

Le Children Newsletter

December 2023

la fondation
de l'hôpital
de montréal
pour enfants
the montreal
children's
hospital
foundation



" He was so tiny at birth. Almost transparent. We could see the blood flowing through his little veins. "

Kana Austin's will to live

Kana Austin's battle started early, right from the 24th week of pregnancy. At birth, Kana Austin was connected to all kinds of impressive machines. It was all very frightening, but at the same time, I was reassured. They explained to me what was happening.

Our baby was in good hands, but we were not yet out of the woods. 285 days passed from the moment our little baby entered the neonatal intensive care unit at The Children's until the day he was discharged from the Hospital. Kana Austin had repeated infections and severe complications. Ten months of roller coaster rides. Hours of anguish, discouragement, and pain, but also beautiful moments filled with intense joy, hope, solidarity, and deep humanity.

We were able to get through all of this thanks to the extraordinary care provided to Kana Austin by The Children's, and thanks to your support.

All these adrenaline rushes, shattered hopes, financial stress, and the back and forth between the Hospital and home took a toll on our energy and our morale. We were of course offered psychological support, but it was the little gestures from the doctors, nurses, and the support staff that touched us the most.

We were at his bedside every day. Exhausted. And so were our savings.

I started by using my vacation days, and my floating holidays, and in the end, all our savings were gone. Fortunately, you were there. Thanks to your donations, we received meal vouchers and parking passes. You gave our family peace of mind, allowing us to focus on what's important: the health of our child. Thank you for supporting us.

Then, one day, the care team told us the last option to save Kana Austin's life was a tracheotomy (creating an opening at the larynx) because the breathing machine was no longer enough for him. The surgery was the right thing to do.

We don't know what the future holds for him and what other impact his extreme prematurity will have on his development, but we are infinitely grateful. Your donations allow The Children's to provide the best possible care to young patients in an environment that takes care of both the sick child and their entire family.

Thanks to your support, we never felt abandoned. I sincerely hope that you will donate again to help families like ours.


Marcial, Kana Austin's dad



THANK YOU FOR BEING THERE WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

You and I are alike. You care about children’s health and want them and their families to feel supported and cared for as they go through difficult times.

Since 2015, we’ve helped more than 70,000 families. How can I tell you how grateful The Children’s and I are to have you by our side? I have the privilege of seeing the results of your generosity. The expressions of gratitude from families never stop: your help comforts them, relieves their burden and gives them courage.

In December, your donation counts double.

At this festive time of year, The Children’s young patients are counting on us more than ever. And that’s just as well because our annual tradition continues. Again, this year my foundation and I will match your donation if you make it before December 31*.

Thank you very much.

I wish you a happy holiday season!



I had the great pleasure of shooting a TV ad with bubbly little Sienna. You’ve probably also seen the billboards, and the web and perhaps heard the radio ad. I hope you’ll enjoy watching the Foundation’s ad as much as I did.

* Up to \$250,000.

Donate online today at fondationduchildren.com

[Donate here →](#)



Here are three children you have helped



Alessandro

Alessandro was just two when he fell off the couch and banged his head on the floor. His parents brought him to the ER, where doctors said that he had a concussion and sent him home. When he was back at home his parents suspected that something was wrong, and they brought him to The Children’s ER. Doctors confirmed that Alessandro had a traumatic brain injury and that he needed emergency surgery to drain the fluid from his brain. After 4 surgeries, Alessandro is back to being an active kid. He loves superheroes and loves playing soccer and baseball and was able to recently start playing hockey.



Florence

Extremely premature, Florence was born at 23 weeks. With only a 50-60% chance of survival, the doctors didn’t know if she would survive: devastating news for her parents. As her lungs were not fully developed, she had to be intubated alternately with the ventilator. In intensive care, she developed retinopathy of prematurity and doctors had to inject her eyes to prevent her from going blind. Today, Florence is doing well, she’s eating, running, climbing, and continuing to develop. Laughing and full of energy, she always tries to keep up with her big sister.



Rita

Rita is 9 years old and receives highly specialized complex care. She has Pfeiffer syndrome, a rare genetic disorder in which the bones in her skull have fused early in her development. Rita is autistic and developmentally delayed. She needs a tracheostomy tube to breathe and is fed through a gastrostomy tube linked to her stomach. Rita is a courageous young girl who has undergone almost forty procedures and has had several near-death experiences. Rita loves singing and taking photos of her friends and family, and she is also a very good speller.

A LIFE ON HOLD

Justin was finishing high school when his life turned upside down. In March 2022, Justin began experiencing seemingly innocent symptoms – constipation, vomiting, and stomach pain. It turned out to be stage 4 colon cancer.

At 16, most teens are worried about prom dates and exams. But Justin was fighting cancer with a series of radiotherapy sessions. He had four surgeries and 12 rounds of chemotherapy. Dealing with the treatments and emotions triggered by a severe illness wasn't easy. It's not easy to eat when you are nauseated. Justin weighed only 32 kilos (70 lbs).

"After my second surgery, I couldn't stand or walk. Learning to walk again was, I found, the hardest part," said Justin.

Unshakeable determination

It was out of the question for Justin to miss his high school graduation ceremony and prom. His classmates cheered as he walked across the stage to receive his diploma and an award for perseverance.

In August 2023, the cancer returned, and Justin had to start another four rounds of chemotherapy. Even if he's a little worried about his future, Justin is ready to face the challenges that lie ahead and is looking forward to getting on with his life.



Thank you for always being there for children and teens with cancer. Your donations give them the support they need to cope with the physical and psychological effects of cancer and its grueling treatments.

It's Christmas at The Children's too!

Thanks to your generosity, young patients can also get into the Holiday spirit. Elves both big and small, compete to put smiles on the faces of children and their families.

Thank you for brightening their Holiday season!



1,000 gifts given to sick children



12 Canadiens players to bring joy



2 elves wrapping gifts for children in hematology-oncology



9 reindeer on the roof of the Hospital



1,500 balls on the Christmas tree in P.K. Subban Atrium



1 mini concert by Charlotte Cardin



1,500 volunteer hours in december



122 young patients who will not be home for Christmas



150 visits per day in the ER during the Holiday period



300 hot chocolate's served during a pyjama party



300 photos with Santa



1 visit from the big guy in red on Dec 25



THE MAGIC OF LIGHT THERAPY

Over the past year, Laurence has undergone four surgeries. While she hoped to recover, Laurence instead found herself unable to speak and had trouble walking, writing, and swallowing. It was a difficult period for her and her family, but light therapy brought them a ray of comfort.

Laurence was diagnosed with severe epilepsy at the age of six. After two brain operations, one with complications, a gastrostomy was required to feed her through a tube to her stomach. Then last May, Laurence underwent a callosotomy, a very rare surgery that consisted of splitting the cerebral cortex to decrease her epileptic seizures. It's a lot when you're only 12 years old. Laurence became depressed.

Everything changed when a Child Life specialist came into her room with a light therapy device. "When Laurence understood that by pressing the buttons, she could change the colours and music or make waves and clouds, her face lit up," her mother Catherine recalls emotionally.

" She could finally succeed at something, and it transformed her. "

Laurence benefited from light therapy sessions, a service offered as part of the Child Life program funded by donors like you. "Seeing my big girl smile and rediscover her love for life, and seeing her happy and relaxed was amazing for me," says Catherine.

Now, Laurence can say a few words and has started eating purée, which has led to other improvements. Her epileptic seizures are less severe and less frequent and she has decreased her medications. Thank you for helping to put the sparkle back in Laurence's eyes.

Thanks!



Kids just want to have fun this Holiday season!

P.K. has made some very close friends at The Children's. Lylia, 4, (our little reindeer) looks particularly mischievous, and Mila, 8, seated to P.K.'s right, seems just as delighted. Florence, 2, and Asher, 22 months, our angelic accomplices, took great pleasure in posing with P.K.!

On behalf of the entire team at The Children's Foundation, we wish you a very happy Holiday season and a wonderful New Year in 2024!

