

Small hands make a big difference in fight against childhood cancer

Every school day in Canada, ten children are diagnosed with cancer. With every devastating diagnosis hundreds of family members, friends and classmates feel overwhelmed and helpless. However, the Childhood Cancer Foundation Candlelighters Canada (CCF) wants Canadians to know "Small hands can make a big difference" and is challenging Canadians big and small to use their hands to help the more than 10,000 children across Canada currently fighting cancer.

From International Childhood Cancer Day (February 15) to the end of September (Childhood Cancer Awareness Month) the CCF is calling on children, parents, schools, community groups and sports teams to organize "Small Hands" fundraisers in their communities.

"We are trying to spread the word that little grassroots projects can make a significant difference in the fight against childhood cancer," says Mary Lye, Director of Marketing and Communications, CCF, and herself the mother of a childhood cancer survivor. "Our new Small

Hands fundraising campaign was specifically designed for individuals or groups to initiate small, personal fundraising campaigns with goals ranging from \$50 to \$5,000 - that when pooled together make a big difference."

A list of individual and group Small Hands fundraising suggestions can be found at www.smallhands.ca. Popular initiatives include: collecting and donating empty wine and beer bottles, hair cuttings/head shavings, garage sales, accepting donations in lieu of birthday party gifts, dinner parties, barbeques and golf tournaments. Each participating individual or group has an online homepage with their own fundraising thermometer, personal message and area for sponsors to submit encouraging messages.

"Although we have identified a list of fundraising ideas, we are really encouraging people to be creative and to design a fundraiser that is both fun and appropriate for them," says Lye. "Last year, one little girl in Toronto raised more than \$5,000 when she cut her knee length hair to her shoulders. In addition to raising the

money she also donated her hair to make a wig for a child with cancer."

The CCF's Small Hands campaign ensures children with cancer, along with their families, receive the range of support and information programs they require to help them through their cancer journey. In addition, the CCF funds research through the C17 Research Network of Canada's children's hospitals and supports childhood cancer survivors with college/university scholarships to celebrate their second chance at life.

The 2009 Small Hands campaign kicks off on February 15 International Childhood Cancer Day the day people around the world unite to raise awareness of childhood cancer and money towards the fight against it. The campaign will close at the end of September - Childhood Cancer Awareness month.

To register a Small Hands event, to read event planning tips or to donate to a participant, please visit www.smallhands.ca. For more information about the Childhood Cancer Foundation, please visit www.childhoodcancer.ca



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Small Hands - Big Difference

By Jennifer LaCharite

The Childhood Cancer Foundation is launching the Small Hands fundraising campaign this month in recognition of International Childhood Cancer Day on February 15. They are calling upon children, parents, schools, community groups and sports teams to initiate small, personal fundraising efforts, with goals ranging from as little as \$50 to \$5,000.

This is a grassroots effort that could add up to big results for the more than 10,000 children across Canada currently fighting cancer. The campaign will last until the end of September, which is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

Little things like accepting donations in lieu of gifts, organizing tournaments or garage sales and donating the proceeds, or even something as simple as collecting bottles and cans for recycling and donating the refunds is considered a worthy cause that anyone, young or old, can do.

People love it when someone raises money to get their head shaved, particularly if it's their teacher or their boss that's shearing their skull.

Speaking as a proud Aunt for a moment I would like to relay my own story about small hands making a difference. Just over a year and a half ago my now nine year old niece Jayla heard of an organization that accepted donations of human hair to be made into wigs for children with cancer, who could not afford to buy their own.

Without hesitation she decided that she wanted to donate her hair and insisted on chopping off her long, dark locks which were then sealed in an envelope and sent to the company in Manitoba that provided the noble service. I recall that I was extremely impressed but, I'm afraid to admit, could not convince myself to chop off the required eight inches of my own hair. Shamefully, vanity prevailed!

Another niece, Jayla's 12 year



old sister Ashley, recently became team captain of The Tiger's, a group from St. Michael's School that has formed a team for Canadian Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

So you see, even children can get involved in the fight against cancer and it's very appropriate considering that every school day in our country, 10 children are diagnosed with cancer.

A list of fundraising ideas can be viewed at www.smallhands.ca. Please consider giving a donation or your time to a cause, because there really are no small gestures.

