

The
GOLDEN THREAD

Le
FIL D'OR



**The Terry Fox Humanitarian
Award Program Newsletter**

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

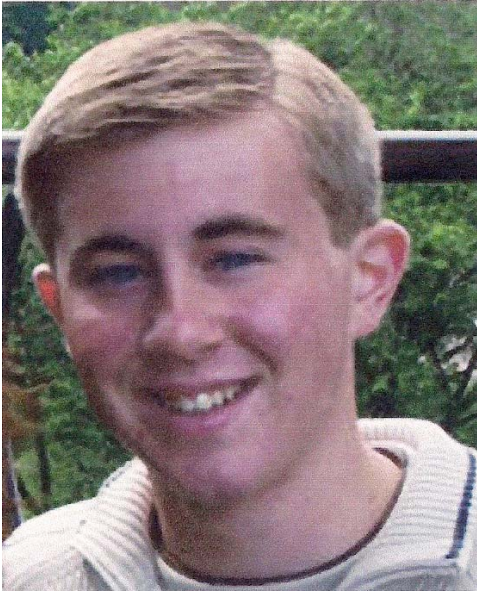
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Cover photo by Kara Warnock

Fall 2010

Congratulations to all of this year's new recipients!



Brian Ferrey
Port Moody, British Columbia



Hayley Pipher
Kelowna, British Columbia



Rowena Cacapit
Vancouver, British Columbia



Alexandra Kulas
Claresholm, AB



Viktor Nnabuihe
Edmonton, Alberta



Erin Bader
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Congratulations to all of this year's new recipients!



Troy Woods
Warren, Manitoba



Sarah Cormier
Collingwood, Ontario



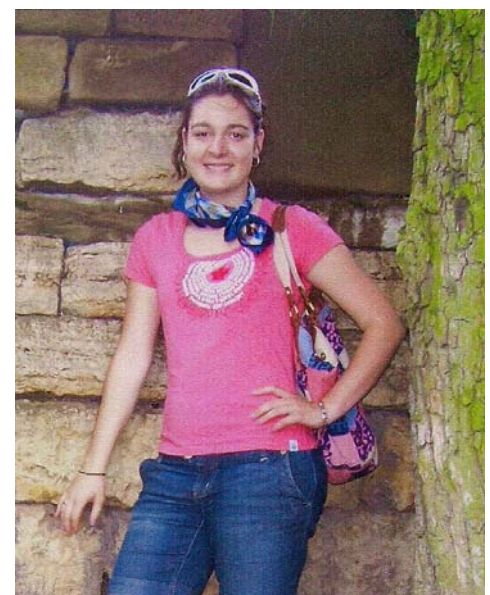
Kaitlyn LaForce
Ancaster, Ontario



Melanie McPherson
Orillia, Ontario

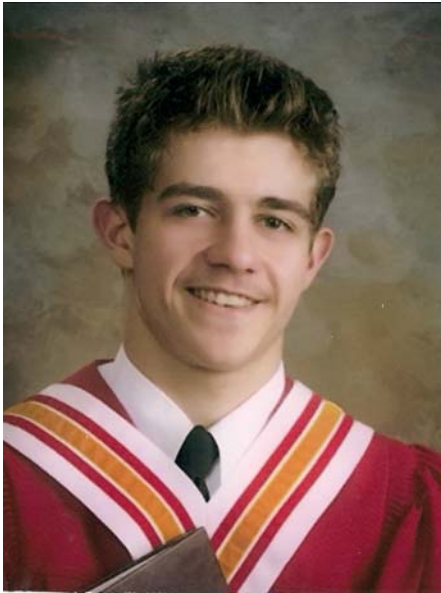


Jenna Cooper
St. Catharine's, Ontario



Christina Marchand
Bothwell, Ontario

Congratulations to all of this year's new recipients!



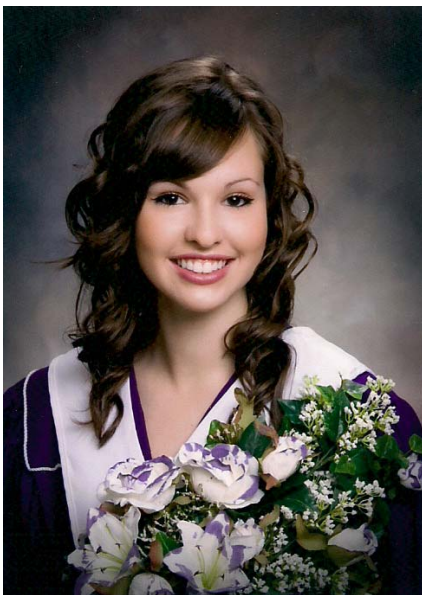
Johnathan Hatzis
Thunder Bay, ON



Christine Lachance
Sherbrooke, Quebec



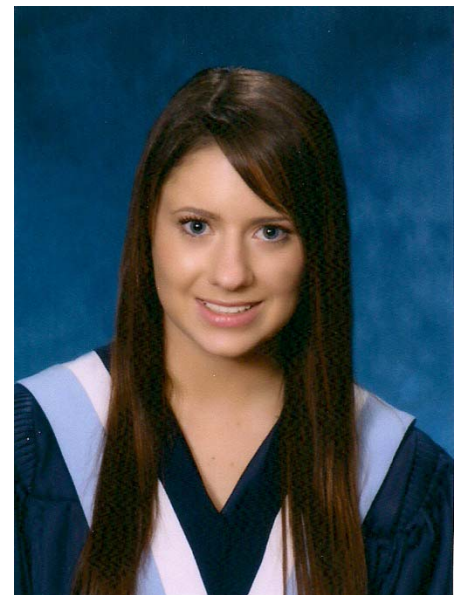
Natasha Caminsky
Lachine, Quebec



Ashley Dickinson
Moncton, New Brunswick

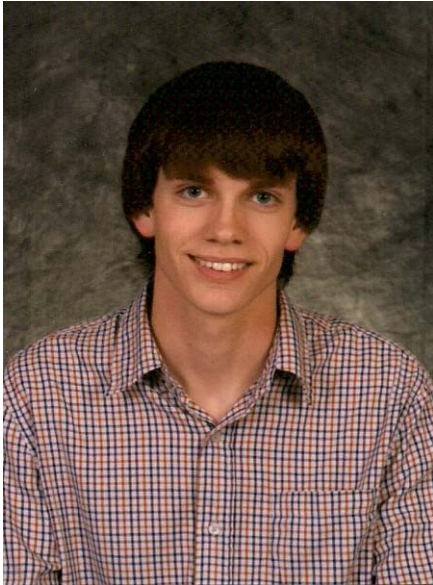


Star Koleszar
Winsloe, Prince Edward Island



Kelsey Boudreau
Pictou County, Nova Scotia

Congratulations to all of this year's new recipients!



William Short
Marystown, Newfoundland



Current recipient Bonnie Schott presenting the award to 2010 recipient Troy Woods in Warren Manitoba.

An Everyday Humanitarian

By Katherine Strapps

This past fall I began my second year of university. Though most second year university students feel more comfortable than they did at the prospect of their first year, as they have established friendships and knowledge of their respective schools, this was not the case for me. Though this was my second year of university, it was my first year at Dalhousie, as I transferred from another school.

Even though I was living back at home (just outside of Halifax), I was apprehensive at the prospect of meeting new people and making new friends, at a school where I did not really know anyone or much about the campus. My older brother advised me to introduce myself to a new person in each of my classes every day for the first couple weeks of school. I took his recommendation to heart.

My brother's advice paid off and I met dozens of new people (a few of whom have become good friends). One girl in particular, Elaine, has become one of my best and most trusted friends.

The first time I met Elaine, I felt like she had known me for years, she is sincerely one of the friendliest, most accepting, and supportive people whom I have ever met. She is completely non-judgmental, she is patient, and she makes anyone she is with feel totally at ease.

Humanitarianism is simply a part of Elaine's way of life. She is always there for her friends and family, any time they need her. Friends of Elaine recently suffered a tragic death in the family, and I am now, more than ever, astounded at her strength and ability to help others, whether through staying with the grief stricken family and preparing meals for them, or through quietly providing a comforting shoulder to cry on.

Elaine, herself, has dealt with significant medical problems throughout her life, having undergone numerous surgeries and endured lengthy hospital stays. The fact that through her own hardships she remains entirely unselfish and continues to devote her time and energy toward others makes her an even more remarkable person. Elaine's selfless nature constantly reminds me that we can each be an humanitarian in our own way, through even the simplest of everyday actions.

A Quick Life at Sea

By Shane Sabean

Ever since I was a young child, my father has sailed on vessels and ships and his father before him and it was eventually bound for me to do the same. Two years ago, I sailed on a tall ship "The Concordia," and it was an eye opening experience. This opportunity during the summer of 2008 was a three week bursary where ten students from Nova Scotia received a sailing bursary, instead of paying \$3000. I applied once I saw posters around my school and thought, this experience would never happen to me, but surprising enough a few weeks later everything fell into place.

The day I was to hear if I received the bursary came and my Guidance Counselor pulled me aside and told me another student from Lunenburg received the experience. I cannot lie; I was a little upset but figured there was someone better suited for the experience. I went home after school and that night a call came, and it was a director, Craig Kelley calling to see if I received an e-mail. I told him no and Craig told me, I was a recipient of the bursary and I leaped for joy. I was super excited and could not wait for this once in a lifetime experience. I went back to school told my Guidance Counselor, and she was shocked. The teachers overheard our conversation and everyone was excited. A few weeks after the call, I was headed towards Lunenburg's dock, where everyone was to board the Concordia.

We were docked in Lunenburg for two days, acquainting ourselves with the crew and other members on the boat. I was a shy person, but hoped this feeling would dissolve on the trip. Within two days, the crew learned different sail names, ropes, duties and safety information. It was stressful at the beginning, trying to process different information in a short period of time, but everyone caught on eventually. Once we left dock July 6, 2008 we were headed towards one of the four destinations on the schedule. Also, a student from grade 10, Andrew Falkenham from my school was on the ship, making the transition comfortable.

I became homesick for a day, then everything began to mold and shape the foundation of the trip. I began learning different skills I never knew I had such as being able to climb to extreme heights, having the strength to pull ropes, overcoming seasickness and being a leader. While sailing, the students took two classes, Leadership and Seamanship class. In leadership we learned what makes a good leader and our teacher was Gwyneth. In Seamanship class, we learned the importance of lights, signals and safety

and our teacher was Goshia. We sailed for four days towards Burin, Newfoundland. While on these four days, I tried my hardest to do everything, while overcoming sea sickness. We arrived at Burin, Newfoundland July 10, 2008 and ported. The scenery was amazing, the fog was rolling over the hills and the water was calm. There were activities planned for each port.

Burin, Newfoundland was completely different from normal life. The first day there, we were welcomed with open arms and everyone was super nice. The first night we were given a special Newfoundland dish, salt pork and potatoes. We were given the chance to dance and were Screeched in as Newfoundlanders. The second day in Newfoundland, we were able to go swimming while traveling on the back of a man's truck. It was a bonding experience for everyone, because on the ship we had a chance to bond, but it was better once we arrived at ports. After swimming, we were able to learn a Newfoundland dance. We could perform that night and some of us did, while others did not partake in the festivities. It was a hilarious time, but we had to leave July 12, 2008. Once we cleared port, we were headed towards Iles de la Madeleine, an island considered to be Quebec's.

Once we arrived at Iles de la Madeleine, we jumped right into the activities planned for us. We took a bus to a beach buggy shop and we were off to the beach. Once at the beach, the buggies were set up and we paired up. I was with Laura Greenwood and we had a blast. The wind picked up and threw us around. It was a hilarious time that anyone would have enjoyed. I received a nasty sun burn, but had a wonderful experience. That night, a group of us went to a fancy restaurant and at first was not able to enter because there was no room, but suddenly was offered a private room. It was an incredible experience some might think only could happen to a celebrity, but happened to us. The food was amazing and the next day, we visited a Hydro Plant and went to the beach. The sand was great and felt amazing to have free time. We left the island July 15, 2008 and headed towards Charlottetown, PEI.

Once arriving July 17, 2008 at Charlottetown we went on a scavenger hunt and my team placed second. It was a fantastic time, even though we witnessed a drunk man on a bench, otherwise an unforgettable experience. We then went to a band stand and played a few leadership games. We had free time to go shopping and July 20, 2008 we left for Louisburg. During this part of the trip, we received the tail of Hurricane Bertha and had taken a lot out of us because we had to get up in the middle of the night and lower sails, because the ship was dipping into the waves, but was incredibly fun.

Arriving at Louisburg was sad because the only weather was rain. We went to see Fort Louisburg, but did not stay long because the rain was horrible and the ground was muddy. We returned to the ship and had a skit night, allowing the three groups we were split into at the beginning of the voyage to come up with a good skit and earn points for their team. It was a great experience to gain confidence. We left Louisburg, Cape Breton July 22, 2008 and eventually arrived in Lunenburg July 24, 2008. We were not allowed to go home until the next day because people were leaving to fly back to Mexico, Spain, Colombia, Germany and a few other places.

This experience was amazing, but would have been no fun without a few people who deserve recognition; Laura Greenwood, Spencer Brown, Andrew Falkenham, Artur and Felipe. Everyone was great but these few people liked me for me and I could not have asked for a greater summer. If anyone every wanted an unforgettable adventure, this was huge to partake in and I will never forget the amazing time and experience I had during these three weeks. Unfortunately over the past year, the Concordia sank in Brazil, so I guess I hold a bit of history, even if it was for only three weeks.

My Day in Kathmandu

By Virginia Arsenault

Growing up on Prince Edward Island, I lived in a sheltered bubble in which I was hidden from life's harsh realities. I had never personally witnessed war, extreme poverty, and absolute desolation before in my life. Everything changed when I landed in Kathmandu, Nepal's capital. I happened to arrive the day the Maoists, the Communist party, had decided to take control of Kathmandu in hopes of overthrowing the current government. The atmosphere was tense as the group declared an indefinite general strike in which no motorized vehicles were allowed on the road – save for tourist buses – and all the shops and government offices were to remain closed. Nearly half a million people poured into the capital from the surrounding area to join the demonstrations.

When I finally found myself on bus going from the airport to our hotel, all my senses were assaulted by the foreign city. Although the usual thick haze of pollution that notoriously haunted the capital was ominously absent, the air was thick with the pungent smell of melting rubber and garbage, as protesters began burning tires in the street. Because it was nearly forty degrees Celsius in the sweltering sun, the bus

windows had been jammed open to let in a breeze. With the flow of air, came the sound of thousands of voices chanting and yelling in unison. As we approached a large gathering area on a major roadway, their voices rose until it sounded like we had arrived at a rock concert. From my vantage point in the bus, the protesters seemed like a sea of red as they milled around the road like thousands of ants on an anthill. As they noticed our bus driving by, some decided to bang on the sides of the bus; fortunately, they never threatened us with any real violence. Among the red, riot police clad in black were creating a visible barrier between the protesters and nearby government offices. They seemed to be waiting for violence to escalate.

Later that day, when I finally arrived at my hotel, I learnt from news reports that the demonstrations would keep going until the government fell, or listened to the demands of the demonstrators. By then, the government was threatening to bring in the Nepalese army if the protests got out of hand, while the Maoists threatened to begin a new civil war if their demands were not met. Nepal had just witnessed a bloody, decade-long civil war that recently ended in 2006. The last thing these citizens needed was another war; they had enough to contend with. The capital city's infrastructure was literally in a crumbling state, as buildings, some five to six stories tall, seemed ready to crumble on the street. Meanwhile, electricity came and went in daily rolling blackouts that left the country in the dark for hours at a time and healthy drinking water was becoming sparse. Street vendors and beggars alike would mill around tourists, hoping for some good fortune, while children were often left to fend for themselves on the streets. Luckily, for the citizens of Kathmandu, the demonstrations never turned violent, nor did another civil war break out. I later learnt that after nearly a week and a half, the strike was called off during talks between the demonstrators and the government, and life returned to normal.

Although I only spent a few days in Kathmandu before I made my way to an amazing couple of weeks in the beautiful and majestic Himalayan Mountains, those days made me realize that I took peace and stability for granted in Canada. I had never truly appreciated how fortunate we are as Canadians to have a stable government and not have to worry incessantly about war and violence. We are fortunate to have to have safe drinking water, to have houses that will not crumble on our heads, and to have programs that help fight poverty. Although my travels to Nepal have made realize how fortunate we are in Canada, I have become inspired by the thought that as Canadians, we have the opportunity and the duty to help a world in need.

How Cancer Changed my Life

By: Chantal Vandesompele

Throughout my life all I have ever known was cancer. Trying to overcome an obstacle so HUGE that my life depended on it. If there ever was a time that I needed to be strong and have a positive attitude, it was now.

In March of 1998, at the age of nine, I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (A.L.L) also known as the “good” kind of Leukemia according to the doctors. In my mind all I could really think about was, “Leukemia? Cancer? Isn’t that only supposed to happen to older people like grandmothers and grandfathers? I mean I am only nine years old? And how can there be anything good about cancer?” At the time I was too young and naïve to understand the whole picture of what was wrong with me and what was going to happen.

The doctors put me on intensive chemotherapy and medications that left me weak, nauseated, bloated and made my hair fall out. So there I was, a bald nine year old scared to death not knowing what the outcome would be. After enduring 2 ½ years of chemotherapy I was free from the chains that the cancer had put on me. Five years from the time I went into remission, I was officially considered cured. That celebration was short lived because 3 months after that I was re-diagnosed with the same cancer.

At the age of 14, I felt like I was a medical dictionary. I knew what I was in for and I was ready to fight and rid my body of this dreadful disease once and for all. Throughout my treatments I received nothing but positive energy from family, friends and medical staff who were helping to save my life.

One day I was approached by an individual, who at the time worked for a local news station, wanting to know if I would be interested in being interviewed for the Telethon for Children’s Hospital of Southwestern Ontario, in London. They wanted me to talk about my experiences dealing with cancer and how the hospital and medical team saved my life. I was a little nervous about being interviewed and videotaped especially feeling the way I was. I gained up the courage and confidence to share my story with everyone in the hopes that more people will realize that victims of cancer aren’t necessarily elderly people but children as well and how realistic childhood cancer has become. During the interview process I found myself quite emotional when I talked about my journey with cancer. This was truly the first time I had opened up about being a child with cancer and coming to terms with

reality. When I watched my segment during the telethon I could not hold back the tears. It was such a moving and empowering moment when my family and I got the chance to look back and see how far we have come. I was so proud of myself for breaking through an emotional barrier.

As a childhood cancer survivor I wanted to help support other children and their families dealing with cancer. I wanted to be an advocate for children in need of the hospital’s facility and services.

Shortly after the telethon, I was approached by the Children’s Health Foundation asking if I would be interested in becoming a guest speaker for them in support of the Children’s Hospital of South Western Ontario. I thought to myself why not, this is a great opportunity for me to really get out there and help other children. From there, my volunteering has snowballed into numerous speaking engagements, becoming a founding member of the CYAC (Children’s Youth Advisory Council – kids helping kids) and helping raise money for the new Women’s and Children’s Hospital in London, Ontario.

Words will never be able to describe the thanks and gratitude that have for the individuals that saved my life. But I know that through my personal experience and volunteering, I can help make the difference in the life another child fighting cancer.

I am now 21 years old and I have fought cancer three times and won. I am taking charge of my life and not letting the fear of cancer dictate my future.



Dr. Jardine, Pediatric Oncologist & Chantal Vandesompele at PMDU (Pediatric Medical Day Unit)



Proud to be Canadian!!

By Sarah DeBay

To fully experience and appreciate another culture one must step outside their comfort zone and completely immerse themselves in that culture. One must surround themselves in the rich sights, smells, tastes, and sounds of the culture and the only way to experience the wonders of another country is to travel there. The similarities and differences one may find on an adventure such as this are wonderfully shocking! The opportunity to travel is so rewarding but it also helps to put life into perspective and forces oneself to appreciate many of the simple things in life that are often taken for granted.

In grade eleven I had the opportunity to participate in an exchange program in China where I would be living with a Chinese family and attending two different Canadian sister schools. I experienced Chinese culture at its finest, going beyond the familiar and daring to try new things. The sights I saw, the experiences I had, and the friends I made will be with me for a lifetime. Yet being in another country, on the other side of the world made me realize how much I love Canada and how often I take things here for granted. Simple things such as running and drinkable water, toilets that are not holes in the floor, clean smog free air, food cooked just the way I like it, not struggling to communicate in a strange language, and most of all my friends and family back in my small hometown are all comforts that I had just come to expect. It is these simple things that I have in Canada that make me so happy to live here, and most of the time I take them for granted. However, the culture shock I experienced on the other side of the world made me, as well as all the students I was traveling with, truly appreciate the luxuries of back home.

At every school we visited we performed in a closing ceremony to show off what we had learned and to thank our hosts. As the ceremony came to a close the National Anthem began to play. We were all singing at the top of our lungs as an overwhelming feeling of pride came over all of us. I had never been more

proud to say that I am Canadian than I was in that moment because before then I never realized how fortunate I am to be able to say it. When the song finished there were rounds of embraces for all our new friends and many tears of joy were shed. It made me realize however, that no matter where I go or how far away from home I am, whenever I see that small red maple leaf I am among friends, and this feeling of camaraderie makes me proud to be Canadian.

It takes only one...

By: Drew Mastromartino

Bob Geldof, former punk star heard a news report about the African Hunger Famine, and was moved to take action. He organized a concert to raise awareness around the world. This concert came to be known as Live Aid.

During the 1976 political turmoil of North Ireland, Betty Williams, receptionist and mother of two witnessed three children killed as a consequence of the political turmoil. She collected 6,000 petitions within two days calling for change, and led a march of 10,000 people. Opposing protestors disrupted the peaceful protest. Williams led a march again three weeks later. This time, 35,000 people showed up.

Peter Benenson heard the story of two students in Portugal raising their glasses in a toast for freedom, and being sentenced to prison for seven years for doing so. The British lawyer wrote letter to the local paper and got an overwhelming response. Amnesty International was formed.

A 12 year old boy was inspired by the death of a 12 year old sweatshop worker in India, and established Free The Children. Craig Kielburger is a recipient of the Children's Nobel Peace prize, and is the youngest person nominated for a Nobel Peace prize. Free The Children has over a million supporters worldwide, and over 550 schools in developing countries.

Joey Lawrence, a photographer turned professional at the age of 16, travels and lives with remote tribes around the world, documenting tribes on the verge of extinction and their voices on cultural assimilation by the government.

A boy from a small South African village dreamt of a day where equality would prevail over his country. After years of activism, he was sentenced to life in prison on the charge of political treason. 27 years later, Nel-

son Mandela was freed and led South Africa in its first ever democratic election.

Agnesë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu left her convent in India to help the poor and dying in the slums of Calcutta. She attended to the needs of the destitute and starving. She has sparked a worldwide revolution with approximately 450 brothers, 5000 nuns, and over 1 million co-workers worldwide, operating 600 missions, schools, and shelters in 120 countries. She died with the world knowing her as Mother Theresa.

Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. – Margaret Mead

So whenever you feel helpless or ready to give up, just remember... it only takes one person to make a difference.

(Article inspired by Nickelback's "If Everyone Cared" music video.)

The Hardest Thing

By Sara Walsh

This is not the hardest thing you will ever do. I had heard those words over and over and over throughout the course of my life growing up. I remember hearing them in grade one when I had my tonsils taken out and then in grade three when I had a thyroid cyst removed from my neck. Then yet again in grade six when someone snapped my bra for the first time. I heard it all through jr. high when I came home either from fights with friends or when my cyst grew back and was again surgically removed. Then in high school experiencing my first heartache. I always thought my Mom was being a little insensitive when she said those words to me. Sometimes I just wanted to be told it would get better, not be told that there would be harder challenges in my life that I would be forced to face. Don't get me wrong, she was great and always very supportive when I struggled with my grade school problems but she never forgot to remind me of those ten simple words.

When I was in my grade eleven year, my Mom's back began to get really sore. I often had to carry her bag inside for her after work or drive very slowly over the bumps on the road. We tried everything for her back, medications, acupuncture, a chiropractor. Nothing seemed to be curing her pain. In October 2007, we learned that my Mom had multiple myeloma, an incurable bone and blood disease that is common in older African-American men. My mom did not fit any of these requirements but yet here she was diagnosed

with this uncommon disease. From that day, my life was changed indefinitely.

During the summer and in grade twelve year my Mom's health did not seem to improve. My Mom spent seven consecutive months in the hospital, with a stay in the ICU. There were times where I had to wear a long yellow gown, gloves and a face mask to just visit my Mom. Leaving the room I had to dispose of them and coming back I had to change to a new sterile one. I saw the effects of chemotherapy, the result of pneumonia on a weak immune system, black bruising from constant pokes of needles, the effects of MRSA, the difficulties helping an ill person, the limits of an immobile patient, and overall the effects of cancer on a family. I became very familiar with nurses, doctors, and the hustle bustle of a hospital. I spent as much time as I could visiting my Mom in the hospital, visiting at least once every day in between working a part-time job, going to school, volunteering twice a week, playing on three sports teams, and participating on two committees. I was also able to hold the highest average in my grade.

In late November of 2008, my family was blessed to have my Mom well enough to come home. We had a ramp built because my Mom could not walk on her own let alone walk up stairs. We had to have a hospital bed and wheelchair rented as well as a walker. Having her home was extremely exciting not only for myself but for my three younger siblings who were not as comfortable visiting in the hospital. I stayed home many nights to just watch tv or hang out with my Mom and in case she needed anything. We spent Christmas together as a family, very grateful that we did not have to spend it in the hospital. Over the Christmas holidays I cried watching my Mom take her first steps without her walker since the time she got sick.

It seemed that Mom was getting better. But, the night before my final math exam, my Mom fell asleep and could not wake up. An ambulance was called and I had a sinking feeling in my stomach. I remember crying in my room watching my Mom being put in the ambulance, and my Dad climb in the front seat. My sister and two brothers came into my room, and comforted me telling me, it would be okay. I remember thinking to myself it should be me comforting them. I was failing my responsibility as big sister. The next day I woke in a daze after a terrible sleep and wrote my math exam. I then drove straight to the hospital, a thirty minute drive that I had become so accustomed to a few months earlier. I spent eight hours at the hospital. Dad took my car home to celebrate my sister's birthday. My Mom cried because she couldn't be home with my sister on her birthday. The next few days were spent in the hospital. Mom was told that in about five days she would be allowed to go home.

Five days later, my Mom didn't get to go home. My Mom passed away. My Dad called me to come right away. I could barely make out what he was saying because the phone was cutting out but I knew that when he called to come, it was not good. I raced to the hospital and found my Dad and many extended family members all there already. My Mom was back in the ICU for the second time although this time it wasn't looking as good as before. Slowly my Mom's body began to shut down. For the next couple days, I went to the hospital early in the morning and stayed late into the night. My family was always coming in and out. I remember going to the mall once for a break, and watching people around me. They had no idea what I was going through, that I felt as though my life was slowly falling apart, but there they were, unknowingly to my struggles, just peacefully shopping for new clothes or browsing carelessly in stores.

I remember my Mom's words to me, *this will not be the hardest thing you will ever do*. I thought to myself, that no longer were those words true. In a second I would have went back to any one of those moments where I thought I was at my ultimate low. I knew now that most definitely, I was being faced with by far the hardest thing I will ever do, saying goodbye to my Mom.

My Mom couldn't talk because she had so many tubes. However there was a few times that I knew she knew I was there. Although heavily sedated, she managed to write words on paper for us to read. Once she took my hand and traced out I love you with her thumb. When she died she was surrounded by her family.

From then on out, we had to plan a funeral and wake for the end of the week. It was an exhausting week. At the wake, we had over a thousand people come and some had to be turned away so we could rest. The church was full for the funeral and it was a beautiful service.

I eventually went back to school and started back slowly at my normal routine. I was amazed at the amount of letters and food and help we were still receiving months after from family and friends. I finished up my grade twelve year successfully. I received many awards for my volunteer work and involvement with sports as well as finishing my grade twelve year with a ninety-six per cent average. I was honoured to receive the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award and I remember standing on the stage close to tears at the cheers and claps of my community when it was announced. This program really recognized how hard those last two years of high school had been for me and for that I will always be grateful.

I still miss my Mom everyday. I know how proud she would have been with my accomplishments and now finishing my first year of university. There are so many times I wish I could talk to her. However, whenever I run into a something challenging in my life, whether it be a particularly difficult exam or feeling homesick when I'm at school, I am comforted by the fact of how lucky I am, that is the only thing I have to be worried about. When this happens to me I try to send a prayer of thanks to my Mom. I also never forget to pray every time I see an ambulance. I now know that my Mom was not being harsh when she repeatedly told me her words of advice but she was merely preparing me for life. I am forever grateful that I got to spend almost eighteen years of my life with such a wonderful woman who was exceptionally wise and has managed in a short time make such an impact on the lives of so many, especially mine.

What is a Disability?

By: Brandon Gillespie

As a person who is hearing impaired I often get asked what I see as a disability, my answer is always rather vague. This is not the case because I refuse to view myself as "disabled" but instead a matter of instilling within that person a newfound respect for the term "disabled". My answer is always quite simply: "a disability is what you choose to let it be". Obviously this answer seems rather deflective, when in fact it is an accurate representation of what I view as a disability. This personal opinion did not arise merely because of my views as an individual but rather through my life experiences and experiences that I have witnessed whereby others with disabilities have overcome adversity. Personally I have had to change my entire life plan due to my disability and this took quite the toll on my confidence to achieve my life goals in late 2008. The epiphany that gave rise to my present opinion did not occur because I had realized how ridiculous I was being but instead because of what I had witnessed.

As a staff cadet at the rank of Warrant Officer Second Class at an air cadet summer training centre in the summer of 2009 I oversaw more than five-hundred air cadets between the ages of 12 to 18 from every walk of life imaginable. I had cadets who were rich, poor, athletic, lazy, obese, skinny, as well as some who were in fact disabled. I ensured that these cadets had an equal playing field in every aspect of their training and expected that they would achieve and maintain a standard equal to that of everybody else, I was incredibly wrong in terms of that expectation. Not only

did these cadets meet the standard but they surpassed it and raised the bar an incredible amount for their peers. This surprised me in many ways when in fact it shouldn't have. I had seen their determination and will to learn from the first day and even though I am disabled myself I ironically foresaw those cadets having difficulties because of their disabilities. I was quite literally consumed by the determination of these cadets and lived off their will to achieve every single day. Little did I realize that the very cadets who I was teaching were in fact re-teaching me the aspects of appreciation and comfort for my own disability that I was once so in touch with and had recently left behind.

One cadet in particular had taken my entire life and turned it upside down. Three of my flights (units of around thirty cadets) were travelling to Halifax in order to participate in a citizenship tour. I decided to go with them as part of my duties for that week. Little did I know the impact that this particular cadet would have on me that particular day. We had just finished a tour of the maritime museum by the waterfront and because the roads are so narrow we had to march to Citadel Hill in order to meet the bus. The cadet in question had Cerebral Palsy and because of this had difficulty marching for long periods of time. We told him that the duty van would be picking him up while the rest of the cadets marched back to Citadel Hill. His response was: "No sir, I can do this on my own", we obviously strongly discouraged this but nonetheless gave him the opportunity as he was adamant about completing the march. My major concern was how he would possibly be able to march up the side of Citadel Hill which is quite steep and challenging for someone without walking difficulties. I was certain that I was about to be amazed whatever the outcome.

We had marched to the base of Citadel Hill without incident and considering the length of that march that was an incredible feat in itself. We again gave him the opportunity to be picked up and he again refused. The order was given for the flights to begin marching up the hill and I could do nothing but watch from behind the cadets. He began traversing the hill and it was obvious that he was having difficulties but he continued nonetheless. He was struggling an incredible amount and despite the offers of help from the staff he continued on his own. He traversed and struggled at an equal pace to that of his flight mates and once it became obvious to his peers that he was struggling they all left formation and encouraged him up the hill. It was the most incredible sight I had ever seen as a cadet and all the staff that were present could do was stand awe stricken. Here were ninety cadets averaging the age of fourteen encouraging one of their peers up a hill in a manner befitting grown adults. At this point I could do nothing but cry, how naive was I to think that

a disability defines an individual when I am in fact disabled. Disability is not etched in the very skin of any individual, there are obvious limitations for most and in some cases they are quite adverse but nothing can stop them from achieving their own personal goals if they pursue them with devout determination and confidence.

We often forget that disability does not define the very core of an individual regardless of the impact it has upon them and instead choose to believe that they must always be defined by what they cannot do. Why not focus on what disabled individuals can accomplish, if we look deeper we will be very surprised as to what lies beneath. In terms of myself, I have found a new appreciation for disabilities, my own included. I am proud to be hearing impaired, it has gotten me to the point in my life that I am presently at and I am very proud of what I have been able to accomplish up to this point. I will never forget the impact and insight that the cadet provided me on that summer's day in Halifax. He brought me back to reality and caused me to refocus, it was not immediate but through continual reflection I have realized why I was overwrought with pride. The reason is simple: he didn't allow his disability to overshadow his ability and worth and thus I have come to the conclusion that I will continue in the same manner by making my disability my motivator and encouragement in life. My name is Brandon Gillespie, I am hearing impaired and incredibly proud of it!

Time with my Grandparents

By Kara Warnock

I had the epiphany as I was pacing back and forth in front of the living room window, watching the current weather patterns. I was trying to figure out if it was a north wind or a west wind, and if the clouds above were cumulonimbus or nimbostratus. To my family, this observation would not be too out-of-the-ordinary since I am a bit of a geography nut. But, this was much more extreme. It was at that moment that I realized: I am becoming one of them. I had missed the warning signs in the things that have subconsciously slipped into my daily routine the last few days. Now that I look back on my time here in Redwing, I can see just how this slow yet steady transformation took place.

First of all, before I get into the details of this process, let me just recognize that the mere suggestion of moving into a retirement complex for two weeks should have been enough to make me say, "Oh, I better get some young fun in this weekend before I leave my Seventeen magazines (not that I have any anyways)

and chick flicks (not that I watch them a whole lot) and the strapping young men (not that I see any on a regular basis) back at home." But no, I had no concerns at all.

I should have known, however, when I started talking to Nicky like he actually was one of my cousins. And as if that wasn't enough, I knew his walking route backward and forward. I could do it with my eyes closed by Sunday. I knew all of the stops at the third bench on the left, that last telephone pole on the right, and the bridge barrier on the way home, in addition to the few grassy patches that were just perfect for rolling around on. Heck, by the third day, I even knew all of Nicky's neighborhood friends: Coby, Charlie, Spot, Mabel, and Buddy. I knew their walking times too.

In case you were really curious, this is what my day looks like. After breakfast (consisting of fruit loops, orange juice, and a cup of tea) I do a little reading. I picked up a few Chicken Soup books from the thrift store because I used to love reading those cute little anecdotes that would make you laugh and cry at the same time (but of course I never cried). Next we got our exercise done: golf on the Wii - Grandad vs. me before Granny plays the winner. Lunch is followed by an Irish movie or two (and a cup of tea).

Don't get me wrong; I love Ireland, and I actually find these movies rather interesting, but they're not your typical-teenager past-time. Uncle Dan has been coming over for dinner, which provides a few good laughs around the table before yet another cup of tea. Granny hands me my Sudoku puzzle from the newspaper at eight o'clock while she does the Cryptogram and Grandad watches the weather channel to see if his predictions match up with the weatherman's. After my eighth cup of tea for the day and some good conversation, we hit the sack.

To some it may seem odd that I haven't been outside of the retirement complex for four days, or that I've taken up knitting at seventeen to pass the time of day, or that I haven't watched television in a week because I've been too busy watching movies like "The Quiet Man" (1952) and "Angel in My Pocket" (1969), but it's not bad. Sure, it may not seem normal when you look at the facts, but if you knew me, you'd know I am having the time of my life.

Seventeen magazines can't tell you how to raise a wonderful family and keep a good home. Watching chick flicks just doesn't compare to hearing the story about how your grandparents fell in love. And strapping young men will always be around, but grandparents might not. Nothing can replace the time I am having this week.

Today, Grandad and I went for a bike ride along the channel this afternoon. And later, Granny and I exchanged a skill for a skill: I taught her how to play cards and she taught me how to knit. Tomorrow I am hoping to learn how to paint. I am reading more than ever, but none of the books I am reading compare to listening to the stories of my grandparents lives.

The Joys of Teaching

By Zachary Reimer

Right now I am in school to become a high school math teacher. I have always loved math and teaching it to others that it just seemed right that I ended up in school studying to be a math teacher. Something happened last summer though that sent me a curve ball. I was working at a camp and for 4 of the weeks during the summer I was in charge of teaching a certain age group. I had never worked with children under the age of 8 before but I decided that I would take on the responsibility of teaching the 3 to 5 year olds. I had never worked with kids this young and therefore I had no clue at all how to teach, handle, control, and manage them. Luckily I had another girl helping me and it turned out to be the best 4 weeks of the summer. I fell in love with this age of kids and was always sad to see them go at the end of the week.

The fall came around and I was back to studying math but I could not get the thought of little kids off my mind, they had brought me so much joy the past summer. It was only my first year in a concurrent education program so I did not have to have an in-class placement yet but I wanted to be back with young children. After making a few calls I had set up a position where I would go into a kindergarten class once a week for an afternoon. The times that I got to spend with these kids was amazing, it was a chance for me to forget about all the big math problems I had waiting for me and just enjoy life. There were so many situations that made me keel over in laughter or melt my heart. I want to share just a few of these stories.

One day as the boys and girls were coming in for the afternoon (it was only half day kindergarten) and taking they were taking off their outdoor shoes and slipping into their indoor shoes, Sophie showed me a blister she had. She was very excited though that she got to have a 'princess' band-aid on it. Another boy, Benjamin, overheard her talking and told me how he had something like that on his bum and that his mom had to give him cream to put on it. I laughed to myself

thinking when would I hear any student other than a kindergarten divulge this information with no shame but rather a beaming smile on his face.

One day as the teacher was taking attendance, a boy was away. She told the class that he was away because he was getting his tonsils removed. She went on to ask the class if anyone else had had their tonsils taken out. A few students put up their hands but then one boy shouted out, "Terry Fox got his taken out!" as if this was what Terry Fox was famous for. The teacher and I could not help but laugh.

Another day I was helping Logan with some of his work. I had already helped Logan out a few times, as he tended to need extra help, so our relationship had grown the most. He always loved to joke with me and try to get out of doing his work. This day he started to poke my arm, and then he said that I should take my shirt off. At this I was very surprised and asked him why I should? His answer was, "SO that all the girls can kiss you." I had no clue what he was thinking but it put a smile on my face and one on his.

The last story is one that melted my heart. After the students are finished their spelling they are allowed to go and play with toys. So when Ben and Sophie finished their work they went over to play with the kitchen set. They both pretended that they were making a dinner and cooking desserts. All the students eventually finished up their work so the teacher called them all to come and sit down. As Ben and Sophie finished playing house, they walked over holding hands and as they sat down Ben turned to Sophie and said, "I love you," and Sophie responded, "I love you too sweetie."

Variables and Constants

By Cameron McNutt

As my first year of university was about to begin and I was soon to move to a new city, I could not help but wonder how my life would change. Ever since my acceptance to Queen's University, I had been looking forward to my studies and moving to a new city. I was excited to further my education as an engineer, meet new people, and, I have to admit, enjoy the social life. But as the date drew nearer, I began to apprehend that my life might change more than I had initially realized. While I was very excited to begin my new journey, I was also a little nervous as I pondered the unknown.

The first few questions that weighed upon me were: What would happen to the friendships which I shared

over the past years and the friends I saw each day? How would I adjust to larger class sizes where my professors did not know me at all? I was concerned about the lack of intimacy in classes of 400 students, with professors who neither knew your name nor cared whether you showed up. This would be a big change from the teachers and coaches who knew me, my interests, and my contributions. As well, I had requested a trade from my championship hockey team to join the team in my new city. As I left behind a group of guys that I considered family, I wondered whether my new team would have the same camaraderie. These were only a few aspects of my changing life as many of my foundations seemed to be falling to the wayside.

With all this on my mind, I took a deep breath and headed off to university. I realized that, as always, the best option was to embrace as much as was possible. Frosh Week made everything easy and reassuring: I met lots of people, participated in endless activities, and was introduced to my new community through various charity events. I soon made close friends and was recognized as a "Hardcore Frosh". University life was more complete and rewarding than I ever imagined – and classes hadn't even begun!

With the first week of classes, my appreciation of the new educational opportunities available to me began to grow – and so did the workload. I soon got to know my professors and marveled at their ability to explain complicated theorems. I loved my courses and I loved my profs. I was certain that I was in the right program of study and I managed to remain easy going and relatively stress-free. I became involved in several activities encompassing community service, my new hockey club, and university extra-curriculars - while keeping my academics in check. But like many students, I had my fair share of challenges.

Throughout my first year, I learned and had to master many things - besides the academics. I had to learn to navigate around campus and a new city; to manage and prioritize the increased (and never-ending) workload; to be attentive to smart food selection from the all-you-can-eat cafeteria (salad over ice cream); make the time to exercise regularly and stay in shape; be attentive to my budget and avoid the temptation of frivolous expenses; and to manage my new freedom and set limits. Most importantly, I learned that almost all outcomes are based on making good decisions and choices.

Overall, I loved my first-year experience and I am excited to start my second year. But I do not give myself all the credit for overcoming these variables. I had one constant in my life that proved to be very helpful: my family. A quick phone call or conversation was often enough to regain my perspective and satisfaction with

my efforts. My family was the constant amongst the many variables in my changing life.

Looking back, it is fair to say that I underestimated the impact my family would have on me. Leaving my hometown, I expected the miles to introduce a subtle distance into my family relationships. I did not realize that a closeness would develop through the multitude of new experiences. My family is and continues to be the support beam in my life. I strive to be the best person I can be – but I know that whatever I do and wherever I go, my family is always there for me. Sticking to my family motto, “a job worth doing is worth doing well”, I had the best first-year university experience possible. I gave my all, in all areas: friendships, academics, athletics and community service. As an Orientation Leader for next year’s first year class, I am excited to help others successfully transition to university life and discover their own balance of variables and constants.

Pat

By Lori-Anne Thomas

Growing up I did not have any personal experiences with cancer. I knew of cancer and was always interested in science; in particular our cells and body. Receiving news from the Terry Fox Humanitarian Scholarship was an experience I’ll never forget. I did know that Terry Fox was an admirable man who did not give up in the face of cancer continuing to educate and raise money for research. These two experiences were the beginning of learning about cancer and the people who face this.

My third experience came while finishing up my second year university at St. F.X. I was unaware that in the summer of 2010 Patricia Halbot would come into my life. In a routine call from my aunt, she had told me that she had a friend staying with her that was ‘sick’. I was not aware that ‘sick’ meant cancer until I came home for the summer. Patricia and I got along from the second we met; it was like I had always known her and that we spent time apart and were now catching up on news. It was very strange and also very comforting at the same time.

Patricia was a long time customer at an automotive repair center in which my aunt was co-owner. My aunt frequently said ‘Hi’ to Pat and would have conversations with her. However, neither of them thought that their relationship would be anything more than professional.

Patricia first came to live with my aunt this past March. Patricia had called my Aunt to say ‘Hello’ and ask how she was, as they were not associated through the business any more. During that conversation my aunt decided to ask her to church after hearing she was not driving as she was experiencing difficulty with her vision. During church my aunt noticed there was something wrong with her and suggested they spend the night together and accompany her to her doctor appointment the following day. It was during a follow up appointment Pat received bad news, the doctor told her that the breast cancer she survived three years earlier manifested to her brain. She was told there was no treatment with an estimated life expectancy of 3-6 months. A week later her oncologist offered her ten radiation treatments to possibly extend her time and lessen her symptoms to one to two years. Of course, she agreed to the radiation treatments.

Over the weeks everyone who knew her had come to love her; to me, my aunt, and many other people she became a member of the family. That’s why it was heart breaking for everyone to hear that she would not make it though the month because the radiation did not work; the cancer had progressed into her lungs.

Two months later her health began to decline again, she was hospitalized for ten days. Through further scans it became known that the radiation did not have the success her oncologist was hoping. Despite the news she kept a positive attitude on life; and to this day she still does. She has made a “bucket list” after receiving this news and each day something gets crossed off.

A couple weeks after hearing the terrible news Patricia decided she wanted to return to Larry’s River; her favorite childhood summer place for family vacations. She wanted to have a celebration of life party and invite everyone close to her. Fifty people came, we all ate, drank and partied; Pat was the Queen for that day. We all had an awesome time spending time with Patricia (and each other).

It was through Pat’s cancer that I had the opportunity to meet her. I can’t even begin to explain how Patricia has changed my life. She has become one of the family. I love her and admire her will and confidence that she displays everyday. She is a true inspiration to me and she proves that no matter what illness you may have, to live your life the best you can and to live one day at a time. To this day she is positive and in good spirits. Whenever she gets down we keep reminding her “You do not have an expiration date!” And it’s true.



Top left: Photo by Alison Hall taken on her family vacation at the lake.

Top right: Photo by William Short.

Bottom: Photo by Christina Marchand taken at her island cottage in the Georgian Bay near Killarney National Park



Photo taken by Elizabeth von Rosenbach. *The Sentinel*, part of a larger series called *Tantramar Lost*, Infrared photographs



Photo taken by Makrina Morozowski in Kananaskis country.

Untouched Beauty

By Stephanie Foote

The silent sound of the paddle slicing through the water,
Surging the sleek kayak forward as if it were gliding upon glass,
Streaks of light wildly paint the vast sky,
The clear water mirroring such breathtaking elegance,
Where the earth meets sky.
The sun slowly descends past the rustic horizon,
The end of today, yet the beginning of tomorrow.
Silence fills the cool summer air,
Solitude. Nothing but me and my thoughts
As I advance through the waters,
no destination in mind,
A loon calls out,
interrupting nature's speechlessness,
Such a haunting sound,
echoing throughout the untamed wilderness.
I am filled with awe,
As I sit upon such tranquil waters
Watching the night's sky transform
To a cloak of darkness, blanketed with blinking diamonds.
I smile to myself
As I make a wish on the brightest star.
Such a childish habit,
Yet one I will never grow out of.
I turn the kayak toward the distant shore,
Hoping that my dream comes true,
While surrounded by
Untouched Beauty.

TERRY FOX

By: Makrina Morozowski

T- True Canadian with True Passion
E- Enthusiastic about Finding A Cure
R- Really Inspiring to Everyone
R- Ready to Face Challenges
Y- Youthful Energy

F- Fight Against Cancer
O- Outstanding Athlete with Enormous
Courage
X-tra Passionate about Living Life to the
Fullest

Terry Fox at an early age was faced with a challenge. Terry's actions demonstrated to us; that all citizens can make a difference and help the fight against Cancer. He took a difficult situation and turned it into a positive event, a Marathon, which has spread across the world. This has continued to raise money for Cancer research.

Learning about Terry and his perseverance in spite of challenges has encouraged me to continue to keep on trying and work my hardest and not let a label, like a disability define myself. Terry has demonstrated through his actions that a person can do anything that they set their mind to. That is a very special quality.