kids 12 years and over. In typical Thea fashion, she was determined to conquer that course. She continued to persuade the counsellors. Thea wasn’t going to let a little something like age, size or cancer get in her way.”

While the official answer was no to the high ropes, behind the scenes, the counsellors were quietly moving mountains. After getting permission from her parents and Camp Kindle’s nursing manager, the counsellors made the necessary adjustments to the course and harness to accommodate Thea’s tiny frame.

“Thea, more than anything, just wanted to be a kid,” says Patrick. “She just wanted to participate and be treated the same. This, we quickly learned is the underlying foundation of what Kids Cancer Care is built on.”

Cont. on page 4



L-R Brynn and Thea enchanted by magic tricks at our SunRise day camp

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Thea enjoying a ride of a lifetime on the zip line at Camp Kindle

Cover & this photo by Michael Gibbons

## how to help

# 5 ways you can help

### BE A MONTHLY DONOR

Even a small monthly gift adds up over time to make a **lasting difference** in the lives of children with cancer.

### MAKE A ONE-TIME GIFT

No matter how big or small, **every dollar counts** in the battle against childhood cancer.

### RIDE A MOTORCYCLE

Join the 2020 **Kinsmen Ride for a Lifetime**. A 3-day VIP motorcycle ride: June 19-21. Register today!

rideforalifetime.  
dojiggy.com

### GO TO A GALA

Celebrate the legends of the silver screen at **Parents' Quest for the Cure: Silver Screen Gala**, presented by **MNP**, on Saturday, March 7. Help raise funds for children's cancer research.

### BE BRAVE

Shave, cut or colour your lid for a kid, while raising funds for children with cancer. Register your **Big Brave** fundraiser today.

Donate, register or learn more at [kidscancercare.ab.ca](http://kidscancercare.ab.ca) today.

*Cont. from page 3*

Sadly, this would be Thea's last Camp Kindle experience. When her pain became unbearable in August 2017, her treatment team regrouped and adjusted her pain management. This meant multiple pumps, lines and needle pokes in her body and five more rounds of radiation.

Amid the gruelling treatments, Thea remained focused on a few things she needed to do. One was to attend her first day of grade three. The second was to make it to one more Dad and Daughter Gala.

In October 2017, just two weeks before she passed, Patrick and his daughters attended the gala. The girls had the time of their lives, but for Patrick, it was much more than just a fun night out with his girls.

"It represented her graduating from high school, graduating from university, getting married and every milestone in between, where we could have shared one more dance together. I think we were the last to leave that night!"



Thea in her dad's arms at the Dad and Daughter Gala

As the years pass and the Roelofsens learn to live without Thea, they are finding healing and support through Kids Cancer Care. Thanks to you, nine-year-old Brynn is building lasting friendships at camp and the whole family is finding support at Family Camp.

"The fear of every parent who has lost a child is that as time goes on their child will be forgotten," says Lesley. "Kids Cancer Care does a lot to ensure that doesn't happen and has a special night called Time to Remember, where we gather to remember our children taken by cancer."

**Thank you! Your support means everything to kids like Thea and their families.**



Thea at the hospital with her million dollar smile

## camp

**25 YEARS +you** kids cancer care

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