



Stronghearts NEWS

2010 Fundraising Success

Stronghearts enjoyed a successful and fun year of fundraising with two events— Winter Sport and Fun and Around the Lake for Stronghearts. We raised \$4,120.70. Many thanks to you, the donors, businesses and volunteers. We are most especially grateful to Sandra Pottle from the Pottle Tree Farm for hosting our events again this year and for helping us to remember and honor her husband, Jim, and our son, Seamus.



Carol Bryon and Lauren Simpson get ready to sled at "Winter Sport and Fun" at the Pottle Tree Farm in Perry on February 13th.



Riley Frasier, Siobhan Duffy and Wren Frasier riding 13.5 miles around Boyden Lake for Stronghearts on October 9th.

Stronghearts Donates to Heart Heroes

Stronghearts initiated a new relationship with "Heart Heroes" this year. The mission of Heart Heroes is to create and distribute superhero heart capes to children with congenital heart defects - the Heart Heroes. Started by a group of three moms with children with CHD's, they seek to honor and share each Heart Heroes personal journey, believing that this will have the greatest impact in creating awareness of congenital heart defects. The capes are free to children with CHD's as they have funding to do so. They have agreed to use Stronghearts' funding for children in with CHD's requesting capes in Maine. To order a cape or to read more about the heart heroes go to: heartherocapes.com

Meet Matt Neuhaus



Matt on the climbing wall at Camp Meridian

unique, fun-filled, guided activities allowing the children to realize their own untapped potential.

Matt Neuhaus was one of those campers. He is diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy. Matt says that he has an enlarged heart and that his heart has a hard time pumping blood through his system. Matt just completed surgery to have a pace maker at Boston Children's Hospital.

What Matt loves about Camp Meridian is the chance to safely play sports like Rock climbing, canoeing, basketball and soccer. With medical personnel nearby, he and his parents can trust that he will be okay. Matt also has found friendships that he maintains throughout the year, with other children like himself. The children at Camp Meridian compare scars. His mother (Dorie) shared that one night the children made up ghost stories to the rhythm of a child's heart valve. Camp Meridian also provided an opportunity for Matt's parents to do something alone with their older son for the first time since his diagnosis two and a half years ago. Matt wants very much to return for his third year at Camp Meridian next year.

Stronghearts provides support and supplies for two campers to attend Camp Meridian over Memorial Day weekend in October. Camp Meridian's mission is to provide a challenging adventure of self-discovery through a series of

unique, fun-filled, guided activities allowing the children to realize their own untapped potential.

Help for Kayla York



The needs of Kayla York of Presque Isle Maine came to our attention through an article run by the Bangor Daily News (12/16/10). Kayla is a 3 year-old child diagnosed with CHARGE syndrome, a genetic disorder that can cause multiple birth defects including heart and breathing problems. CHARGE syndrome occurs in about one in every 9,000 to 10,000 births worldwide. In her short life, Kayla has undergone multiple surgeries requiring lengthy trips to Portland for care. Stronghearts was able to support Kayla

and her family by donating to Hands for Children and Families, an organization that was receiving donations for her. Amber York, Kayla's mother wrote, "You don't know how much that's going to help us and it came at the perfect time due to us having to go to Portland on Friday for the weekend for an appointment for Kayla." Kayla's parents both work full-time and have two other children to care for as well.

Stronghearts Pendant

The Stronghearts necklaces and pendants are available for donations of \$200. They are sterling silver and handmade by Brian's cousin, Leo Conalty in Ireland.



Local Support for Families

Stronghearts supports local families caring for children with CHD's as there is a need through the Christ Church of Eastport Deacon fund.

Support for CHD Families in Maine

Stronghearts continues to provide funds to Precious Hearts, a Maine-based support group for families with CHD's. Monies are used towards gift baskets for families that have a child undergoing heart surgery at Maine Medical Center.

Memorial Donations in Loving Memory of:

Mary Metcalf, Jim Pottle, Elizabeth Matera, Dale Sherrard, Elliot Fishbein, Bob Dolan, Caroline Dopyera, Lee and Irene Carroll, Judy McDonald, T.Way McDonald, Dana Bowen, Jr., Philip Clement, Sid and Hazel Bahrt, Dr. James Bates, Leiana Howarth, Moses Holbrook Walker, Jim Neal, John Benvenuti, Seamus Duffy



I have pondered over and over why so many people are drawn to the story of one little seven-year-old girl recovering from an unexpected brain injury. How could the journey through recovery for this young girl from the Midwest and her family inspire people from coast-to-coast to follow her story.

Ashley was born in 2001 with absent pulmonary valve. At the age of three months, she had her first heart repair at Childrens Hospital in Omaha, NE. She went home 2 ½ months later with a trach, and breathing apparatus. For 1 ½ years, her family loved her and watched as her airways grew strong enough that she no longer needed the breathing support or trach. A few years later she received stents via heart catheterization. And finally, in the summer of 2008, she would have her second open-heart surgery to replace the valve implant that does not grow as she grows. Tragedy struck when an air bubble escaped and went to her brain, causing her to suffer a stroke. Her family poured their love and belief into her during a 9-week hospital rehabilitation, and 6-week extensive out-patient daily rehab. Ashley learned to hold her head up, sit on her own, eat, talk, feed herself, walk, write, learn, and become a normal-functioning child once again.

Ashley's family saw this traumatic event as a blessing, a gift, a life changing experience. They readjusted their lives to place more emphasis on family versus careers. Through this experience and the support and friendships they encountered with other CHD families, a nonprofit group called Heart Heroes was founded. The sole purpose of the group is to give Heart Hero Capes to children with CHD in order to give them the courage they need to endure their challenging surgeries and frequent doctor visits. Ashley's family are true testaments to the power of simply *believing that anything is possible*.

Saturday February 12th at the Pottle Tree Farm in Perry Winter Sport and Fun



Skate . .Cross Country Ski. .Ice Fish. .Snow Shoe. .Hike. .Labyrinth. .Sled . .Potluck

No Admittance Fee. Donations support Stronghearts in their effort to support families caring for children with congenital heart defects.

The event is held in honor of Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week and in loving memory of Jim Pottle and Seamus Duffy.

From Rt. 1 in Perry Maine, go 2 1/2 miles down South Meadow Rd. The Pottle Tree Farm is on the right.

Stronghearts is a Perry based foundation established in 2002 by Brian and Sue Duffy in memory of their son Seamus who died of a congenital heart defect, Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome. Stronghearts supports families caring for children with congenital heart defects.



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