

Hope for Christian Crowell

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I met with the Crowell family at the end of July. I had been looking forward to meeting the adorable little boy I had heard so much about by reading his mother's online blog and by taking in some of the local fund raising events. I couldn't help but immediately fall in love with four year old Christian, his sparkling eyes and boyish charm. I was completely overwhelmed listening to his mother, Megan, as she recalled what the family had been through over the last eighteen months, and yet at the same time I was inspired by their strength. Seeing before me, this happy, fun loving child romping and playing with his siblings and giving hugs to his grandmother Marilyn, it was simply hard to believe he had been such a sick little boy and NEVER did it cross my mind their heart-ache was far from over.

By Linda Harrington

In January, 2011, Christian appeared to be a healthy happy three year old, suffering from cold symptoms for a few weeks and a bit of a stomach ache but nothing to be concerned about until the moment he climbed into his mother's lap and a hug around his belly made her mother's instinct go into full alert.

After a rush trip to the Children's hospital, Christian was immediately admitted and a whirl-wind bought of testing began. Within a few hours Megan and Chris heard the words no parent ever wants to hear and their battle against stage 3 Rhabdomyosarcoma in their son's tiny abdomen began.

Throughout 18 months Christian had to endure 26 blood transfusions, 430 needles, 169 days in hospital, 45 rounds of chemo, 60 weeks of treatment, 28 days of radiation, 12 hours of surgery, 1 emergency bowel surgery, and 9 platelet transfusions.

Megan couldn't find the words to express the heartache of watching their three year old suffer such excruciating pain and not being able to eat a normal meal for a year and a half. "He had no strength, no balance and had lost his confidence. He was terrified to be away from us," she says. "We had such huge support from family and friends, especially here in the Belmont area, we knew as soon as we could, we had to come home," she says.

"As soon as we got here, Christian blossomed," said Megan, reflecting on the joy of family times. "He became a new boy and the trip was healing for the whole family. Christian felt the love of family around him and he was back to the little boy he should have been all along."

Chris and Megan have two other young children Ryan- 2 and Evelyn-3 and the last 18 months has been very difficult for them to understand, as well. "There is nothing better we could have done these last six weeks then be here. We started to get back to the people we were," she said.

As Megan boarded a plane

and headed back home she reflected on the wonderful time spent in Nova Scotia with friends and family and she wrote on her blog, "It was such a blessing to see these people's faces and feel their genuine love and concern for our family. I don't know any other words to say except thank you."

Christian was scheduled for his follow-up scan back in Calgary on Friday, August 10th. After a few days his parents received the most heart-breaking news. Later Megan found the strength to share this devastating news on her blog,

"This is the hardest blog post I have ever written. I will only be able to peck out a few words as I try to explain how our world has been turned upside down. Christian had a scan one week ago today. It has been shown that he has developed a new tumor in his abdomen and his cancer has returned. There is no need to talk about how devastated we are as a family and I know many of you are crying a tear with us. Originally, surgery may have been an option but it has been determined that it would be too dangerous and Christian would be in a significant amount of pain following the surgery. The hospital has offered us chemotherapy to help 'prolong' his little life. But it has been made very clear to us that he has an incurable form of cancer."

Megan titled her blog "Hope for Christian Crowell" and this is what everyone who knows this remarkable little boy is asking for...HOPE... and a miracle.

"So would you please raise your voice and say a prayer out loud for Christian, a prayer that would bring a miracle to our family and save our little boy," asks Megan.

A prayer group was set up on Facebook by Freda Steeves at "Hope for Christian Crowell" and immediately there were close to 1500 members offering their prayers and words of support.

"Christian needs a miracle. We know a God who performs them. So, please join with me and many others for the impossible to be made possible,"



A delightful four year old Christian Crowell showing his big muscles. Christian has been battling stage 3 Rhabdomyosarcoma since January 2011. While he was in remission, the family came home for a wonderful six week visit. They have just learned Christian's cancer has returned and they are asking for prayers, as they hope for a miracle. (Harrington Photo)

asked Freeda.

On August 21st, Christian had a bone scan and there was much relief when the results came back clean indicating the cancer had not spread. Then on August 23rd, Christian was rushed to hospital when he developed major pains in his abdomen. Doctors were not sure if it was the tumor or a bowel obstruction and decided to attempt surgery.

After several agonizing hours, Megan wrote on the prayer group's website, "God has revealed Himself to us this evening. He cured my 'unbelief' - the surgeon was able to remove the whole tumor instead of just bypassing it to relieve Christian's pain." Family and friends rejoiced at this amazing news, offering prayers and words of encouragement, as Christian recovers from this latest surgery and keeps up his courageous battle.



Christian blossomed during a six week visit in the Belmont area with family and friends. He loved going to the beach, swimming, boating and golfing. Left to right - Chris Crowell holding two year old Ryan on his lap, Megan, grandmother Marilyn Crowell with Christian, and Rodney Roode. Missing from photo is three year old Evelyn who was taking a nap. (Harrington Photo)

Great Village Community Association News

By Linda Shears

The seniors' book, "Telling our Stories" is now available for \$15 at the Community

Centre. These books are a great idea for Christmas gifts. Looking ahead to the Christmas season, mark

Saturday, November 3, on your calendar as the date for the annual Great Village Christmas Craft Sale.

When school resumes in September, Karate classes will move back to the school gym.

Attendance has been disappointingly low at several events and programs over the summer.

More active community involvement is necessary if similar events and programs are to be provided in the future.

It is hoped there will be a good turnout for the Terry Fox Run scheduled for Saturday, September 15, from 10AM to 12 noon.

The 8 km route will be along the marsh road, beginning and ending at the school grounds.

Participants can vary the length and speed of their course to suit their individual preferences.

A BBQ will be held at the conclusion of the course.

CALA (Colchester Adult Learning Association) will resume adult education courses in September at the Centre, with instruction by Charlene Lannon.



Terry Francis shows Marguerite van den Hoek some of her samples of Steeped Teas at the Rest & Relax evening at the Legion Hall on August 17. (Shears photo)



Charlene Lannon and Jeff Maluske enjoy tea and dessert at the Rest & Relax event sponsored by the Great Village Community Association. (Shears photo)

Local Food Fund Invites New Round of Grant Applications

Local Food NS has announced another round of funding through the Local Food Fund at the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia for community based organizations that aim to strengthen the local food system in Nova Scotia.

The Local Food Fund is the only charitable funding

source in the province with a mandate dedicated to healthy local food issues. Interested groups are invited to apply for grants of up to \$1,000 each. Applications can be downloaded from www.local-foodns.ca or www.cfns.ca. The application deadline is September 14, 2012. Grants will be awarded in October.

Local Food NS is part of the Spirit Nova Scotia movement. Its goal is to help develop and sustain a healthy, local food supply for all Nova Scotians. This team of dedicated volunteers has partnered with the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia to create and administer the Local Food

Fund. For more information, please visit: www.local-foodns.ca

The Community Foundation of Nova Scotia is a public charitable foundation created by and for the people of Nova Scotia. It works with private donors, communities, and charitable initiatives which make an ongoing difference in communities across Nova Scotia.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.cfns.ca> For further information contact: Allison Kouzovnikov, Executive Director, Community Foundation of Nova Scotia. 1-877-999-5907 or ak@cfns.ca

Deadline for the October issue of **The Shoreline Journal** is September 18

To follow Megan's blog online go to <http://christiansfight.blogspot.ca/> or search on Facebook for "Hope for Christian Crowell".

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