

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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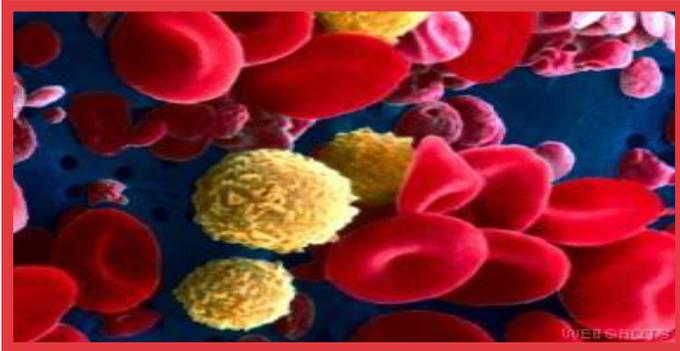
Cover Image by Scott Baker

And Much More....

Winter 2009

Blood, it's in you to give.....

By: Kaeleigh Barney



Recently, I was asked to become involved in Canadian Blood Services speaker's bureau program. Although I continue to volunteer at the blood donor clinics on campus, the speaker's bureau program allows me to share my story and personally promote the importance of blood donation first hand. You may be wondering why I first became involved with Canadian Blood Services. My story began back in 2000, shortly after I was diagnosed with Ewing Sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. Due to the location of my cancer, it was inoperable; therefore I received 28 rounds of inpatient chemotherapy and 50 rounds of radiation therapy. The side effects of my treatment consisted of significantly weakening my immune system, and neutropenia, with a very low RBC, WBC, and platelet count. This is why I received the many blood and platelet transfusions that I did. I received 40 blood transfusions and 150 platelet transfusions, and without them, I would not be here today. As you can recognize, those who donated these several units of blood and platelets saved my life, and while in hospital, I was able to recognize the importance blood donation played in others lives as well. Most importantly, kids fighting cancer, who required the blood, plasma, and platelets to stay alive. Whether it gave them just a little longer with their families, gave them back their health, or for some kids like me, saved a life, it plays a very important role in the treatment of cancer and various other chronic illnesses as well. Therefore, for those of you who are able to donate blood, I ask you to roll up your sleeves. You can save 3 lives in just the 1 hour it takes to donate. Here is some more information about Canadian Blood Services and blood donation:

- Someone in Canada needs blood approximately every minute of every day

- 52% of Canadians say they or a family member have needed blood
- There is a direct connection to saving someone's life
- Cancer patients need up to 8 units/week
- Abdominal surgery patients often need up to 4 units
- Heart bypass surgery patients often need up to 8 units
- Car accident victims often need up to 50 units
- Liver transplant patients often need up to 100 units
- There is no substitute for human blood
- Approximately 85,000 new donors are needed every year to meet demands
- We have an aging donor base, therefore, younger donors are encouraged to donate
- **1 hour = 3 lives saved**
- In the 1 hour it takes to donate blood, you can save 3 lives as the blood is divided into red blood cells, platelets, and plasma
- Hundreds of Canadians need stem cell transplants due to life-threatening illnesses, and 70% of the matches are from an unrelated source, only 30% are from family
- You must be between 17 and 61 (for first-time donors) and in general good health
- If you are unable to donate blood, you can still make a difference, you can volunteer, make a financial contribution, or register to potentially donate stem cells

You may be wondering why you should donate blood. There are many answers for this question: Blood saves lives

- It could be you or someone you know who needs blood some day: you, your children, your parents, your siblings, your grandparents, your extended family, your friends, your colleagues, your neighbours
- Ensures sufficient supply
- A way to give back to your community
- Restore others to health
- Offer hope to patients, family members, friends
- Give more time to patients to spend with loved ones for low time commitment, no more than 6 hours out of 8,760 hours a year

Therefore, I ask you all, roll up your sleeves and save a life.

**Call 1 888 2 DONATE – 24/7, go onto www.blood.ca – “Donor Clinic Locations”
THANK YOU!**

I have completed my first year of university. I had some bumps and it was rough adjusting to my new environment plus the added schoolwork. I got this email around January from a family member and it cheered me up.

Submitted by Lori-Anne Thomas

How to Become a CEO

A successful businessman was growing old and knew it was time to choose a successor to take over the business. Instead of choosing one of his directors or his children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young executives in his company together. "It is time for me to step down and choose the next CEO," he said. "I have decided to choose one of you." The young executives were shocked, but the boss continued. "I am going to give each one of you a seed today - a very special seed. I want you to plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from the seed I have given you. I will then judge the plants that you bring, and the one I choose will be the next CEO." One man, named Jim, was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed.

He went home and excitedly, told his wife the story. She helped him get a pot, soil and compost and he planted the seed. Every day, he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks, some of the other executives began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Jim kept checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by, still nothing. By now, others were talking about their plants, but Jim didn't have a plant and he felt like a failure. Six months went by - still nothing in Jim's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Jim didn't say anything to his colleagues, however. He just kept watering and fertilizing the soil - he so wanted the seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the young executives of the company brought their plants to the CEO for inspection. Jim told his wife that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But she asked him to be honest about what happened. Jim felt sick at his stomach. It was going to be the most embarrassing moment of his life, but he knew his wife was right. He took his empty pot to the boardroom. When Jim arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other executives. They were beautiful --in all shapes and sizes. Jim put his empty pot on the floor and many of his colleagues laughed. A few felt sorry for him! When

the CEO arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted his young executives. Jim just tried to hide in the back. "My, what great plants, trees, and flowers you have grown," said the CEO. "Today one of you will be appointed the next CEO!"

All of a sudden, the CEO spotted Jim at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered the financial director to bring him to the front. Jim was terrified. He thought, "The CEO knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me fired!" When Jim got to the front, the CEO asked him what had happened to him. Jim told him the story. The CEO asked everyone to sit down except Jim. He looked at Jim, and then announced to the young executives, "Here is your next Chief Executive! His name is Jim!" Jim couldn't believe it. Jim couldn't even grow his seed. How could he be the new CEO the others said? Then the CEO said, "One year ago today, I gave everyone in this room a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds; they were dead - it was not possible for them to grow.

All of you, except Jim, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Jim was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new Chief Executive!"

[If you go out, vote]

By Steven Roy

It is generally accepted that one's vote in a democratic system is not only a right, but an important, some argue obligatory, act that allows one to have an active voice in the policy and decision making of our country. But there is a less talked about participation in this process, that is not only less discussed, but less carefully approached: the consumer vote. In fact, in many ways buying is much like voting, you just do it more often. And herein lies the tragedy - that the inferior amount of attention paid to this moral and value laden activity is then magnified by the routine frequency of engagement in it.

In traditional times, the act of buying may not have been an event, but in today's consumer driven economy, where the price is the bottom line, it has become so. In his criticism of capitalism, Marx noted that in reality a purchase is an exchange of time - your

time for the time of the person or people creating the product. Money is essentially an intermediate tool to allow individuals to trade their time with others to whom what they produce is not desired. The downfall, he argued among other things, was that this relationship was not apparent when money was used. Now whether you agree with Marxism or not, there are too many examples of this specific idea, to dismiss it. It would not be possible for one to buy bananas at 49 cents a pound, for example, if one recognized the relationship in which they are participating, in fact investing in. Buying a banana is arguably not simply the trading of your quarters for a beloved fruit; moreover it is in fact financially supporting the exploitation and in some cases, blatant slave and child labour that were resorted to in the competition for your consumer vote (never mind the environmental impact that is caused). Gross human rights violations are consistently reported in the production of many of the most imported products we buy - bananas, coffee, chocolate, cotton - to name a few.

We as North Americans have been taking too lightly our buying and consequently the underlying relationship and corresponding duty inherent in it. As a reminder, our options are to condone the exploitation through our continued support of it, to boycott such product or to nurture the healthy relationship. Like voting, not participating, though an option is not the best one considering the unallocated power of that vote. In this case, the alternative is buying a fairly traded product. Buying Fair Trade products as an alternative to conventional ones, not only removes financial support and sustenance to immoral business practice, but it has several other equally far-reaching effects: in fair trade, small scale farmers in under-developed regions are paid fair wages for their products. This not only doesn't exploit their poverty, but supports the creation of sustainable income for these communities, which has a much longer lasting impact than much of the aid our country sends (which often goes to treating symptoms of the problems our lifestyles have unknowingly created).

Now, the intention of this article wasn't to incriminate or blame the reader; the goal was to empower. The very attempt to be conscious of the effect of our actions has tremendous power to have a lasting impact on the lives of many. By paying 30 cents more for your bananas (... , coffee or chocolate), you'll be offering families and communities a real opportunity to sustainable income as well as the dignity all human beings deserve. And in the process of recognizing your relationship with them, it will lighten their hearts much more than it will lighten your wallet.

Selfish

By Zachary Reimer

This past year I was going to school in Abbotsford, BC. My girlfriend and I decided one Saturday to take the bus to Vancouver and hang out there for the day. We planned out a few things that we wanted to do but still left the plans open so that we could enjoy just being together. When we got off the bus in Vancouver we started walking towards East Hastings. For those that do not know what East Hastings is, it is an area of the city that inhabits many homeless people and has a very high concentration of drugs. I had never been to East Hastings before but my girlfriend had and she wanted to walk me through it. As we walked closer to the main intersection of the area I could feel her grip on my hand getting tighter and tighter. We eventually made it through and even in the few seconds I was there it was very eye opening. We then continued on into Gastown which is quite the opposite of Hastings as it is very ritzy. It was so strange to see how two extremes could be so close to each other. As we continued to walk through Gastown, a man on rollerblades with a paint brush came up to us. It was clear to see that he did not belong in this area of town and was trying to get money. He asked my girlfriend and me if he could draw our picture in exchange for a few dollars that could be used for a coffee. We told him that we did not want to. I was thinking myself that I did not feel like having the hassle of lugging along a picture all day long and wanted to get on with my day as it had only been about 15 minutes since we had stepped off the bus. He did not take no for an answer and continued to tell us that he had gone to school in Toronto at an art school and was very good at what he did. I once again told him no and expected him to move on to other couples that were in the area, WRONG! He continued to follow us, skating alongside us, not leaving us alone, to the point of harassing us. He continued talking but I was not responding anymore hoping that he would just leave us alone. What he said next though has stuck with me ever since, as I continued to ignore him he said, "Do you even care, are you even listening?" We ended up ducking into shop where we knew he could not follow us but this line really hit me hard. Growing up I always thought that I was a good person and cared about others but this man totally called me out and made me realize how selfish I am. I tell you this story so that when you come across someone who you may think is not important as yourself that you would take the time and effort and actually care for this person.

The Power of Positive Thinking

By Tara-Anne Holland

Looking at the world as a glass half full rather than half empty is something that you hear people say every day, but practicing this saying is a lot harder than it may seem. I have Psoriatic Arthritis and sometimes the chronic pain can be very draining. I am also a busy girl with a lot on her plate, as my mother always says, and I've learned that living optimistically can dramatically improve my day to day. There are many people in the world that carry around whatever issues they have in life wherever they go, and it is apparent that something is burdening them as soon as you encounter them. Life is short and full of things that may be easy to complain about and dwell on, but looking on the lighter side of things, I believe, has helped me live a happier and love filled life.

Since before my diagnoses I have always struggled with finding a balance of energy, either I was too high strung or wiped out from all of the activities that I was involved in. During grade 11 and 12 I got to the point where I wasn't finding as much daily enjoyment as usual, I needed to re-evaluate what was really important to me. Entering my first year of university 2 years ago I decided to cut back. I am currently a student, a waitress and a volunteer and I can honestly say that volunteering is one main reason that I am able to keep such a good attitude about life. My family and friends are always commenting on how I seem to just go go go and they wonder where all of my energy comes from. Keeping myself busy has always been my way, but sometimes being so busy that you no longer have time to smell the roses can turn you into a drone who is just going through the motions. Being so busy for such a long time has made me a pro scheduler and it has almost gotten to the point that when I know that I'm free I will try to plan something to fill the gap, which I've realized that sometimes you need me time. Getting and keeping the motivation to continue on for me comes from trying to live my life to the fullest, being able to look back and regret nothing.

As a waitress I am in contact with people every day and have come to the sad conclusion that there are an abundance of people who are miserable. Now I know that life is complicated and there are many circumstances out there that are difficult and trying,

but yelling at your server for giving you over poached eggs is just not going to fix things.

And just like the fact that there are people who seem to be on a mission to make others feel awful, there are people who shine and spread the warm fuzzies wherever they go. This second group of people is the group that I hope I belong to, the young man who opens the door for you and calls you beautiful or the old woman who would just like to talk and give you a scotch mint. Optimism is a force that can be used to fight off every woe, a tool against sadness and anger, jealousy and hate, in the words of the country band Sugarland "it's Love". Love is what most people strive for, so why not try to use it as much as possible. Finally I would like to conclude with the lyrics to the song that reminds me of this philosophy that I have about keeping positive, happy and a life full of love.

Love by Sugarland

Is it the face of a child,
Is it the thrill of danger,
Is it the kindness we see in the eyes of a stranger,
Is it more than faith,
Is it more than hope,
Is it waiting for us at the end of our rope,

I say it's love

Is it the one you call home,
Is it the Holy Land,
Is it standing right holding your hand,
Is it just like the movies,
Is it rice and white lace,
Is it the feeling I get when I wake to your face

Is it the first summer storm,
Is it the colours of fall,
Is it having so little, and yet having it all,
Is it one in a million,
Is it a chance to belong,
Is it standing right here singing this song,

I say it's love

The Taste of a Broken Heart

By Matthew Pellan Cheng

I'm going to kiss a girl today", said my best friend Karl. "Oh yeah? Well I'm going to kiss three girls today", said my friend Dave. "That's nothing", I boasted, "I'm going to kiss *seven* girls today". It was a frigid morning on February 14th, and I was sitting at my usual desk in French class, childishly competing with my friends as to who could kiss more girls on this special occasion. For an average 13 year old, there was nothing more important on Valentine's Day than to kiss a girl, any girl.

By lunch time, most of my friends had already found their Juliet's and I was left alone to feel the taste of foot in my mouth. The truth is that I was not really interested in girls and even less so in kissing them. I found them to be dumb, smelly and generally yucky. Nevertheless, I absolutely had to kiss a girl, as my reputation was at stake. After summoning up my courage, and realizing that I had little time left, I decided to speak with a member of the foreign species. Samantha wasn't as bad as the other girls because she didn't smell completely horrible and sometimes had intelligent things to say. She was a short, skinny girl, with light blue eyes and soft, curly, strawberry-blond hair that bounced up and down when she walked. After briefly talking with her, I noticed that she seemed very interested in me and a glimmer of hope crossed my mind, I could kiss *her*.

"I have to go now, because my sock is wet", I muttered. It was a terribly lame excuse, I know, but I had to speak with my friends as quickly as possible. "Guess what guys?!", I yelled, "I'm going to kiss Samantha today!". "There's no way *you're* going to kiss Samantha", replied Karl. "Yes I will!", I shouted, "and I'll prove it to you!". So I ran back to Samantha, but when I came face to face with her, my mouth went numb. "Could I have your heart today?", I blurted out as smoothly as I could. "Sure, just go to your locker after lunch", she replied.

After convincing my friends to hide underneath a table to witness my chauvinistic exploit, I proudly dashed towards my locker. However, Samantha was nowhere to be seen. Instead, I found a little cinnamon candy-heart with a little note taped to my locker that read: "You only need six more now". Apparently, she had overheard me in French class.

Completely embarrassed, I ran to the bathroom, only to find my friends laughing hysterically. The spicy aftertaste of the candy was slowly burning my tongue

and I wanted to cry in shame. "You know, you might have actually kissed her if you hadn't bragged about it", said Dave, who felt like twisting the knife lodged in my heart. "Bragging often turns around against you, remember that", said Karl, who was clearly affected by know-it-all syndrome. To this day, I can still taste the cinnamon candy-heart in my mouth whenever I feel like showing off, mainly because my friends have the kindness to send me little candy hearts every year on Valentine's Day.

The Importance of Home Cooking

By Katherine Strapps

Food is one of the great comforts of people, it can be enjoyed by all. In addition to being a basic human physiological need, good food can also provide emotional support to those in need. The best food is often the kind that is made in the home. Home cooking is important for several reasons, among which is the fact that the quality of food made at home is controlled by the person who prepares it. Another benefit of home cooking is simply that it is much more economical than buying prepared food, a factor that is especially appreciated in these times. Finally, preparing food at home brings joy and satisfaction both to the person who prepares it and to the family members and friends who are fortunate enough to partake in its consumption. I believe that home cooked food is simply the best type of palatable sustenance there is.

Since food is the fuel of life, it is incontrovertible that the quality of the fuel one uses to power one's self is of great importance. A serving of french fries, while it may have the same carbohydrate value as a serving of roasted potatoes, has much higher fat and sodium contents. In fact, fat and sodium, two of the leading factors in the risk of heart and kidney diseases (among many others), are the major culprits in the comparably inferior quality of store bought food.

As far as the economic side of things goes, it is well known that food made at home is far less expensive than food that is bought from a store. If a person buys only one 'combo' meal a day, five days a week from a fast food chain, by my calculations, he or she will end up spending approximately thirteen-hundred dollars a year on low quality, unhealthy food! The truth of the matter is that most good, healthy food bought in a grocery store or market, meant to be prepared at home, is relatively inexpensive. The other positive aspect of buying food from the grocery store is the fact that it

stimulates the economy of the area from which the food comes, rather than simply compounding one's contribution to major, astoundingly wealthy corporations like McDonald's.

Most people who cook for their families and friends will say that the simple act of preparing such food is one of the most satisfying things they can do. Not only does home cooked food make those who enjoy it feel more vital and healthy, but it brings great fulfillment to the person who prepares it. It brings with it a sense of being needed and appreciated. Another option is gathering family members together to create their own, and each others', food. This act teaches children the work and ingredients that go into the food they eat. At the same time, a family prepared meal allows the family to have more quality time together. This is especially important in today's age of technological advancement, where such time is a commodity that seems to continue to diminish.

There are several instances that demonstrate the importance and benefits of home cooked food. Despite these facts, people continue to eat out, order in, or purchase prepared food. In actuality, a good homemade meal can take a very short time and a small amount of effort to concoct. With much of the world attempting to live healthier and more economical lives, an easy adjustment is to change the way we feed ourselves. We should stop making excuses and try to change the things we can, all the better for our health and lives.

If this little essay has inspired you, why not try my recipe for...

Summer Oatmeal

Ingredients:

Main: - quick oats
- water

[Note: water and oats in 2:1 ratio; ie. for 1 person: 2/3 cup water and 1/3 cup oats]

- apple (peeled and diced)
- pinch of salt
- pinch of cinnamon
- pinch of freshly grated or powdered nutmeg

Garnish: - brown sugar or maple syrup
- peaches (peeled and sliced)
- plain yogurt or milk

Directions: Combine all main ingredients and cook in pot over medium to medium high heat until bubbling. Top with a dollop of yogurt or splash of milk, peaches, and a sprinkle of brown sugar or drizzle of maple syrup!

Unrealistic Goals: Do They Exist?

By Brandon Gillespie

Everyday we get reminded about the so called "reality" surrounding the goals we set out to achieve in our lifetime. Parents or friends always tell us what goals we can and cannot achieve; goals that are "unrealistic" or simply unattainable from their perspective. Of course we often take this advice and unfortunately allow ourselves to slip down a path of discontent and dissatisfaction. However if it were not for the "unrealistic" goals and the people with the unrelenting will to achieve such goals we would never hear the stories of excellence, and overwhelming achievement.

Why settle for less when you can achieve basically anything with nothing more than a little determination? Why maintain a repertoire of risk-free, safe goals and dreams when those dreams which we long to achieve may only be a little more difficult to achieve? The answer is simple: we follow the status quo and we refuse to believe that we can accomplish incredible things. This dynamic is proven every day. Great world leaders, accomplished writers, and those who we see as successful people did not allow themselves to be defeated by their dreams nor did they lessen their goals because of the limits that society places upon them. The people that we view as being successful (which is a different interpretation for everybody) are not successful because of circumstance in most cases; they are successful because they didn't let themselves be defeated by their dreams and aspirations. Never allow yourself to become a statistic; rise above the barriers that prevent success. In the end it is what makes accomplishing those difficult goals that much sweeter.

I've realized something very important this year and I believe it applies to anybody who's ever felt that they have to give up on their goal or replace it with a lesser desire. Life is too short to settle for the lesser prize, you get one shot to enjoy it and allow others to benefit from it. Even if it doesn't come instantly or if it doesn't seem like it will come in twenty years, don't give up because giving up altogether is the same as losing. A loss is perfectly fine in the competitive sense but when it comes to your own life it's not something you should let yourself live with, considering all it takes is a little determination to turn that loss or minor defeat into an amazing accomplishment.

So, in regards to unrealistic goals, the proof of existence lies within each individual person, as the only one who can disprove the notion is a person who is not willing to give up on themselves or the opportunity to better the society around them.

The Deaflympics

By Cole Sanderson

My name is Cole Sanderson. I was Terry Fox Humanitarian Award winner in 2006. I recently represented Team Canada beach volleyball for Deaflympics in Taipei, Taiwan. It was life-changing experience that I'd like to share with you.

I have been playing beach volleyball since I was 15 years old. I have always played with hearing partners and competed in hearing competitions throughout Canada and a few in the US. For Deaflympics you must play with someone with a hearing loss of 50 db. So, I played with Ian Molenaar, who is hard of hearing. He depends on his hearing aids and he talks to communicate. He grew up in the hearing world and attended a hearing school. I am different than him and have had different experiences growing up. I grew up in a deaf world, interacting with my parents and one sister in sign language. I went to an elementary school that has a deaf program and all my deaf friends went there as well. In high school I went to the BC School for the Deaf, which is at Burnaby South Secondary, it's a deaf program for deaf students within a hearing school. In grade 10, I decided to change my life experience and go to a hearing school in my local area, Semiahmoo Secondary School in White Rock. For the first year, I was the only deaf student in the school, and then the next year, two friends, Mari and Brian, joined me. The main reason why I moved to Semiahmoo Secondary School was because I am very involved in sports and it would be easier for me to be involved when I attended a local school than staying late after school for practice and etc. and commuting 1 hour each way daily to get to school and then later to get to practice.

This past summer I trained with Ian a great deal to prepare for Deaflympics in September. It was a different experience playing with a hard of hearing partner who doesn't know sign. I had to try to communicate with him, the same way that I do with a hearing partner, but it was made much more difficult because Ian couldn't use his hearing aids in competition and knew no sign language. I had to finger spell everything out in alphabet sign language for him to understand what I was saying. My experience with hearing partners is they learn sign language quickly once paired with me; this wasn't the case with Ian.

Taipei was one of my best lifetime experiences. I now understand SO much more about the worlds deaf sports. It was my first Deaflympics. When I was 16 years old, I was supposed to go to Melbourne in 2005 to compete in beach volleyball for Canada, but my partner had to drop last minute so I was not able to attend.

Team Canada was a pretty small team; mostly bowlers, individual sports members, and most of them were much older. So, I spent most of my time at the Deaflympics socializing with all other deaf athletes from all over the world. The sign languages are not the same! I had to use Universal Sign Language to communicate with other deaf athletes from throughout the world. I felt very connected with every deaf athlete at the Deaflympics. I was able to communicate with anyone I wanted to. I didn't have any problem feeling left out or feeling a communication problem while in Taipei. I have made a lot of new friends from all over the world. I still keep touch with some of them and will see some of them again in Deaf World Beach Volleyball Championship in Israel in 2010.

I also have learned a lot from many different deaf athletes' point of view about how sports are integrated into their lives. There are some countries that came just to socialize, compete, and have a good time. But some countries are there to win! Seriously! They are professional athletes and their governments will pay them BIG BUCKETS of gold nuggets to make their life VERY comfortable after they win medals at the Deaflympics. Some governments even buy their athletes houses, some get paid monthly for life; including their children. That is, if they win medals, and they are rewarded more if they win a gold medal! But of course, even professional athletes come to socialize and have a good time. Because this is our only our opportunity, once every four years, to be with people that have experienced the same kinds of things you have, it creates strong, strong bonds between us all. Deaflympics is an amazing experience where deaf people can socialize with anyone and have no restriction on their communication.

The organization of the Deaflympics in Taipei was overwhelmingly amazing! I was totally treated like a celebrity, like a famous athlete, for 2 weeks in Taipei. There were so many advertisements of the Deaflympics everywhere in Taipei, including on the video in the airplane before we touched down in Taipei. The ads and promotional material were in the airport, wrapped onto buildings, on the streets and even on all the buses. Deaflympics was everywhere you went! The people in Taipei were aware of Deaflympics and it was on the front page of the newspaper everyday. Even live on TV everyday. The Opening Ceremony was very amazing, crammed full of thousands of people (sold out well in advance), the performance was unbelievable – just so amazing and stunning! There were so many fireworks during the ceremony – not just inside the stadium, but throughout the city at the same time, even on the 101 Tower: known as second tallest building in the world. When the torch was lit in the stadium (in a super cool way), five buildings in Taipei, miles away, also burst with

fireworks – one of them was up the entire 101 Tower, it was very neat! Also the Closing Ceremony was wonderful and memorable. It was a banquet for 5,000 athletes seated on the field, entertained by some great entertainment and of course, more fireworks.

The refs on the beach for beach the volleyball competition were very ORGANIZED! It was like a professional beach volleyball event! The sand was cleaned after every timeout and the refereeing was elite quality. Also there were lots of towels and water provided. And even ball people to give you a ball during the games. Sometimes there were cameras to show the live game online or on TV and they had a “jumbo-tron” showing the game behind the stands and doing replays while we were competing! There were lots of people to keep the stats to put online so the world would be aware of what happened everyday during Deaflympics.

Overall we did pretty well in the tournament. I finished 2nd in the pool of five, lost to the Ukraine B team, 21-17, 22-20! They were very close games! They were very young and very athletic and are professional athletes (meaning they live and breathe volleyball all year and get paid well for results)! I made it into the top 16 playoffs and played Poland the first game and won, then unfortunately in quarters, the draw was not what I hoped, I had to play the best team in the world, the Ukraine A team, they were AMAZING! They won gold Deaflympics and repeated it again this time by beating the USA. I finished tied for 5th out of 21 teams, which I was very proud of.

I am really looking forward for Deaf World Championships in Israel; I will be able to see all my friends that I met in Taipei. Also I am already very excited for next Deaflympics in Athens, Greece in 2013!



A Time to Graduate...

By Jessica Roy

It feels like the past four years of my life at Dalhousie University have flown by. I can still remember moving into residence, my first day of classes and meeting the all the people that I am still great friends with to this day. I have had my lowest of days and best of days here at Dalhousie, all the while trying to figure who I am as a person and what I wanted to do with my life. I have been blessed to have met some incredible people who have made huge impacts on my life. I have learned so much over the past four years and I thought I would share eight key things I think helped me through everything

1. The big decisions in life: I have found that it is just as important to discover the things you don't want to do after University as it is to find the things you do want to do. It is scary to think the next choices I am going to make will be setting me on path towards my career. I am embracing the nervousness and the unknown of it all but I know it will all work out in the end. I just have to constantly work on making sure I am making the right decisions for ME and no one else. I have to make sure I am passionate about what I am doing because I want to love what I do.

2. Patience: I learned it is just as important that you have patience with yourself, not just others. Know your limits and know that it is not a sign of weakness to ask for help. You aren't always going to be the best and it is about your best, not anyone else. There are going to be challenges, but face them head on and you can get through anything. Furthermore, with respect to patience with other people, I tried to always put myself in other people's situations so I could find a way to best help them and to be able to relate to what they are going through.

3. Healthy body healthy mind: The Terry Fox Humanitarian Award Program has always put emphasis on healthy lifestyle choices and I have always tried to mimic that in my life as well. Keeping my body healthy helps to clear my mind. Having an active lifestyle is my way of relieving stress and I will always keep that a part of my life. I feel good when I take care of myself and I will continue to put self-care on my priority list.

4. See the positives: Over the past 4 years of my university degree at Dalhousie, I have learned to see the positive in everything. When you seek to see the positive, situations and people will surprise you. Of

course things go wrong but take those experiences and learn from them. I have learned in my first year to give people more than just a first interaction, giving them the benefit of a doubt that maybe that there may be other things on their mind. Being positive leads to positive things, I have experienced that first hand.

5. The importance of service: I love the message that the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award Program sends to youth and to those who have the award, that it is important to give of yourself to others. It makes you feel so good inside when you do it and I always found that through volunteer, it really gave me perspective on what things in life are really important. For example, if I had a test where I did not meet my goal set and sometimes I would forget how insignificant that test really is in the big picture of life. Of course, it is important to do your best but recognize that you will never remember those marks but you will remember the wonderful connections you made through helping people.

6. Take advantage of every opportunity: I never considered myself a shy or timid person but the Terry Fox award gave me the strength and courage to break out of my shell and try everything in front of me. I have tried to squeeze every bit out of my Dalhousie University and because of that I have met so many incredible people and have done so many things beyond my academics. The list of things I do on campus is long but the list of things I have tried is longer. I think it is when you put yourself outside of your comfort zone that you really learn the most about yourself.

7. Kindness goes a long way: I have consciously made an effort to treat everyone I meet with kindness and respect. I have learned by doing that, you grow as a person. Everyone deserves your respect whether you like them or not and it is important to keep your integrity all the while. Integrity is important because the words you say and the actions you do, once done, cannot be taken back. Treat others how you would like to be treated. Along with kindness comes gratitude. Even the smallest things, be sure to thank people for their efforts. It makes them feel good about themselves and continue to do things for others. You can never say thank you enough.

8. Surround yourself with people that lift you up: I learned that it is important that you surround yourself with people that support you and are positive influences. I learned a long time ago that it isn't necessarily about the quantity of friends you have, it is about the quality of friends/people you have around you. Cut people out of your life that bring you down or

do not celebrate who you are. You will feel so much better and you will save so much energy by not being negative.

I hope the things I have learned will prove helpful to those who are in the same situation I am. I am grateful for the experiences I have had and I am excited for the new experiences to come. Words cannot express my gratitude for the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award Program; I couldn't picture my life's path without it.

What Camp Means to Me...

By Matthew Sheriko

Camp Triumph is a project that both inspires and humbles me. It has given me an opportunity to reach out to a special group within the maritime community. I'm motivated to continue developing this camp when I see the transformation in children going from shy to enthusiastic by the end of their week at camp. It isn't just from the kids' experience of getting familiar with their new surroundings, but it also comes from the feeling that they are among people that understand what they are going through. I can relate to these kids because I grew up with parents who suffered from chronic illness as they do.

Camp Triumph is a residential summer camp solely for children with a family member suffering from a chronic illness or disability. The campers are between the ages of seven and 17 and come from across the Maritimes. Campers attend free of cost.

The first camp was held in August 2005. That week saw the first 40 campers to ever call Camp Triumph "their camp." Many of those first campers have continued to come to camp each year since. For each of the next two years we had 58 campers. This past summer the camp grew from one week in August to three weeks and a leadership camp accommodating a total of 176 children.

My family had the idea to start this camp, particularly my oldest brother Jordan and my mother Kathi. They thought of the idea after hearing about a special camp that was intended for the loved ones of those who lost someone to illness. They began to think of our own situation and the impact chronic illness has on all family members. After researching they concluded that a camp specifically for the family members of those who are ill didn't exist. They knew first hand that it was a group that needed to be acknowledged and supported.

Five months before I was born my father was diagnosed with a brain tumor. The initial feelings of the doctors in Halifax were of a poor outlook for survival. They gave

him two months. He beat the odds and continued to live for almost 18 more years, passing away August 30, 2007, just before I was to leave for my first year of university.

My brothers and I grew up with a sick father. We would try our best to entertain ourselves during the long waits in the waiting rooms as our mother and father would be off somewhere at the Cancer Centre. We learned how to amuse ourselves and rely on each other. We learned to cope with the long absences of our parents while they sought treatment in different provinces. We learned to accept the uncertainty of terminal illness and all the stress that it brings. The adversity we faced also had a positive side as it made me more mature with an appreciation, respect and value for life and all its opportunities.

The actual development of the camp began just before my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Through her treatment and time in the hospital, she and my brother worked to develop their ideas into a reality. Mom fought the cancer and came through the other side ready to make a difference in other peoples lives.

Camp Triumphs goal remains: to provide "an opportunity for children dealing with a family member who has a chronic illness to come together in an environment of support and understanding and to develop a positive outlook on their circumstance."

Camp Triumph doesn't stop growing. We started out in a former amusement park on the North Shore of PEI. We used commercial tents (often used for concerts or weddings) as bunk houses and a replica of the Columbia Space Shuttle as an indoor space. We moved on to rent a church camp on the South Shore of the island and then to two years of renting a Scout camp also on the South Shore of PEI.

We have made Camp Triumph a place where these kids can come and be with others who understand their circumstances, peers who experience the same range of emotions and internal conflict, peers who worry about their sick family member on top of the regular worries of a regular kid.

Camp Triumph is the result of making something positive out of something negative. When I see all the different circumstances of each camper, I know that camp is a respite for them. Some have dying parents, some with very high needs siblings, some have a family member with illness and cope with poverty as well. But, they can always count on camp to be there for them. Just acknowledging their mixed emotions and the impact that their circumstances have on them is helpful. We are continually honoured by the feedback we get from the

kids and parents. One parent whose kids have come to camp all four years recently wrote, "I look at my boys and I am both saddened and proud. Due to the chronic illness in our family they are often expected to do more, do without, or make do...It gives them a chance to be with others who understand, or just be absent from it all for a short time. At the same time these wonderful positive role models as counselors show these kids they can do anything."

I was a 16-year-old counselor in the first year of camp, only a year older than a few of the campers. Now after the fourth year of camp I am the Head Counsellor and still one of the younger members of the staff. Taking on such a leadership role all four years, especially this past year, has made me a much better person. I have learned perseverance through adversity, empathy, patience and confidence in my own ability to cope with challenges.

Camp has always been a place where I can be myself. I know the same is true of others. It's a place to be silly and a place to be serious. I try to be the best role model I can be, staying conscious of how I present myself. All the kids look up to the counselors and therefore I have to show them the kind of person I am.

I greatly value the bonds I have made at camp with the other staff. Nowhere is it easier to feel valued by others than at Camp Triumph. The bonds we make as a staff are strong for years. The bonds we make through our experience at camp transcends age, personalities and backgrounds. For example, when I'm at camp I feel like I have a third brother, (in addition to the two I actually have). Fraser Ash has been there since day one, helping make the camp what it is today. He's one person I often look to for help and another opinion. When I am stressed about something to do with camp, he helps me work through it. That is a bond that I have created through camp. There are many others that come alive through the course of the camp.

Also, it is evident that all staff who share the experience of camp, have a common belief in its values and cause.

Through camp, I have also strengthened the friendships with my two older brothers. We have worked towards the goals of camp together. Family is important to us and has always helped us get through the hard times. I have a connection with my brothers that allows us mutual support in all aspects of our lives beyond anything our friends could offer.

The most important part of camp for me is helping others get through tough times by using my experiences. I know what these kids are going through and can relate to their feelings. They don't know if they're allowed to have fun. They have a sick family member at home so they are constantly worrying about them. Sometimes they don't understand the situation and they live with constant uncertainty. I try to help them see that camp is a place where they come to be regular kids. "It's time to have fun," I tell them. Then send them to kayaking or swimming or arts and crafts or archery or even sandcastle making so that they can give themselves permission to have fun.

Many of our campers have lost a parent over the years. I didn't know how to fully relate to this until my father lost his battle with cancer. Like many of the campers, I lost my dad bit by bit. I have dealt with having a sick father my entire life. His health slowly deteriorated as time passed. He kept getting worse, in that he couldn't drive, then he couldn't walk without a walker, then he couldn't walk at all. Because he had brain cancer, he also lost his ability to process information effectively, interact appropriately, and parent. I have only faint memories of having a normal father. One that drives you to school and plays street hockey with you. I never really knew the intelligent, competent, compassionate, witty man that my mother says was my father.

For the last three years of his life he was either at home receiving care or in and out of hospitals and nursing homes. This was extremely hard on the family. His final destination was a nursing home 20 minutes from home where he died a week after our third camp and a day before I was heading off to start school at St. Thomas.

There are few events that leave me with such an all encompassing feeling of withdrawal when it is finished. Camp Triumph is one of them. Until someone experiences it for themselves they can never truly understand the way it makes you feel. The excitement and enthusiasm of the kids is infectious. A little bit of my inner fun-seeking child comes out when I am there. I get to interact with a wide range of kids who each bring something unique. I have a self-satisfied feeling of accomplishment and many memories of special moments.

“The World is All Gates, All Opportunities”

By Virginia Arsenault

It all started when I was a small child, lying on the freshly painted helicopter pad of the local hospital. As I gazed at a brilliant summer sky, a bird caught my eye as it dove at a breakneck pace toward the ground. Excitedly, I watched it hurtle closer and closer until it gracefully landed in the shade of some nearby trees. At that moment I began to realize how amazing it would feel to fly and to be so free. But my reverie was cut short by a series of harsh beeps, emitted by a machine hooked up to my arm. Grudgingly, I trudged back inside, my IV pole in tow, already dreaming of the next time I would be outside.

As the years passed, the dreams never went away. I dreamt of being the first person on Mars, summiting Mount Everest and of course, flying. I also grew increasingly tired of people telling me that it would be impossible for me to become an astronaut with a failed kidney, that I would never survive the high altitude of the Himalayas and that humans cannot possibly fly. But in the summer of 2006, I decided to achieve one of my biggest dreams, the dream that had started it all. I was going to skydive. I was going to fly!

When I finally arrived at the airfield, everything was surreal. But after a brief lesson, my instructor and I headed toward the tarmac to board our plane. Sitting on the floor, I looked outside the window as the aircraft took off and gained altitude. With each passing second, the world beneath us seemed to shrink away until the fields looked like stamps and the cars were like tiny ants. The air grew steadily colder and thinner as we climbed higher into the sky and soon we had reached our target altitude. As my instructor clipped our harnesses together and opened the hatch, my heart was thumping wildly in my chest and adrenaline coursed madly through my veins. Slowly I placed my shaking foot on the landing gear and my hand on the wing and before I knew what was happening, we had begun our harrowing descent back to earth. Surprisingly, it didn't feel like falling; it felt like flying. As a matter of fact, the feeling is akin to sticking your hand out the window while driving on the highway, except on your entire body. Less than a minute later our freefall was over and the parachute had been deployed. I had never felt so alive in my life.

While we lazily floated toward the landing zone, an immense feeling of peace swept over me as I realized that by achieving one of my biggest dreams, I had

overcome one of my biggest fears. I had been afraid that everyone who had told me that I would never accomplish my ambitions in life were telling the truth. When my feet touched the ground, tears welled in my eyes as it finally hit me that I could achieve anything I aspired to in life if I put my whole heart into it.

Three years have passed since that day and I've now focused my attention on the pinnacle of my dreams: the summit of Mount Everest. By going on an expedition to Island Peak in the Himalayas next year, I'll hopefully be one step closer to standing on Earth's highest peak. And although people still give me disbelieving looks when I tell them my plans, I'll continue to fight until the day I reach the top of the world.

To all of you that have big aspirations for the future, whatever they may be, I implore that you follow your heart and ignore all the naysayers who want nothing more than to crush your dreams. Follow the wise words of Ralph Waldo Emerson who wrote: “We are all inventors, each sailing out on a voyage of discovery, guided each by a private chart, of which there is no duplicate. The world is all gates, all opportunities.”



Sharon

By Shawna Stone

In my Writing by Women class this past semester, we were asked to write a creative piece about the special women in our lives as an end of term project. Now I can write essays with the best of them, but creative writing has never been my strong point. However, my life has been blessed with many exceptional women- my sisters, my adoptive mother, my friends- so I decided to give it a shot. And when I sat down and thought about it, the one who stands out to me, and to whom I owe the most, is my biological mother, Sharon Anne Stone. She passed away from ovarian cancer in October of 1988; however, before she did, she made sure my 5-year-old sister and I were given a loving home with our adoptive parents. Not only did she give us life, but she helped to give us a wonderful childhood- I couldn't have asked for better parents than the ones she chose for us. So, if you can get past my lack of creative ability, this poem is for her, and for the connection I have always felt with my "Mommy Sharon in Heaven".

Sharon.
Shawna.
Sharing Sharon,
Sharing with Shawna.
Sharing her body with Shawna.
Allowing the bundle of cells that would become
Shawna
(For no particular reason)
to grow safely within her,
to be one with her.
One life's blood and tissue sustaining two beings,
Briefly.
Then thrusting her out from a soft world, of hushed,
rhythmic, intimacy,
To a world of
assaulted senses
A complicated world of
Crazy
Chaos
That is nevertheless precious in its brokenness.
Then the one becomes two;
But not really.
The body they shared is now just Sharon's,
The swelling cells have become Shawna, a separate
piece of astonishing, but fragile (astonishingly fragile?)
organic matter.
But the intimacy cannot be severed.
These two clay beings
owe one another their lives

in an infinitely intricate web of favours and debts and
shared experiences that can never truly be separated
by mere physicality.
And when the cells that make up Sharon, like the
broken world of which they are part, become corrupt,
uncontrollably dividing dividing dividing
Destroy her from the inside out
at the smallest structure of biology
As disease spreads from the womb that once gently
cradled life,
Still the intimacy remains.
The division of the One into Two is never complete at
the level of the soul,
Which, unhindered by the laws of physics,
rises above this broken world.
The half that once dwelt in the cluster of cells called
Sharon
looks down at the other half,
Which resides for a time in a baby girl,
named Shawna for no particular reason,
who grows up confident that Everyone has
a Mommy Sharon in Heaven,
the lovely, quiet Other Half with whom You once shared
a body,
and a Mama and Papa to Love You on Earth.

Love

Submitted by Jamie Frazier

LOVE is the stuff that binds us to one another. Without
it we are truly alone. It is inherently political, but
ironically, you rarely hear the word pass through the lips
of our leaders or uttered in the halls of our government.
Love can be readily produced and distributed to
everyone. It is inexpensive, costing only time and
understanding. But its returns are immeasurable. And it
is rare now. It is scarce. It has become a tainted word.
A silly word. A flaky word. Not a serious word. Not a
serious notion. Its meaning has been slowly and subtly
eroded. Like other once noble words- liberal, humanist,
statesman, teacher, artist, worker, child- it has become
marginalized. But these are not weak words. They are
strong. They are words that can lift us and challenge us
and help us cross the wide and dangerous road that
separates us from where we are and where we can be.

-Unknown

June 14th

By Katie Charbonneau

It's been almost four years since I really woke up.
I was being told in an abrupt way to wake up and look at my life.

Look at who I was and what I had the potential to become.
I had to choose.
I had to choose to give up or fight.

I chose to fight.

And that's what I have been doing every day since.

I fight.

I fight to overcome obstacles.
I fight through every day.
I fight through the rough times.
I fight through my emotions.
I fight through the pain.

These four years have been the hardest of my entire life.

I've lost many things.
I've lost superficial things.
I've lost material things.
Those things are easy to lose.

The things that are the hardest to lose . . . are people.

I've lost people who didn't mean as much as I thought they did.
I've lost people who will forever regret losing me.
I've lost people I loved and people who loved me.

I've lost a lot.

But somewhere through my heartache and pain, I found something.
I found myself.

I found the person I always wanted to be.
On top of that, I found that for everything I've lost, I gained more.

I've found what family is all about.
I've found out who my friends are.
I found out what friends are for.

Having found all that, I've found that I don't need anything more.

I've found happiness.

And for that, I'm thankful.

Thank you for today.

Pavlova

Submitted by Laura Vollet

4 egg whites, room temperature
1 tsp. cream of tartar
1 c. sugar
1 heaping tsp. cornstarch
2 tsp. malt vinegar
1 tsp. vanilla
2 tsp. water
Fresh whipping cream
Fresh fruit

Beat egg whites and cream of tartar with an electric beater until peaks form and the mixture is very stiff. Add half the sugar and beat until dissolved and the mixture is stiff again. Repeat with the remaining sugar until stiff. Add cornstarch, malt vinegar, vanilla and water and beat a final time until stiff. Pour the mixture onto a flat well-greased non-stick oven tray. Pile it high and do not attempt to spread the mixture over the pan, it will do this as it cools. Bake for 40 minutes at 285°F. Then turn the oven off but do not open the door until the Pavlova is completely cooled. Wait until just before serving to top it with whipping cream and any fruit or other toppings you can think of.

I hope you enjoy this very sweet dessert!



The Bailer

By Adam Legge

From my window I could see that off in the hills, the foliage waved with a new yellow tinge. The prior nights frost warned of an early fall. By now though, the sun had burnt off the low clouds in the field.

The decade-old bailer and I woke at the same time. I wasn't surprised to hear my father start the tractor, drive into the rye, and engage the gears. Such an early frost called for an early final cut. I turned over in my bed to glance at my old analog clock and, though my eyes were still blurry from sleep, the angle of the hands told me it was around 9:10.

Because it was Labour Day, the final day before the start of the term, I refused to spend it in bed. With the whir of the bailer in the background, I knew that I'd risk being lulled back to sleep by staying in bed any longer. I pulled myself up and walked closer to the window. To my relief, no frost endured the dawn, but the forest, lawn, and field shimmered in heavy dew. The wind wasn't strong; just enough to bend the rye before it gently rebounded. Dad was bailing the west field, the portion on the far side of the brook. I'd probably do the east-side after lunch.

I walked down the stairs and poured myself some tea. The kettle was still hot from my father's breakfast fifteen minutes earlier. I sat in the bright, east-facing kitchen and drank it slowly while the radio mumbled behind me. The weeping birch centred in the lawn still held its deep green hue. It slipped slowly out of focus and gazed blankly for a while out the window. After a while, I became aware of the smooth folk ballad that played on the AM radio over my shoulder.

But my peace was short-lived.

"Bang bang!" squealed my five-year-old assailant from under the table. My remaining tea splashed evenly across my clean, white shirt and my knees slammed the bottom of the table. For a second, I wondered if he'd actually shot me.

My brother scampered out from under the table and giggled maniacally, his index finger still pointed at my chest. Then, a little perturbed, Ben whined, "Hey, you gotta be dead! Shut your eyes and stuff!"

After I assured myself that I hadn't literally died of fright and once my heart regained a normal rhythm, I complied. "Is this good?"

"Bang, bang!"

I miraculously sprang back to life. "Hey! Why are you still shooting?"

"Cause," he said, rolling his eyes as if I were the five-year-old, "dead guys don't talk."

"Oh, sorry," I said and reassumed the "dead guy" role.

I poured Ben some fruit loops and watched as he managed to get the better part of them in his mouth. He would start school the next day. I dreaded September for him as much as for me. I knew that tomorrow he wouldn't be a little kid anymore. He'd be introduced to all kinds of things at school: math, science, reading, bad words, bad attitudes, bad kids. He'd probably get some new friends to replace me as his best pal. He'd sprout a few feet and a moustache before I knew it. I savoured the whole summer knowing that today was coming. I turned my attention to the window again and, although it was still obviously September, the blue in the sky was a little colder.

I had deliberately skipped breakfast as I planned the night before to walk down and gorge on the flora of blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries along the beach. I rose quietly and counted how many steps I could take before . . .

"Hey?! Where are you going?" asked Ben, his head tilted inquisitively.

I smiled and continued walking away. Before I could reply I heard him jump down from the chair to follow, sending a torrent of fruit loops from his lap onto the floor. "For a walk," I said coolly.

"C'I come?!" he said. Without waiting for an answer he dashed past me and collected his Bob the Builder rubber-boots. I pushed on my shoes, slipped on a coat, and returned to the closet for Ben's jacket. By this time, he had a single boot halfway on the wrong foot.

The tractor was well in the distance by now. Ben and I walked hand-in-hand down the barn road. Every few steps he'd look up at me, squinting his eyes, tilting his head and eagerly ask a puzzling question about whatever caught his interest.

"How come the trees don't stay green?"

I responded just as eagerly, "Well ya see, the most of light is green or yellow. So the leaves have something like green paint in them called 'chlorophyll A'."

He glanced up again, shifting the tilt of his head the other way.

"See, the tree has other colours of paint in them, too, like orange carotenoids and yellow chlorophyll B. See, when the trees get--"

"Bobbb the Builderrr!" Ben sang loudly. I had never expected to finish my answer. He'd probably forgotten the question by now, anyway. We took a right into the east field. The path to the beach was on the other side. Each movement through the stalks sent a cascade of dew down over us and the sunlight diffracted through the rye to turn everything golden.

Ben loved walking through the field just before a cut, when it was at its tallest. The rye grew a few inches over my own head, meaning he was dwarfed by even the smallest stalk. The tractor buzzed on, still at the other side of the field.

He was much better at weaving through the grass than I was. My long, clumsy strides made it impossible to take more than a few steps in straight line. Ben, with his short legs and bright-yellow rubber boots could navigate efficiently through the field. He was always a few paces ahead of me, leaning slightly forward to pull me on. Being tugged by my three-foot-tall guide, my nostrils were penetrated regularly by the tips of the rye. I stumbled on after him.

"Hey!" he shouted back as if I was twenty feet behind, "How come the sky doesn't like green?"

"What do you mean?" I responded while taking a stem in the eye.

"Well, it's blue all the time. How come that?" Ben said, his head tilted directly up, staring into the sky. I clued into his question. It occurred to me that, from his miniature stance, he could only see the sky and the blades of grass that blocked the view of the beach. I anticipated a question about the rye next.

"Well ya see," I began, "there's all kinds of different colours of light. The sky only lets some of it directly through. It's called Raleigh scattering. Ya see, the sun shoots out all kinds of light and--"

Ben spun around, "The sun can shoot?! Bang bang!"

Typically, I'd win a game of quick draw. The few times I lost, however, I wasn't a good sport.

"Hey, I wasn't ready!"

Through his giggling, Ben managed, "Too late, you're dead already! Bang bang!"

"I'll give you 'bang bang'." I said playfully and made a strong stomp towards him, signalling that he'd better start running. Ben knew this signal well enough; he was ten feet away before I started my pursuit. He ran nimbly through the grass, his semi-automatic finger and outstretched arm behind him. Trailing behind, I wasn't nearly as graceful. Twenty feet into the chase, I had inhaled more rye than there were berries on the beach.

"When I catch you, I'm gonna pound the snot outta ya!" I threatened.

Ben's retort consisted of giggles, punctuated by more gunshots. I was having a hard time keep pace in the soaking grass. Heavily-winded, I made a final push to catch up before I'd concede. Suddenly, I burst out of the grass and, feeling as if I had overshot the next step on a staircase, one foot plunged below me into the cool brook that interrupted the rye. Without losing pace, I had followed Ben into the west field. He squealed with delight after splashing through the water.

"Now look, my shoes are all wet! That's it! You're toast now!" I yelled ahead.

Ben's reply was accompanied by the roar of the bailer. As if one of his bullets had hit my intestines, I was drowned in a feeling of nausea. We cleared the brook. We were running through the west-side. The final cut. The bailer.

I had heard stories of rabbits caught in the path of a tractor's intake. After it passed, the only sign of the animal would be a fine, red mulch spread throughout the bail. Gruesome frames passed through my head. I accelerated.

"Ben! Ben, stop! Dad's running the bailer! Ben!" The deafening din of the machine overpowered my warning. I would have to catch him. In the rye, it was impossible for me to reach full stride. I held my forearms in front of my face to block the blades of glass and continued to yell after him, though I knew it wouldn't help. The roar of the tractor continued to crescendo.

I was gaining on him. All I needed was a hand on his shoulder to pull him back. With a few of the longest strides I could muster, I began to extend my arm. Each revolution of the tractor's engine was now audible, meaning we must be within ten yards. Every tendon of my anatomy became devoted to extending my reach another inch. Just as my fingertips brushed the Tonka truck on the back of his well-worn shirt, I tripped and fell on my face in the grass.

I froze, still on the ground, waiting to hear something like a stone shot through a snowblower, waiting to hear my father disengage the gears to investigate, but the only sound was my own heavy breathing and the sound of the bailer shrinking with distance.

After a few seconds, I rose to my feet and cautiously called, "Ben? You alright?"

Silence. I took a few paces forward and peered passively out from the rye. There was no sign of blood, but also no sign of Ben. Stepped out into the fresh cut grass and looked north to see my father driving away. My breathing had slowed and I sniffed the sweet organic smell of the soil and rye. The eerie calm kept my worst fear at the front of my mind and with every second, I became more and more distressed.

Hit in the back of the knees by a charging Ben, I collapsed immediately. I would have shouted with fright had there been air in my lungs. He leapt to his feet and pranced victory laps around my limp body.

"Come on I wanna go throw some rocks at the beach and I'll throw'em out far in the water and stuff!" Ben blurted with little regard for punctuation.

I rose silently, speckled with pieces of damp mulch, took Ben's hand, and set a course for the shore.

“What if the--” Ben looked up and changed his question “How come you’re so white and stuff?”

My answer was delayed. “Well, it’s ‘cause... the, um, normal circulation... um... the colour of people’s skin is...” I paused, “It’s ‘cause I got a fright. Don’t run out so fast like that. You can’t even see where you’re goin’. If you--”

“I’m hungry” said Ben.

Wrestling: Winning a Gold Medal Off the Mat

By Mark Ballon

The sport of wrestling seen at face value is the ability to apply brute force to an opponent with the allotted time of one hundred-eighty seconds in a round. The high pitched whistle locked in the lips of referee that speaks only to signify a violation. It is where medals are won; given to athletes standing first, second and third on a podium. We admire athletes that win such as Danielle Ugali and Carol Huynh, but what about those who do not? What does wrestling have to offer athletes who do not have a winning record? To those who can barely afford to buy wrestling gear, let alone attend costly tournaments? To those who have mental or physical disabilities? Personally speaking, wrestling has given me a lifestyle that I could have not imagined seven years ago.

I was a troubled teenager who was not very involved in school. All I wanted to do was occupy every hour of my day with my friends. When I attended my first wrestling practice, my quest to be involved was fulfilled thereafter. The aspect of wrestling gave me a sense of enjoyment that nothing ever had. But, being an immigrant from an impoverished country, I could not afford to be engaged in wrestling any longer and thought of leaving the sport all together. However, a large number of people in the wrestling community are willing to lend a helping hand. In my case, my high school coach gave me an opportunity to keep wrestling without the worry of the cost involved. This opportunity gave me a chance to grow which affected every aspect of my life positively.

This is a great example that winning medals in wrestling matches and in any other sport is not as important as the positive change within individual

athletes. It is a greater fulfillment when a coach sees that an athlete has had a positive life changing experience in wrestling rather than winning bronze, silver or gold medals.

As a current coach of the John Oliver Secondary School wrestling team I am on cloud nine when I see students who have a very difficult life become very involved in wrestling. I witness the molding of positive attitudes towards life and school. Those who seem to ignore each other due to a classified reputation in school have now created a close bond between a group of team mates. I am in awe when the special needs athletes who have cognitive disabilities continue to learn various techniques in wrestling which they figure out are relevant to their lives. I will continue to coach not because of the status granted but the realization that everyone should be given an opportunity regardless of ability. The result is a positive life altering experience for everyone involved, including me as a coach, because of this wonderful sport.



Mark Ballon coaching wrestling at John Oliver Secondary School.