

The
GOLDEN THREAD
Le
FIL D'OR



**The Terry Fox Humanitarian
Award Program Newsletter**

**Le journal du Programme du
Prix Humanitaire Terry Fox**



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.... And much more!!

The Story of “The Van”

By Elizabeth Von Rosenbach



Timing is everything, or so the saying goes!

It was a warm, overcast evening in July and I was walking through Ontario Place with my parents on the way to a concert by Great Big Sea. The air was buzzing with excitement as hundreds of people streamed toward the Molson Amphitheatre, eager to enjoy a couple of hours of lively, east coast music. Great Big Sea is one of my favourite musical groups, so I was just as excited as everyone else.

But suddenly, my eye was caught by a smaller crowd of people gathered around an antique-looking van, under a sign that said “Terry Fox Marathon of Hope.” As a Terry Fox Humanitarian Award winner, I’m always interested in anything connected to Terry Fox, so I pulled my parents out of the concert throng and we made our way over to the van. You can imagine my surprise when I discovered that the vehicle everyone was looking at was the actual van that Terry Fox used as his mobile home during his famous run across Canada in 1980!

Resurrecting a piece of history

Members of Terry Fox’s family and several volunteers were taking the van to 50 communities across the country on a “Tour of Hope” to raise funds for cancer. Fascinated by the opportunity to explore a little bit of Canadian history, I introduced myself to Darrell Fox, Terry Fox’s brother, and the other volunteers. Darrell told me how he had discovered the van after someone at a party casually mentioned that it now belonged to his neighbour. Apparently, the van had changed hands several times over the years and was now being used by a rock band to transport equipment. After a few months and some tricky negotiations, Darrell was able to purchase the aging vehicle and then the fun began. A crew of volunteers from Ford Canada spent over 1000 hours disassembling and restoring every single piece

of the van, until it was just like new again. Once the van was ready to roll, the Tour of Hope kicked off on May 25, 2008, in St. John’s, Newfoundland, at the exact spot where Terry Fox first dipped his artificial leg in the ocean, 28 years earlier.

I really enjoyed seeing Terry Fox’s original “Home away from Home” and I was inspired to offer my help with the tour in any way that I could. Again, the timing was perfect because the Tour of Hope was coming to a Ford dealership in Burlington, my home town, just two days later. So, after I finished work on Monday, July 14th, I went over to the Ford dealership to help out with the fundraising. What an experience that was! So many people from Burlington came out to see the van and share their stories of inspiration and hope. It soon became very clear to me that Terry Fox’s courageous journey had touched the lives of many, many Canadians. Glemena, one of the volunteers on the tour, told me that she ran part of the way with Terry and personally raised thousands of dollars for his cause. She also showed me an album of photographs that she took during that time, photos that the Terry Fox family had never seen before the Tour of Hope began.

Inspiring the next generation

Another woman told me that she was filling her car at a gas station, 28 years ago, when the Terry Fox van pulled up to the pump beside her. Although she didn’t get to meet Terry at that time, she was thrilled to see the van in action again. A number of parents also brought their children to see this wonderful bit of living history. It was so much fun for me to see the awe and joy on their little faces, as they looked at the bed where Terry Fox slept after a long, hard day of running. It really seemed to bring the Terry Fox story to life for them.

I even met a member of the original OPP team, Sergeant Harry Carrigan, who provided an escort to Terry and his supporters as they rolled through Ontario. I could see the emotion in his face, as he told me how he had watched Terry struggle to get through the long, tedious miles of his demanding journey. To give Terry a manageable goal to reach each day, Darrell (Terry’s brother) would drive the van a short distance ahead to act as a landmark. Once Terry managed to reach that goal, Darrell would drive ahead again and Terry would struggle on, foot after aching foot, to the next landmark. Hearing stories of Terry’s courage and seeing the photos of that brave and optimistic young man, brought his story to life for me, too.

I had a great time talking to the many visitors to the Tour and I was able to help by selling armfuls of t-shirts and other merchandise. Although I don’t know the final figures, I think Burlington residents were very generous in their support of the Tour of Hope’s fundraising efforts. All in all, it was a wonderful experience for me and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting all the dedicated people who helped to put this special event together. In the sweltering summer of 1980, that intrepid van brought Terry’s hopes and dreams to the attention of a nation and now, in the summer of 2008, it is inspiring a new generation to strive to make cancer history.

For the Love of Peanuts



By Matthew Cheng

"You know, you're pretty lucky, a lot of girls would love to date a guy with a car," I said arrogantly to my new girlfriend. It was a chilly autumn day in mid-November, the smell of acorns was in the air, and I was sitting on my girlfriend Julia's porch, trying desperately to impress her with dazzling comments. After yet another yawn of disinterest, I realized that I had to do something quickly, as I was unwittingly walking her to Boredomville. From the corner of my eye, I witnessed my savior, peering down at me from a tree.

"Look! A squirrel!" I yelled. Skippy, as I called him, was a short and cheerful squirrel, with soft, auburn fur and deep brown eyes. Considering how I could reveal my caring nature to my girlfriend, I enthusiastically fetched a jar of peanuts from inside the house for the hungry animal. Skippy was delighted by the sight of the nuts and eagerly accepted my invitation. However, after seeing Julia's cat, he quickly ran back up the tree. Cookie was a lazy, fat animal, weighing about three times what she should – or so it seemed to me – with silky fur the color of coconuts and a little silver bell around her neck that tinkled when she walked. Seeing how the situation could become interesting, I offered more salty treats to Skippy. After much hesitation, he accepted the challenge. He wanted the nuts.

Skippy was a lot quicker than chubby Cookie. After quickly avoiding the cat and seeking out his treasure, Skippy victoriously ran back up the tree. Fascinated with the series of events that had just unfolded, I tossed loads of peanuts on the jagged cement porch. My girlfriend did not share my sense of humor or approve of my evil intentions, girlishly screaming the words "animal cruelty" into my ear. No matter, I was too immersed to care. "Besides," I chuckled, "there's no way *that* cat can outrun a squirrel". Skippy, who appeared to agree with me, looked at the cat defiantly, and dashed down the tree. He couldn't resist the crunchy goodness.

Unbeknownst to my buddy Skippy and myself, my girlfriend had another cat, a secret ninja cat. Molly, who resembled Cookie to the finest detail, enjoyed hiding underneath the porch in order to surprise unsuspecting visitors. After having easily escaped Cookie once more, Skippy triumphantly jumped onto the porch to claim his prize. Unfortunately, Molly had different plans for my little buddy, as she too jumped onto the hard concrete. Scared witless, the poor squirrel threw his nuts three feet into the air, skidded off the porch and ran back up the tree faster than he had ever run before.

"How could Skippy have lost like that?" I cried.

"He wasn't thinking straight," my girlfriend chuckled.

"But he was so sure of himself!" I answered.

"Well so were you, I guess that'll teach you both a lesson," she replied.

"What lesson?" I demanded angrily.

"That's what you get for being arrogant," she smirked, while mockingly kissing my cheek.

"They say that arrogance and brilliance often walk hand in hand," I stubbornly replied.

"Well whoever said that knew nothing about life," she replied angrily, while distancing herself from me.

Just then, the phone rang, saving me from what would have been a very, *very* unpleasant conversation. "I'll be back," she grunted, as she slammed the patio door and stormed inside the house to answer the phone. As I was left to realize the (very small) extent of my wit, I noticed Skippy sheepishly walking towards another squirrel. Skip-pet, his female counterpart, definitely wasn't impressed with his macho behavior.

"Maybe you should go now," my girlfriend said dryly as she returned to the porch. She obviously didn't appreciate my attitude.

"You're right," I muttered, "my arrogance has cost me enough for one day, but I at least want to make things right with Skippy before I leave." I then stood up, took the jar of peanuts and walked towards the squirrels.

"I'm sorry, buddy," I began to the squirrel in the tree, "there was no point in putting you through that." To my surprise, he hopped down a few branches and gleefully started picking his savory delicacies out of my hand. "You could have gotten hurt," I continued, "although I'm pretty sure the cats only wanted to play with you." He was too happy to care.

"There's never a reason to be arrogant," I said while looking back to Julia, "and you're right, an arrogant person surely isn't bright." She had a dumbfounded look on her face, and clearly didn't know what to say.

"Are you apologizing?" she asked in disbelief.

"I'm really sorry this didn't work out," I continued, while putting the empty jar of peanuts on the porch. As I slowly walked towards my car, I realized that I had the IQ of a squirrel.

"Wait!!!" she yelled, while running after me.

"What is it?" I answered hopefully.

"You finished all my peanuts," she replied.

"Ohh, is that it?" I said sadly.

"No dummy," she smiled, "that means you need to bring me a new jar next Saturday".

Book Review : “Tuesdays with Morrie”



By Michelle Leong

For this edition of the Golden Thread, I'd like to recommend a book, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, by Mitch Albom. For me, this book has been very inspiring and insightful, so I'd like to share two of my favourite passages:

Number 1:

“So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they're busy doing things that they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things. The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.”

Number 2:

On this day, Morrie says he has an exercise for us to try. We are to stand, facing away from our classmates, and fall backward, relying on another student to catch us. Most of us are uncomfortable with this, and we cannot let go for more than a few inches before stopping ourselves. We laugh in embarrassment.

Finally, one student, a thin, quiet, dark-haired girl whom I notice almost always wears bulky white fisherman sweaters crosses her arms over her chest, closes her eyes, leans back, and does not flinch, like one of those Lipton tea commercials where the model splashes into the pool.

For a moment, I am sure she is going to thump on floor. At the last instant, her assigned partner grabs her head and shoulders and yanks her up harshly. “Whoa!” several students yell. Some clap.

Morrie finally smiles.

“You see,” he says to the girl, “you closed your eyes. That was the difference. Sometimes you cannot believe what you see, you have to believe what you feel. And if you are ever going to have other people trust you, you must feel that you can trust them, too – even when you're in the dark. Even when you're falling.”

Happy reading!

What Didn't Kill Me, Made Me Stronger

By Alexandra Tirabassi

Meningitis. That's what my family doctor was thinking with my blood tests the first day that my story started. I was feeling really tired and weak, with flu-like symptoms which normally would pass in a couple of days. However, that's not exactly what happened, and after three trips to the emergency room, it led me to McMaster, my now home away from home. Further testing and a bone marrow test showed an extremely disrupted immune system that left the doctors shaking their heads in confusion.

It took the doctors another six weeks to diagnose my disease. “Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia,” a cancer that affects the blood. Acute Leukemia is a rapidly progressing disease that affects mostly cells that are unformed, immature and not fully developed. “These immature cells cannot carry out their normal functions,” they told my mom and I. I had no idea what I was in for.

When people think ‘cancer’, their first thought or words are naturally “I'm going to die.” Mine, however, were “I'm going to beat this. Just tell me what I have to do.” I was very relieved to hear one of my many oncologists tell me, “Alexandra, we are going to cure you.” I was fortunate and given a very good prognosis.

I remember the very first time I walked into the 3F Pediatric Clinic at McMaster. I saw these kids, much younger than me, with bald heads and skinny bodies, hooked up to IV poles and receiving chemotherapy. At that moment, my life was changed and to this day hasn't been the same. I never knew this life existed until that point, but now it plays a huge role in my life. It didn't bother me so much that I had cancer myself and that I might not survive, it bothered me that these kids, being so young and innocent, had to endure this horrible experience so early in their lives. Would they make it to see their next birthday? Would I?

This is a complete trust situation. I had to put trust into my Mom, the doctors, the pharmacists and God to get me through every day successfully, hoping that the right decisions about my treatment had been made. Many good things have come from this unfortunate, but at the same time fortunate experience. I've met some really amazing people who I connect with on so many levels that ‘normal’ people wouldn't understand. It was a long two and a half years of treatments and testing, and it certainly wasn't what you'd call a smooth ride. Chemotherapy is one thing,

but the side effects are a whole new story.

Hair loss and weight loss wasn't a big deal to me, it was the life threatening blood clots that almost took my life. I'll never forget that one time when my Mom had to give me a needle containing blood thinners. Christmas day 2003, over the phone, one of my oncologists had to walk my Mom through the process of administering the needle to me. This became a twice daily occurrence for eight months. My Mom became such a pro at this, but thank God she doesn't have to still do that today. Another side effect that I still have today is poor bone density and muscle cramping. All thanks to the steroids. Not the ones that make you bulk up, but the ones that keep the white cell count in tact. I'll also never forget the time my thrombologist, a doctor who works with blood clotting, walked into my hospital, looked at my Mom and said, "I don't know if I can save her." Mom and I never prayed so much, or so hard in our lives.

One of the things that I know got us through was our faith. I wasn't really close with God before this, but I know that the man upstairs is the reason that I'm here today, alive and healthy. Nurses and doctors aren't just what their titles imply; they are some of the people with the biggest hearts and the best personalities you will ever meet.

Although this ride was not something a teenager should experience, it was a life changing and eye opening experience of what life is truly about. Even now my journey is not complete; I still go for check-ups, blood test and scans to make sure I remain in remission. So next time you go to complain about the small things in your life, just be thankful that you have a life to complain about.

Oh What a Life! – part one

By Jen Ross

Four years ago, I was a confident senior in high school, ready to go off into the world and make my own new adventures and stories. The biggest step I had ever had to take was facing me square on, and a decision had to be made; do I stay in my hometown in Alberta and go to university where I know everyone, or do I branch out and go to school on the other side of the country? This was a HUGE decision for me, but fate guided me, and I ended up on the other side of Canada, in Nova Scotia.

Part of me had always known I would go to school in the Maritimes, as all three of my older siblings had done so, along with my mom, grandpa, and many other relatives. Although it seemed like the only option, when it came down to making the move, it was one of the hardest things I have ever done. Leaving everyone you know and love behind, to chance a new life was a big obstacle, but I gritted my teeth, shed a few tears (I'm being easy on myself... more than a few) packed my bags and made the move. I didn't know what to expect but Saint Francis Xavier University surpassed all of my ideas about what university would be like.

Now, almost four years have passed and I'm about to get the most sought after thing in my university; the mighty X-Ring! Many people come to school here just for the ring, as many people recognize it world-wide, but it is much more than that to me. This ring symbolizes my life for the last four years. The funny, sad, crazy, boring, and life changing experiences that come with university will all be remembered whenever I glance down at my ring hand. It is common for people to say that university was the best time of their life, and I agree. The friends and relationships that evolve over the course of four years are often stronger than ones you have worked a lifetime at home on. I'm not discrediting old friends, because they are still very important in my life, but for some reason, it is just different here. Maybe it's because as we grow, and take the first steps into the real world, we realize just how hard it can be. When your family is not there to turn to, friends become your family. They are there to laugh with, cry with, and most importantly, hug it out with, whether it is for good or bad reasons.

With the countdown to get the ring on December 3rd, it's easy to realize how important friends are. Coming from a different province, I know that I will celebrate with my friends, our journey over the past 4 years, the good times and the bad – they all need to be recognized. People and relationships are what makes the world work, and in university, you get first hand experiences that will help you recognize this. I know that because it is only November, I will learn, laugh, cry and hug even more than ever to make sure I get the most out of my remaining time with the people I have grown to love. Who knows where everyone will be five years down the road – so we might as well live for today. I am interested to see if I have any variations of what I feel by the end of this fourth year at St. FX. Will I still be beaming that university glow, or will I shake it off and enter the workforce looking for another new perspective. These steps of significant change are hard in life, but in my experience, they are always worth the fear, and tears that will undoubtedly be shed. Take a chance on change, and you might be pleasantly surprised.



Shine On

By Ashley Major

My name is Ashley Major and I was born and raised in the community of St. Brieux, Saskatchewan. St. Brieux is a thriving industrial community of 500 people. Everybody knows everybody, and the bond between our members is more like that of a family than that of acquaintances. On August 14th 2008, our town was struck by a tragedy that completely devastated our entire community: a woman and five little girls from our town were killed in a terrible accident.

Over the course of four days, we laid six people to rest. I will never forget those funerals. The slideshow of the mother and her two little girls plays repeatedly in my head. We sang the girls' favourite songs; "Hey Mickey" and "Brown Eyed Girl" will never be happy songs for me again. The grief that our town felt was so incredibly overwhelming; I will never forget the anguish of the parents and the families.

This summer, a lot of things were put into perspective for me. I realized two very important things. The first one is that I have no right to complain about the circumstances of my life. I have Klippel Trenonauy Syndrome. KTS is a disorder in which painful "lumps" form in my lymphatic system. I feel great pain when these lumps are bumped, and their outward appearance is that of melanoma. My left leg was the only area affected for the vast portion of my life, but they are now spreading. After the week of funerals in August, I vowed that I would never ever feel sorry for myself again. There are so many much more terrible things that could happen to me, such as having to go through the pain that these parents did. The second thing was that I realized just how important my family is to me. My little sister is a year older than three of the little girls who were killed; it could have just as easily have been her in that vehicle. I cannot imagine the pain and grief that those families feel, losing a beautiful little girl.

I think of those little girls, and how precious they were. I went to school with them and taught them at Vacation Bible School and Sunday School. It is hard to understand why tragedies like this happen. Why did a mother and five little girls have to leave this earth so soon? I like to believe that they are now angels in heaven. At the funeral of the last child, "Shine On" by Jet was the song that was played as she was processed out. Here is a sample of the lyrics:

Please don't cry
Although I leave you here this night.
Wherever I may go, how far I don't know
But I will always be your light.

When the days all seem the same
Don't feel the cold or wind or rain.
Everything will be okay,
We will meet again one day.
I will shine on, for everyone.

Of all of the questions that are raised by the terrible event, there is no question as to whether these girls will be remembered or not. When I read the posts and see the pictures on the Facebook support group, it is so evident just how loved these people were. And when I look down at my wrist and see the white bracelet bearing their initials, I think of their beautiful innocence: "They died too young, like a story that had just begun, but death tore the pages all away" – "Who You'd be Today" by Kenney Chesney. MAMJMC, you will always be loved and remembered. Heaven just got a little brighter because you are up there, shining on for everyone.

Home



By Jocelyn Shhadeh

I think the essence of being homeless isn't the lack of a building; it's the lack of a same and comforting place. When one of the young ladies that regularly attends our street youth program announced that she was out of the shelter and had her own place we were all thrilled. One night after our program she asked myself and one of the other volunteers to come and see her place.

We went with her and I was horrified with what I saw. She was so proud of her new apartment so I hid my shock and acted happy. She was living in a room that was falling apart. There was a big hole in the floor, duct tape was holding the window together, there was no furniture, the whole room was smaller than an average bedroom, there was a toilet and shower in the space of a closet and she was sleeping on a pile of clothes. I smiled and told her how wonderful it was that she was out of the shelter.

When I got home that night I cried. I couldn't imagine living in such a dirty wreck. Then, I did what many people fail to do when they hear about or see an injustice; I did something about it. I called people I knew and asked for donations of food and furniture. Within two days I was able to return to her apartment with several boxes of groceries and other volunteers brought her a couch and other necessities. What makes people world-changers is not that they something wrong that no one else sees, it is that they see what others see and decide to act on it.



Charity work with ICSA and my summer experience with India's floods

By Jaskiran Sidhu

I have been involved with the Indo-Canadian students association (ICSA) for 4 years now. The aim of this group is to promote the Indian culture with today's generation of Indo-Canadian students while having several fundraisers throughout the year. Last year it was my responsibility to organize one of the largest fundraisers that the ICSA has, the Ladies Cultural Evening. This was a huge fundraiser and required months of preparation. But in the end, the event turned out to be very successful. We raised over \$5000 in profit. We sent a large fraction of the money to "Girl Child" project through Plan Canada. This project supports female education and literacy in third world countries. From the money that was left, my family matched the amount and I took it with me to my summer trip to India to do some charity work.



While I was in India I gave three people the gift of sight, with money for eye surgery. I helped one impoverished family with supporting the education costs for their daughter. Also while we were in India, there were tragic floods in many areas of Punjab. Even though we only had two days left in India when we heard the news, I thought this would be a great cause to support. So my family and I bought a lot of dry food and clothing and headed to some of the nearest flooded sites. It was a very dangerous mission but we managed to reach the flood victims, who were sitting in the middle of the roads with tarps and branches trying to stay out of the 9 feet of water on each side of a very narrow road. We covered over 9 kilometres of distance distributing food, clothing and money to these families. The flood victims were thankful of the support that we provided for them.

This year I have been elected as Vice-President of the ICSA and will continue to support many worthwhile charities!



Top to bottom: Ladies cultural evening, gift of sight, floods of India donation.

Putting my Disability into Perspective

By Michael Kuijpers

I would like to share with you my motivational speech which I present as an advocate for kids with physical disabilities at various local fundraisers. As well, I would like to share with you how I have come to be the person I am today.

I have a disability called poly-peripheral neuropathy, a degenerative neurological condition that causes atrophy of the muscles in my hands and feet, challenging my balance, mobility, strength, and fine-motor coordination. Consequently, everything I do takes much longer than most people, also partly because the disability affects my energy level. The effect on my hands causes tremors and the fact that my hands shake can be one thing when I'm playing the piano, but when eating with a fork and knife, it becomes a dangerous, frustrating and often very humorous activity. As you can imagine, eating peas is something I like to avoid, but no one has to worry about what does fall on the floor because my dog will surely eat it up.

Before I was diagnosed at the age of nine, I was physically very active: I had played team soccer for five years, participated in a skating team, and took art and piano lessons. My neuropathy started to atrophy the muscles in my feet first; my ankles turned inward and I began to lose my balance. The first operation on my feet followed very soon, after which I was fitted with brand new A.F.O.'s, ankle-foot orthotics, which are also known as leg braces. As a young child, I liked them because I could choose a variety of colours and designs, such as Batman or Spiderman. I will show you my first pairs!



However, in time they were not so great anymore, because they caused calluses and painful bone growths, caused by excessive rubbing, which would never go

away. I lost time from school due to the operation and from playing with my friends due to physiotherapy three times a day. However, I was happy to endure all of the above, for the sake of having "straight" feet and being able to walk again. I felt hope for a future where I would be "normal" again and my classmates would stop calling me a slowpoke or how I walk like a penguin.

But the neuropathy didn't stop there; it turned out that the atrophy of my feet was happening fast and there was more work to be done, resulting in 3 more surgeries. Toes were lengthened, ligaments stretched, bones transplanted, and muscles cut. I would like to show you some of my pins, especially the longest one, which went from the tip of my big toe into my foot. I started losing a lot of muscle in my legs and my toes continued to curl up, the odd shape of my feet making it difficult to fit comfortably into braces. I was having trouble riding my bike and had to be fitted for a wheelchair. The fine movements of writing and doing up buttons became a great challenge, let alone advocating for my accommodated needs in school.

Talking about school, that area was not doing much better. Even though I was studious and enjoyed school, my hands could not keep up with the volume of homework. Additionally, I was relentlessly being bullied by the whole male grade 8 part of the 7/8 split I was in at the time. The lead bully was two years older than me and targeted me for all the easiest reasons: I was new and had no friends, I was much smaller than him, and I looked "different" because of my braces. He would have his followers run into my back and make me fall, throw chocolate pudding on my pants, and push me in my wheelchair towards the wall only to stop at the last moment. Fortunately, the bullying stopped when my family ultimately called the police, but by that time, it was the end of the year and every other means for help had failed.

As a 12-year old, I felt overwhelmed by the effects of my disability on my life, and started to lose hope.

One day my mom saw an ad in the newspaper where the Easter Seals Society was looking for their yearly Provincial Ambassadors, a boy and a girl, who could represent the organization, but more importantly, the tens of thousands of young people across Ontario, at very substantial fundraising events in Toronto. We applied and I was chosen. I didn't know what had hit me, because my life changed tremendously.

The Easter Seal Society bought me several outfits, trained me which cutlery had to be used first at the table, and what not to do or say in front of the camera. They gave me a laptop to speed up my homework; I learned to give speeches and to overcome my shyness. I even turned my bullying experiences into a speech which I presented at local oratoricals, with SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) conferences,

Crime Stoppers, and local schools, while even managing to take the same speech all the way to the Provincials with the Royal Canadian Legion speaking contest.

My first event as Provincial Easter Seals Ambassador was a very large and formal one: the Toronto Conn Smythe Sports Celebrity Dinner and Auction, where I met such hockey greats as Guy LaFleur and Darryl Sittler, while doing my speech partially in French. Many other events followed, such as the Persechini Walkathon, which drew literally thousands of runners, and the Toronto Easter Seals Telethon, led by my friend, Mike "Pinball" Clements. It was a fantastic year and I started to feel like a celebrity myself.



Photo of Guy LaFleur and Daryl Sittler

When Easter Seals invited me to stay at one of their camps, Camp Woodeden in London, I met many kids with much more debilitating conditions than mine; many were in electric wheelchairs and had difficulty communicating or breathing. Not only could they not feed or dress themselves, they had much trouble sleeping at night because of the discomfort caused by a breathing apparatus, feeding tubes, and the need to be turned every couple of hours. Can you imagine being fed through a tube into your stomach, while trying to sleep at night?

That's when I realized they were the celebrities, not me. They were the true heroes who had faced enormous challenges on a daily basis. People often say I am an inspiration to others, but in reality, it is the young people with physical disabilities that inspire me. When I see the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that are put before them every day, while never failing to meet them head on, it puts my disability into perspective and inspires me to do even more for Easter Seals Ontario. After all, I was fortunate just to be able to walk, talk, and get an education. Camp Woodeden taught me the true meaning of being and advocate and spokesperson. I made up my mind to advocate for their right to live their lives to the fullest and reach their greatest individual potential.

Today, it is my commitment to ensure that all kids with

physical disabilities, no matter how severe, have a chance to enjoy camp just like able-bodied kids and without their parents having to worry about their safety. Over the last few years, I have been a tour guide of Woodeden Easter Seal camp, just outside London, where I describe the camp and my experiences as a camper to corporate businesses wishing to donate or people who just want to know more about Easter Seals and the kids we help. What makes Woodeden special, though, is being a fully accessible camp with a tree house, swimming pool, a brand new sledge hockey rink, North America's only fully accessible high ropes course and a seventy-foot swing. It is such an awesome camp and so full of heritage that I learn new things every time I go.

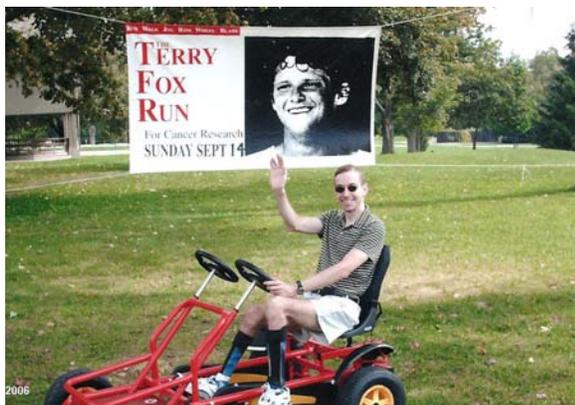
I really enjoy being a Camp Woodeden guide because of the great experiences I always have in that position. Just last October, I gave a tour to Roger Abott and Don Ferguson of the Royal Canadian Air Farce and when we reached the high ropes course and seventy-foot swing, they commented on what people who drive by the camp must be thinking as they hear the kids' screams of excitement and thrill, as in "I wonder what they're doing to those poor disabled kids at that camp?" We had a lot of fun that day, but the best part was their large commitment to Easter Seals and Roger Abott's joke about the small graveyard at the exit of the camp. He said, "Is this where they bury the kids that fall of the swing?"

Advocating for others has given me the confidence to advocate for myself. I learned to speak up in school and request additional time for homework, tests, and exams. I made myself promise to stay on my feet as long as possible, out of my wheelchair, by working hard at strength training, swimming, biking, and physio and massage therapy. Hence, I am still mobile today. I have been playing the piano for over 15 year and I completed my grade 8 practical exam just before University last year. By the way, the bullying has stopped; last year, I had the opportunity to meet Barbara Coloroso, author of "The Bully, The Bullied, and The Bystander", and I opened her dynamic and intriguing presentation with my anti-bullying speech two nights in a row.

While I often surprise myself with what I can do physically, even as my hands continue to worsen and piano playing becomes a necessity, it is the ability to truly see an opportunity in each difficulty that has helped me in rising to face adversity and become who I am today. But I could never have done this without Easter Seals Ontario and all of the kids they have helped.

If you ever come to London, Ontario, I would like to personally invite you for a tour through Camp Woodeden to meet our counselors and Easter Seals kids, since I would be happy to be your tour guide. Finally, I would like to leave you with a quote that motivated Christopher Reeve in his later years and something I believe

can be an inspiration to us all. “For all those who said I couldn’t do it, for all those who said I shouldn’t do it, for all those who said it’s impossible: I’ll see you at the finish line!”



By Kayla Atkey

The air is calm today in a particular way that is signature to fall in Alberta. Sunshine permeates through the autumn leaves, creating translucent shades of red and yellow on my feet. My chemistry lecture has ended and I’m supposed to be meeting with my laboratory coordinator to prepare solutions for my next lab, but I’d rather be outside enjoying the Indian summer.

Once inside, I climb the beige stairs of the chemistry department of the University of Alberta towards the office of the coordinator. Dr. Cooper emerges from the door adjacent to his office twenty minutes late. Trailing behind him, I hurry down the empty hall to the storeroom where he hands me a white sample in a test tube, unlocks the laboratory door, and leaves. I am alone in the lab. Fluorescent light bounces off the worn grey tabletops and across the windowless walls, off the scuffed floors and film covered sinks. I prepare my solution with care, wary that a single fingerprint will wreak havoc on the weight of my beaker or that unseen static will send my balance into a number dance. Then, just when I think I’m in the clear, a draft sweeps over my bench and my glass pipette falls to the floor and breaks in two.

I broke my share of glassware over the summer working as a lab assistant for Fluid Life, an oil-analysis lab in Edmonton. Something like 5 out of every 100 Albertans work in an oil and gas related field and for chemists in the business of oil analysis, job prospects are on the rise. My transportation to the lab was the Eighty-Three to Eastgate. Every morning, it hauled its passengers like prisoners to a gulag into the city’s industrial heartland. However, instead of the untamed emptiness of Siberia, we were confronted with a cluttered and synthetic soli-

tude of concrete slabs, train tracks, garbage dumpsters, trade buildings, and closed-down cafés.

The same summer I signed my contract with the oil-analysis lab, Greenpeace opened an office in Edmonton to kick start their campaign against the tar-sands. According to Greenpeace, the Alberta tar sands covers a minimum of 4.3 million hectares of Canada’s boreal forest. It considers Alberta a major site of environmental exploitation. I can recall passing the oil sands on the way to Camp YoWoChas on Lake Wabamum as a child. The giant tractors cutting through the land and the huge piles of desert-like sand were, to me then, only minor blemishes in the rolling landscape of an infinite prairie.

My mother knew the director of YoWoChas through work and one summer she and I spent two weeks house-sitting his cottage. I passed most of my afternoons lazing around in a rubber dingy anchored in the reeds, reading a book, or catching garter snakes in the woods. When I tired of these activities, I joined the campers for kayaking or canoeing on the lake. On August 3rd, 2005, 1.3 million liters of Bunker C oil was dumped into Lake Wabamun during a C-N rail derailment, devastating the habitat of fish and wildlife. Many residents believed that C-N had been too slow in instigating the clean-up operations. The spill was used by protestors and NGO’s to demonstrate that Alberta’s environment was under attack, now, more than ever before. My aunt, a former employee of C-N, lives on a farm 10 kilometers east of the lake. She spent many days that summer helping with the clean-up, washing birds coated with oil and collecting cat carriers to transport them to rehabilitation centers.

You can get to my aunt’s farm from Edmonton by traveling down Highway Sixteen, through the twin towns of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove. She owns 80 acres of rolling country, most of which is reserved for hay and field for the livestock to graze. As a child, I spent hours on the farm riding horses, galloping through fields and down empty country roads. During the long days and evenings of summer, a girl from the neighboring subdivision and I would ride along a path in the reserve attached to my aunt’s farm. Logs scattered the trail, creating the ideal conditions for making cross-country jumps and clearing them on horseback. When the white foam of exertion began to form on the withers of our horses, we put their halters on and let them graze while we made whistles out of long grass and forts from fallen trees. During the spring, we celebrated the retreat of winter by galloping through large pools of melted snow. In early fall, the multitude of Canadian geese resting in the fields provided a worthy alternative, covering us not with mud and water, but in a blanket of wings and sound.

Memories pile in the abandoned field until little dreams crop up... Alacrity vision remembers little of the past while bulldozer trails lead the kids home to new playgrounds.

Excerpt from Abandoned Dreams, Kenneth J. Smith

Those Who Inspire Us- Becky

By Colin Matheson

As great as being a student is, life on a university campus can sometimes become a bit monotonous. A few weeks ago, my roommates and I were in one of those pre-midterms robotic phases of life consisting of little other than classes, eating, sleeping, and studying. We decided to inject a large dose of excitement into our lives by going on an afternoon trip to the grocery store for some much needed food. However, we were in for much more of an adventure than we had expected.

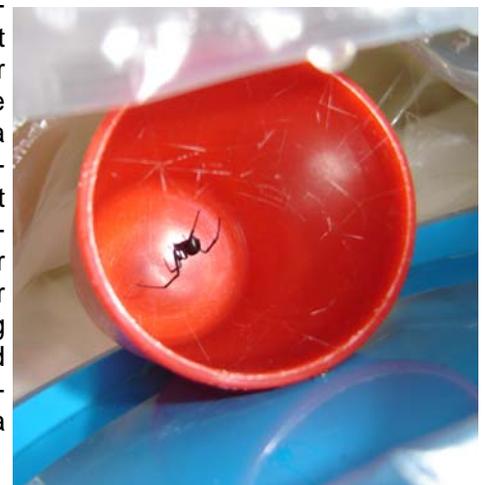
We bought a bunch of different types of food, including fruits like grapes, bananas, and apples. When we returned home, we packed most of the groceries away in the fridge, still unaware of the drama to ensue. About an hour and a half later I went to the fridge to get a glass of milk. When I opened the fridge, I noticed that there was a spider on the inside of the door moving quite slowly (no doubt due to it's time in the cold fridge). This sight was somewhat unusual, but certainly nothing that was all that exciting. I casually prepared to scoop up the small, frigid friend and relocate him outside, when for some unknown reason (perhaps divine intervention) I paused to take a closer look. This spider was certainly not huge like the infamous tarantula, but was slightly bigger than most spiders an urban-dwelling Canadian would commonly encounter. It was almost completely pitch black with long, skinny legs. The spider had stimulated my curiosity, and so I took a few more moments to pretend to be an accomplished biologist and inspect further. When I was finally able to see its underside, my eyes grew wide and my pulse quickened. On its abdomen was a small but unmistakable shape: a bright red hour glass contrasting with its shiny black body. I could not believe that right in front of me was a black widow spider.

I took a moment to remember a recent animal biology lecture where the species had been brought up. Black widow spiders are relatively small in size but they use potent venom to kill their prey. A bite from the larger female is quite dangerous, resulting in paralysis or death. The female black widow earned her name as she often decides to eat the male during the mating process. She has a black body with the distinctive red hour glass on the abdomen. This spider fit the description. Still not entirely convinced, but certainly excited at the strong possibility, I got my roommates (all of whom have taken several biology courses) to come and take a look. We discussed the possibility of whether or not it could be the famous black widow and the more we looked, the more confident we were. We quickly searched and found some pictures of the spider on the internet and the resemblance was stark.

This was too good to be true. All of us, being overconfident in our biological knowledge and abilities and with youthful invincibility complexes, decided that we would keep the spider in our small apartment. While the spider was still quite slow and cold, I scooped it up carefully with a cup and plate and put them all in a zip lock freezer bag which we quickly closed and poked many small air holes into with a fork. Once safe, we let our minds and imaginations wander about the possibilities of this discovery. Half (but only half) sarcastic ideas were tossed around like, "I could get out of my next midterm with a bite from that thing!" and "maybe we can domesticate it and teach it tricks, and then we'll get on the news" and "we can use it to terrorize everyone and take over the world!"

That night it was difficult to fall asleep, partly because of the excitement of having a very famous and very dangerous animal fall into our possession, and partly the fear and dread of opening the fridge for breakfast in the morning and having hundreds of baby black widow spiders crawl out. Luckily, the next morning was uneventful. We woke to find our new friend safely in her little home and already beginning to spin a web. Also, despite our trepidation, we have found no more spiders in our fridge. That morning I went to seek the counsel of a zoologist in the biology department. When I told him of our discovery, he was very excited. He sounded very impressed with everything and so I asked to make sure there was danger associated with this animal. He replied, "Oh well yes, the black widow is the second most deadly spider in the world." He then concluded our talk by saying, "I can take it for you if you wish, but you and your roommates can keep it as long as you consistently feed it medium sized insects."

I am proud to report that Becky the black widow has been living with us in the apartment for the past two weeks. We unfortunately have not been able to teach her any impressive tricks yet but many of our friends have come to take a look at her anyway. We are not sure what the future holds for her but stay tuned for the travelling show "Becky and Brothers" hopefully coming to a town near you.



Hobbies – Photography

By Daniel Smith

In order to maintain sanity in a stress intensive, fast paced university setting it is crucial to have some sort of hobby or activity that you find enjoyable. This could be anything from music, to sports, to collecting stamps; it's really a matter of person preference and interest. A hobby doesn't necessarily have to be something that you are really good at, just as long as you find enjoyment in what you do.

One of my newest hobbies is photography. I first saw my brother become enthralled in the world of cameras; as soon as I viewed some of the photos he had taken I was amazed and instantly intrigued. I found myself a digital camera and began taking pictures, and boy did I start taking pictures! I took pictures of everything, from the sunrise in the morning to a piece of gum on the sidewalk. I quickly became captivated by the realm of photography and often found myself thinking "that would make a nice picture!" It seemed like the more pictures I took the more I loved taking them!

I slowly began to see the world in a completely different light; I saw a good picture in just about anything. I began to see beauty in places I never thought I'd see and I came to realize that there was a certain beauty in everything. For me, photography has completely changed the way I view my surroundings and I feel as though I am better connected with what happens around me. Not only has it allowed this change in vision and thought, it allows me to have time to relax and think about things. This is something I feel everyone (post-secondary students in particular) need to have, a certain time to bounce ideas and thoughts around in your head while you relax. Personally, I find nature photography is one of the best ways to relax and to momentarily forget about that big test coming up soon, or how you're going to finally wash that massive amount of dishes. This clarity of the mind is a truly amazing feeling and has helped me a great deal throughout the last couple years when dealing with the stressful life of a student.

So to all of the fellow amateur photographers and hobby enthusiasts out there, keep it up! To those of you who haven't tried it, I strongly recommend it. The main thing in whatever hobby you choose to do is to have fun and enjoy every moment!

Right: *After the Rain*



Left: *Frozen Beauty*

A Good Workout Plan

By Mark Ballon

I have always been very active ever since I can remember. As a kid I never stopped moving and in my days in high school, I was called "an athletic freak." Now I am attending Douglas College and taking courses in Sport Science. I feel that I possess a great deal of knowledge when it comes to working out and staying healthy. If you would like to be in good physical condition, just follow my 8 week program.

Week 1: Make a plan of specific exercises and goals. Make sure you have accounted for time of workout and rewards after goals are accomplished. A minimum of 3 days per week and a maximum of 5 days per week for at least 1 hour.

Week 2: Start your workout plan with low intensity exercise. 1-3 sets and 10-15 reps, make sure it is at a low speed for cardiovascular training and low weights for strength training.

Week 3: Keep on the same plan as week one.

Week 4: Gradually increase the workout intensity by 10% (both with speed and weight).

Week 5: Continue increasing by 10%.

Week 6: Continue increasing by 10%.

Week 7: Begin with repetition maximums (maximal weight you can lift in one rep) every 10 minutes.

Week 8: All exercises are high intensity workouts.

My University Experience so Far

By Chelsi Cormier

This poem is very inspirational to me because I really did not understand what being a nurse actually meant before I started the Nursing program at the University of New Brunswick, Moncton Campus. University is a lot different and quite a transition from high school. Everyone has a million things going through their minds the first day of school. Who am I going to be friends with? What if it is too hard? Can I really do this? I found that the first couple of weeks of school were very intense. Teachers in high school say that they are preparing you for post secondary education, and they do in some ways, but I find I had to find new and different studying strategies. University is a whole new experience in itself. It will be a life long experience that I will never forget. School is getting harder and I can tell which students are actually going to stay and which ones are going leave. My program is intense, especially because there are only 40 students and the teachers and the students are really close, so the profs expect more from everyone as a group. I really like my course and I recommend it to everyone. Try not to get stressed out, especially about bad grades, because you will grow as an individual and learn from your mistakes. I wish everyone the best of luck in their courses.

WHAT IS A NURSE? ©

She's such a special person,
She's an angel in disguise
With tenderness in every touch
And caring in her eyes.
She's the one who'll sit beside you
To talk away your fears
She'll soothe your spirit, warm your heart
And wipe away your tears
She'll comfort you, look out for you
With true concern and care
And when you need a helping hand
You know you'll find her there
She cares for all her patients
With true expertise and pride
Her warmth and dedication
Come from way down deep inside
A nurse is a professional
Who goes the extra mile--
What is a nurse?
A little bit of heaven...
with a smile.

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Raspberry Orange Muffins

Submitted by Kathleen Courtney

Being a food maniac, I wanted to pass on an awesome website I heard about. Vegweb.com is a great vegetarian recipe website with a great search tool which helps find recipes that match up with whatever you have in your kitchen. I thought I would share a muffin recipe that suits many different dietary preferences. Vegan baking and cooking (leaving out animal products from) is full of flavour plus it is lower in saturated fat and cholesterol. Vegan and vegetarian food is full of fiber, magnesium, and antioxidants like Vitamin C. These muffins are great and full of energy!

All the best to the other Terry Fox scholars with the next half of the school year!

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 tablespoon flax seed (ground is best)
- 1/4 cup orange juice (lots of pulp!)
- 1/2 cup soy/rice milk
- 1/2 cup oil
- orange zest (I used a half of orange worth, maybe a tablespoon)
- 1/4 cup raspberries, cut

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400F, oil muffin pan
2. Mix dry ingredients: flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, and flax seed
3. Mix wet ingredients in separate bowl: milk(s), orange juice, and oil
4. Mix wet ingredients with dry ingredients
5. Add orange zest and raspberries
6. Pour batter into muffin pan and cook until fork comes out clean. It will likely take 20 - 30 minutes.

Chocolate Chex Caramel Crunch

This simple recipe is great, especially around the holidays when the company is piling in!

Ingredients:

- 8 cups Chocolate Chex cereal
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 6 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup vanilla baking chips

If you can't get a hold of Chocolate Chex—be creative—add melted chocolate or use chocolate Coco Puffs.

Directions:

1. Into a large microwavable bowl, measure cereal; set aside. Line cookie sheet with waxed paper.
2. In 2-cup microwavable measuring cup, microwave brown sugar, butter and corn syrup uncovered on high 1 to 2 minutes, stirring after 1 minute, until melted and smooth. Stir in baking soda until dissolved. Pour over cereal, stirring until evenly coated. Microwave on high 3 minutes, stirring every minute. Spread on cookie sheet. Cool 10 minutes. Break into bite-size pieces.
3. In small microwavable bowl, microwave vanilla baking chips uncovered on high about 1 minute 30 seconds or until chips can be stirred smooth (bowl will be hot). Drizzle over snack. Refrigerate until set. Store in tightly covered container.

Have you heard from these TFHAP Alumni?

As the years go by after a Terry Fox Scholar leaves the program, we sadly often lose touch with some of them. Here are a few of the alumni with whom we have lost touch.

Audric Beauchesne

Annie Bélanger

Donna Cameron

Christopher Campbell

Sandra Clark

Lauren Clarke

Cindi Cohen

Terri-Lynn Convey

Hilary Corlett

Subrata De

Chantal Decelles

Renee Depocas

John Diakogeorgiou

Marie Claude Dion

Kimberly Donohue

Claire Doucet

There is a complete list of all alumni on our website at www.terryfox.org which indicates all the alumni for whom we have no correct contact information.

It would be a tremendous help and would be greatly appreciated if you would take a moment to look at the list of our alumni as perhaps you may know someone with whom we have lost touch. If you do happen to know one of those alumni we would be very grateful if you could contact them to let them know that we would like their updated contact information so we can keep them updated regarding the program.

Alumni Reaching Out to Others Who are Worthy of Financial Support

Two years ago, thanks to the generosity of one of our alumni, Dr. Kelly McCaul, we were able to establish the One More Award program. The purpose of this program is to provide at least one more award to deserving, outstanding, worthy candidates for a Terry Fox Humanitarian Award when we have exhausted the number of awards the TFHAP is able to provide in a particular year.

Our graduates have proven that they are caring humanitarians. The One More Award program is certainly a great humanitarian opportunity for them to assist us by making a donation to support worthy candidates. If each of our graduates were to donate as little as \$50.00 to this program, we would be able to provide almost four additional awards in a given year; thereby helping to provide the marvelous opportunity of receiving a post-secondary education for four students who otherwise may not be able to go to college or university.

Your support as an alumnus is strongly encouraged, and as the old adage advises, "Don't give t'il it hurts but give t'il it feels good". Your generosity will help others become Terry Fox Scholars.

Warmest Regards,

Lorne Davies

Lorne Davies
Executive Director