

Kids Believe in SickKids Awards spotlights top young philanthropists in Ontario

National survey reveals that most Canadian parents are passing on the giving gene to their children

TORONTO, ON November 20, 2006 – More than 100 kids will gather at The Hospital for Sick Children today to celebrate the young winners of the inaugural Kids Believe in SickKids Awards. The awards are being launched in parallel with the results from the SickKids Spirit of Giving survey which show that parents in Canada are placing a priority on teaching their children to give back to others.

The SickKids Spirit of Giving survey found 89 per cent of parents in Canada noted that it's very or somewhat important that their children learn to donate to others. The survey also found that Canadian parents are serving as excellent role models for their kids, with 85 per cent stating that they have donated to charity in the past two years.

As part of its campaign to support empathy and compassion in kids, SickKids Foundation launched the Kids Believe in SickKids Awards. These awards honour and recognize young leaders who have made a difference in the lives of other children through money raised for SickKids. Today's event will feature the inspirational fundraising stories of four Ontario winners:

- *Top fundraising individuals:* Nobleton's Anthony Mascarin and Markham's Justin Bonfini, both 18, raised more than \$15,000 at "Rock 4 the Kids", a concert featuring local bands
- *Top fundraising group:* A group of high school students at St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic Secondary School in Oakville raised more than \$16,000 at their "Infusion" Fashion Show
- *Top tribute donation:* Toronto's Cole Rodness, 13 years old, raised \$22,000 at his Bar Mitzvah by requesting donations be made to SickKids in lieu of gifts
- *Spirit award:* Kingston-area Sydney Whyte, eight years old, helped to raise \$10,000 through homemade bracelet sales, head shaving pledges, and piggy bank donations

"Regardless of the size of the donation, these extraordinary children all deserve to be celebrated," said Paula Roberts, Vice President, Strategic Communications, SickKids Foundation. "As a philanthropic leader and an advocate of children's physical, mental and emotional well being, we think it's important to foster empathy in children and to teach them the importance of supporting others."

When asked who was most likely to teach their children to donate to charity, 55 per cent of Canadian parents named moms followed by 40 per cent naming dads. Nine per cent of Canadian parents believe teachers motivate children to donate while grandparents were named by three per cent. No respondents said celebrities have a philanthropic influence on their children.

Surprisingly, 18 per cent of parents said no one teaches their children the importance of giving back.

The survey also revealed that this holiday season, four out of five parents will encourage their children to donate to charity, while 19 per cent of parents will not.

"While we understand that children often learn empathy within the family, we'd also like to do our part to help inspire compassion and understanding. In addition to celebrating the young fundraisers who're making a difference for SickKids, we'll be launching SickKids 'Spend, Save, Give Banks'. Through these piggy banks, we hope to provide a simple and fun way for parents to teach their children financial management skills that include giving back to others," says Roberts.

With the SickKids 'Spend, Save, Give Banks', children can place coins from their allowances, earnings or savings into three separate slotted canisters: Spend, Save or Give. These banks are a fun and easy way for children to practice the art of saving, enjoy the fun of spending, and most importantly, feel the satisfaction of giving to others. The Banks can be purchased for a limited time online at www.ShopSickKids.com, Toronto's One of a Kind Show, or in the lobbies of The Hospital for Sick Children or SickKids Foundation for \$20.00 (plus tax) with the proceeds from the sales going to the SickKids Foundation.

Additional information about the SickKids 'Spend, Save, Give Banks' or the Kids Believe in SickKids Awards can be found online at www.sickkidsfoundation.com

The SickKids Spirit of Giving survey was conducted by Decima Research. A random sample of 597 Canadian parents with children 17 years of age or younger living in the household were interviewed via telephone September 28 and October 8, 2006. Results for a sample of this size are considered accurate to within +/- 4.0% per cent, with a 95 per cent confidence level.

About SickKids Foundation

SickKids Foundation was established in 1972. Its mission is to inspire its communities to invest in health and scientific advances to improve the lives of children and their families in Canada and around the world. Its vision is "Healthier children. A better world."

In addition to its support of The Hospital for Sick Children, the Foundation has a mandate to support children's health on a national basis. Through its National Grants Program, SickKids Foundation invests \$4 million annually across Canada in paediatric research, focusing on issues important to children's health which have not been addressed elsewhere.

For more about SickKids Foundation, please visit www.sickkidsfoundation.com.

About The Hospital for Sick Children

The Hospital for Sick Children, affiliated with the University of Toronto, is Canada's most research-intensive hospital and the largest centre dedicated to improving children's health in the country. Its mission is to provide the best in family-centred, compassionate care, to lead in scientific and clinical advancement and to prepare the next generation of leaders in child health.

For more about The Hospital for Sick Children, please visit www.sickkids.ca.

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