

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CEMETERY AND FUNERAL PROFESSIONALS

2017 IMPACT REPORT



Thanks to critical support by the Ontario Association of Cemetery and Funeral Professionals, the Unforgettables Fund helped **20** families last year, and covered **\$27,159** in funeral-related costs, bringing total giving to **\$280,500** since 2007. For the recipient families, these gifts have meant dignity and peace of mind. Here are some of their stories.

The debt of loss

A family of three from Quebec had been at SickKids for several months awaiting a heart transplant for their son. Tragically, they'd been through this sort of trauma before; ten years earlier they had lost another child—to a different disease at a different hospital. They happened to mention to the attending social worker that the funeral all those years ago had plunged them into debt. As immigrants, they had little family in Canada, and very limited means. Both parents had left their jobs to attend to their boy in his very precarious state. When he died, they were offered Unforgettables funds. They were so touched, surprised, and grateful for the support, which helped them say goodbye to their son with dignity and without a second thought to expenses.

Blindsided by trauma

When their young daughter died suddenly following an injury, her parents could barely wrap their heads around what had just happened. They were utterly overwhelmed. Despite their raw emotional state, they immediately worried about how they would cover the funeral costs; mom had been receiving employment insurance for several months, and dad had been off work during his daughter's hospitalization. The Unforgettables Fund put their minds at ease, allowing them to grieve and take the first shaky steps toward acceptance and healing.

One less worry

Last year, a young girl died suddenly in the intensive care unit after a choking incident at home. Her family, utterly struck down by shock and agony, had very limited means and three other kids at home. SickKids staff directed them to the Unforgettables Fund, which covered their daughter's funeral and lifted a layer of stress and worry.

A long, hard road

Last year, a single mother found herself in every parent's worst nightmare. Her son had an incurable, rare disease, which slowly and cruelly left him with no other options outside palliative care. His mom was a student scraping by on loans and carrying around the heavy fact that her son would die. Even though she had mentally prepared, when he finally died, she was overcome by a muddle of emotions: aching sadness, shock, and relief. During this darkest time, the Unforgettables Fund relieved a huge worry. Mom could focus on letting her son go.

Saying goodbye, again

A family recently came to SickKids from Montreal with their newborn girl, who was diagnosed with the same condition that had claimed their son two years earlier. They hoped against odds that their daughter could be saved by a lung transplant, but she died at just two months old, having spent her whole life in a hospital. Amid the haze of shock and grief, her parents were deeply thankful for the Unforgettables Fund, which covered the cremation and funeral-home costs.

Words from our grateful staff

"We see a lot of families in the same situation: months in a critical care unit, travelling from out of town, not being able to work, the resulting financial stress, a great deal of love for their babies and—after all this—the death of their babies. I am so grateful and relieved that I can offer families support through the Unforgettables Fund, which at such a low point of their lives, helps maintain their dignity and allows them to grieve the loss of their child without worrying about money. A few days—sometimes months—later, parents call us to express their gratitude. On behalf of all these families: thank you."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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