



VOICE OF HOPE



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Life Adventures Fund *ensuring every child is able to participate*

Each spring we share with you a story of a child waiting to go to camp. This year we were especially struck by the stories of two young children—a brother and sister—who, because of this community's generosity, received their first camp experience last summer.

Noah and Darby. Until last year, neither seven-year old Noah* or his six-year old sister Darby*, had ever been to camp, but that was the least of their challenges in life.

Their mother's chronic drinking and marijuana use caused them to be born with the debilitating effects of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). Their mother was simply repeating the cycle that left her a victim of FAS. If this wasn't enough, Darby and Noah's tiny minds were further damaged through lack of prenatal care, severe neglect, and—unbelievably—starvation. It wasn't long before the young siblings were brought into the care of Family & Children's Services of the Waterloo Region.

Due to the excessive demands of their medical appointments, inability to express 'normal' emotions, and various other high needs, the pair were quickly deemed 'unadoptable'. They had already passed through several care- and foster-homes by the time foster parents Teresa

and Jo Martin* received the Agency's call. The Martins were told they may be the children's last chance. Darby and Noah were only four and five.

In the first six weeks, the Martin's had to deal with the initial adjustment of bringing the children into another new living situation. Their trust in adults had already been irrevocably diminished. Seven windows were broken during uncontrollable tantrums that would break out without warning. Those first few weeks tested the patience of the Martins' who had already housed some of this community's most challenging foster children. But they weren't prepared to give up on Noah and Darby that easily.

They connected the children with therapy programs F&CS makes available to address the unique traumas experienced by abused and neglected children. Darby was enrolled in the Moving Forward program to

deal with trauma she experienced through sexual abuse by two separate offenders. Noah, troubled with reoccurring night terrors from exposure to domestic violence that manifested itself in inappropriate aggression, was enrolled in the Play Therapy Program.

School was another matter. Testing showed that Noah was functioning at a 29-month-old level. Darby wasn't far behind. Within a year, the Martins' determination was already paying off at a level that surprised teachers, workers, even the children themselves. Noah was reading at a level 15 and Darby was in a regular class setting for the first time. *Continued on page 4*



Become a camp sponsor and...

...give a child the chance to discover a skill they didn't know they had!

Call 576-0540 to find out how you can make summer wishes come true.


Life Adventure Campaign "camps out" at **CONESTOGA MALL**

You can help send a child to camp this summer by visiting the Foundation's interactive "CAMP CONESTOGA" camp site at the Conestoga Mall on May 5 to 7.

At the whimsical camp scene, visitors will have the opportunity to see profiles of children waiting to go to camp (we are affectionately calling these "Life Adventure sponsorships"); or purchase a piece of much-needed recreational equipment such as sleeping bags, sunscreen, water wings, towels, back packs, tents, etc.

During the three days, Conestoga Mall merchants have joined in on the fun by organizing free, "camp-inspired" activities of interest to families and children.

Guests can also help support camp experiences through our Life Adventures Raffle and take a chance to win some fantastic prizes from Adventure Guide.

Join us May 5th to 7th and you can help make a difference in the life of a child! 

- ### CAMP ACTIVITIES - Join Us!
- Friday, May 5**
 - 2:00 pm** - A Survival Guide For The First Time Over-night Camper
Greg Dow, Camp McGovern
 - 7:00 pm** - Ghost Stories by Coles
 - Saturday, May 6**
 - 10:00 am** - Kids Stories by Coles
 - 12:00 pm** - Camp - What to Expect & How to Choose the Right One
Greg Dow, Camp McGovern
 - 1:00 pm** - Camp Craft by Scholar's Choice
 - Sunday, May 7**
 - 3:00 pm** - Camp Craft by Scholar's Choice

Thank You! Thank You! THANK YOU!

Thanks to the many individuals and businesses for their generous support of the Adopt -A- Family Holiday Program.

Thanks to all the local retailers who supported the Deck the Walls Campaign, including **A&W, PRICE CHOPPER, SOBEYS, BOSTON PIZZA, GRAND RIVER CREDIT UNION, QUIZNOS AND ENTERPRISE.** And thank you to **ROGERS CABLE AND ST. AMBROSE CATHOLIC SCHOOL**, who won the Roger's Deck the Walls School Challenge. Two hundred students viewed the latest Harry Potter movie.

Thanks to **WALKER EXHAUST, SCHNEIDERS EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, ROGERS CALL CENTRE, IVISION, RONA, U OF W, PURALATOR, BRESLAU PS, THE CO-OPERATORS, TALK OF THE TOWN, WOODLAND PARK CHILDCARE CENTRE** and many individuals who gave new toys over the holiday season.

Thank you to the **K-W ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION** for supporting Muslim families involved with F&CS during their celebration of Eid ul Adha.



Thank you to those who gave **in memory of EMMA RINGROSE and BOYD BELL.**

A special mention goes to **THE BABY DEPOT AND THEIR STAFF** who donated a crib and took up a collection for a mattress, bedding and even started a piggy bank for the baby! The young mother was so grateful for their assistance.

Thanks to all of you who supported the **Foster Family Association Gift Wrapping** station at Cambridge Centre Mall. They raised over \$10,000 this year for the *Fostering Futures Scholarship Award.*

Thanks to the children, parents and staff at the **K-W MONTESSORI SCHOOL** for sewing and stuffing more than 100 Santa Sacks.

Thanks to the children, parents and staff at the **SUNSHINE MONTESSORI SCHOOL** for collecting and wrapping almost 300 hats, mitts and scarves.

Special thanks to the following friends of the Foundation:

Jim Lehman and the Waterloo Knights of Columbus, Columbia Sports Wear, Kitchener Rangers, Waterloo Siskins, Procter and Gamble, Cambridge Towel, Del Pharmaceuticals, and Sun Star Butler.



Life Adventure Cards
April 28 to May 22

Thank you Montana's (Cambridge & Kitchener) for providing Life Adventureship cards to your patrons enabling children from this community an opportunity for an adventure, whether it be day camp, art lessons or sports camp. Please visit Montana's to purchase your Adventureship card -- designed by local artist Sue Wicks—today!



LIFE ADVENTURES DRAW

Adventurous Prizes will include:

- **A LIFE ADVENTURE PACKAGE** Courtesy of Grand Experiences, Paris; *retail \$priceless\$*
- **Royal Robbins - women's hoodie;** *retail \$85 courtesy of the Adventure Guide*
- **Lounge Lizard Plus portable lightweight folding outdoor seat ;** *retail \$40 courtesy of the Adventure Guide*

Visit our **CAMP DISPLAY** at **Conestoga Mall** May 5th-7th to purchase your draw tickets. All money raised will support the **Life Adventures Fund** which helps to ensure abused and neglected children have the chance to expand their horizons, build confidence, life skills, and their

The Magic of Summer Camp

A Tree of Hope Campaign supporter for years, Bob Shantz decided to take his commitment to this community's children one step further in 2003 by joining the F&CS Foundation Board of Directors. Shantz brings with him the same dedication and sound business sense that served him well as a local business owner.

He also brings with him a commitment to ensuring all children have an opportunity to break free from the cycle of abuse or neglect to build successful lives for themselves and their families. Equally important, Shantz feels that children should have the chance to just be kids. One of the simplest ways to accomplish this is through camp.

Raised on a farm and attending a one-room schoolhouse, Shantz can empathize with the

social isolation experienced by children served by Family & Children's Services. During summers, Shantz looked forward to the chance to attend camp with other children his own age. To engage in group activities and crafts, or do things you couldn't do at home—like staying up late to read comics by flashlight, swimming in the rain, or sitting round a campfire under a magnificent sky brimming with stars. Each experience offered Shantz new kids to meet, who, by the end of the week, were fast friends.

Bob's memories of camp are fond ones. And he would like to ensure all children have a chance to engage in these magical childhood moments.

"The children and youth we see pass through our doors are some of the most courageous kids in our community. Their stories

of survival are amazing, heart-warming, and always inspirational," says Shantz. "It is the Foundation's mandate to not only protect these children and help them heal, but also to provide opportunities for them to learn and grow. One of the ways we are able to do this is through our Life Adventures Camp program."

"Camp provides children with the chance to expand their horizons, build confidence, life skills, and their self-esteem," says Foundation Manager, Jim Phillips. "This year we anticipate 300 camp requests. Without this community's support, these requests may go unanswered."

"Every gift, whatever the size, makes a difference in providing magical moments to children who need them most," says Shantz. 🌈



A Young Mother's Story

Hailey knows that the hardest thing about being clean, is coming to grips with your mistakes.

Hailey's childhood, stolen from her through unspeakable acts of sexual abuse by her step-father, came to an irrevocable end when, at the age when many of her classmates were preparing for high school, Hailey found herself living on the streets. It wasn't long before she was introduced to drugs as a means of escape from the cold, harsh realities of being a homeless youth.

Heartbroken and alone at 16, Hailey gave birth to a baby girl. Unable to care even for herself, the baby was apprehended. Alone again, Hailey was drowning in a cocktail of loneliness and guilt; and she had now graduated to using crack cocaine.

Pregnant again, Hailey was wrenched forcefully from her self-induced oblivion by a court-ordered detox. Clean for almost three weeks, Hailey now had to face the guilt of how her actions have affected her unborn child.

She knew one of the greatest gifts she could give her child would be the childhood she never had. With parents who could care for her child's special needs and provide him or her the future she now thought might be possible for herself. For the first time in her life, Hailey had found something special to live for.

She was focused on caring for herself to give her child the best possible start and she made the decision to work with Family & Children's Services to make an adoption plan.

With a plan in place, Hailey began working closely with her worker to counteract the negative impact of her drug addiction. She began to take pride in her achievements, but at the same time, she was remorseful about placing her baby at such risk.

Following the birth of her baby girl, Hailey completed her treatment and found secure living arrangements.



Today she stays in touch with her Pregnancy Counselor, Donna DesGroseilliers, and continues to work towards being the best person she can be. Though she knows it won't happen overnight, she continues to be encouraged by the knowledge that people cared enough to take the time to help her break free from her destructive past.

Today Hailey hopes her children will grow up surrounded by people who support and encourage them to be the best person(s) they can be.

You can help support the Pregnancy Counseling Program by making a gift or purchasing an item from the attached wish list. For more information about the program, contact Donna at (519) 576-1329 ext 3617. 🌈

Mother's Day Wish List

The word Mother can mean different things to different people. At Family & Children's Services we work with mothers every day—birth mothers, adoptive mothers, foster mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters—in many situations. Through our work with moms in the community we have a current need for the following items:

- newborn diapers & baby wipes
- Avent breast pumps and bottles
- Similac Advance formula 0-6m
- new born clothing
- breast pads
- pyjamas & slippers for birth mothers at hospital
- Small things for hospital like lip chap, hand cream, magazines
- disposable camera, frames, scrapbooking supplies
- child proof safety devices
- first aid-kits, band aids
- food vouchers, bus tickets
- gift certificates

Want to make a world of difference? MENTOR A YOUNG MOTHER.

The Pregnancy Counselling Program is looking for caring volunteers to help share a little time with a young mother (age 14 to 18). At any time there are over a dozen new moms or mothers-to-be in the program. Volunteers will be matched one-to-one with a young mother.

"Often times these young women are completely alone during one of the scariest periods in their lives," says Pregnancy Counselor, Donna DesGroseilliers. "Many would benefit greatly from having a volunteer to attend medical appointments with them, encourage them, or to just 'be there'."

You can help a young woman or child in need. Contact Donna at (519) 576-1329 ext 3617 or donna.desgroseilliers@facswaterloo.org today.

UP COMING EVENTS - mark your calendars !

LIFE ADVENTURE CARDS

Montana's Kitchener and Cambridge locations
April 28 - May 22 Buy a Life Adventure card

CAMP CONESTOGA

Conestoga Mall

May 5-7 Visit our camp site at Conestoga Mall and help send kids to camp.

HOT SHOTS STREET HOCKEY

Street Hockey Tournament

June 3-4 Conestoga College For more info. or to register a team contact 576-0540 ext 3294

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Transylvania Club

June 22

KW MULTI-CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Victoria Park, Kitchener

June 24 & June 25 Look for our info booth

TOONEY TUESDAYS

Kitchener City Hall

July 4, 11, 18, 25 Free family fun, 6:30-7:45pm

COUCH & COMPANY GOLF TOURNAMENT

July 15 For more information call 576-1329 ext. 3294

KIDSPARK

Victoria Park, Kitchener

August 19 & August 20 Look for our info booth

AFROFEST

Waterloo Park, Waterloo

September 9 Look for our info booth

FREE 2 B ME YOUTH DAY

August 23

Visit our website to find out more about these events at www.facswaterloo.org

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If that weren't enough, the last report card she brought home was almost entirely filled with A's. The Martins state they always knew it wasn't a lack of intelligence, but a lack of exposure that kept them from making gains academically. The only persons prouder of this amazing accomplishment than the Martins, were the children themselves!

Another obstacle the children faced was their fear of running out of food or being left alone. To address this, the Martins would buy food in bulk and encourage the children to help put it away. To address the children's hoarding habits, the Martins would leave a buffet table filled with snacks such as fruit and granola bars, which the children could see or take at any time.

The fear of being left alone was harder to address. They bought special blankets and stuffed animals for each child to sleep with. They placed family photos beside their beds, which the children find reassuring when they awoke at night. And last summer, with the help of the Foundation's Life Adventures Fund they were able to take the biggest step in the children's development. The Martins were able to find a four-day camp experience that would accommodate the children's very unique physical challenges—lasting reminders of the abuse or neglect they have suffered.

The camp didn't have a lot of bells and whistles—but it was the simple things that stimulated the children. The children revelled in the campfire songs, hot dogs, and swimming. Darby bonded quickly with her counsellors. In fact, when the Martins came to pick them up, Darby was rehearsing to be in her first play! The children's involvement in the camp, and the gains it gave towards their independence, was more than the Martins could have hoped for.

This summer the children are hoping to return to make even more discoveries! **With your help they can.**

The Martins are doing their part to help Noah and Darby break free from the cycle of alcoholism, abuse, and neglect that they were born into. To equip them with the necessary skills and resources to become productive members of our community, and when they are ready, successful parents. **Today, we have the opportunity to do our part.**

We would like to invite **you** to join us in helping to make these gains possible. Would you consider a gift to **The Life Adventures Fund**, which aims to provide children with summer camp experiences, enabling them to expand their horizons, build confidence, life skills, and their self-esteem?

At any time Family & Children's Services has approximately 500 children in our care, and we are working with over 1000 families in the community. Though we receive a small amount of funding for children in care to attend camp, it is simply not enough to fulfill the number of requests put forward by children hoping to attend summer camp, music lessons, sport leagues—**and there is no recreational funding for the children we are involved with in the community.**

Your support of the Life Adventures Fund will ensure the miracle gains being made in the lives of children like Noah and Darby, can continue to happen. 🌈

**Names have been altered to protect the identity of the children.*



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Voice of Hope is published twice a year by F&CS Foundation. We welcome your letters, ideas, and contributions. Please contact: 576-1329 x 3943 if you wish to be removed from our mailing list.

Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$15.

Please make cheques payable to F&CS Foundation.

Yes, I would like to help give a child a Life Adventure!

- \$320 (average cost of camp)
- \$100
- \$50
- \$25
- other \$ _____

I would like to direct my gift to another fund:

<input type="checkbox"/> F&CS Children's Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Fund
<input type="checkbox"/> Better Futures Endowment Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Smile Maker Fund
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Forward Fund (<i>funding the Sexual Abuse Treatment Program</i>)	

- I would like my gift to be made anonymously.
- My employer has a matching gift program & I will inform my Human Resources Department of my gift.

I wish to make a monthly gift of \$15.00 to ensure a child from this community can attend camp this summer. I have enclosed a void cheque or my credit card information.

Method of Payment:

- Please find my cheque enclosed.
- Please charge to my:

VISA	MC	AMEX
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Card #: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____