

McPhee
, Bill.

City man needs double-lung transplant

Nortel workers donate \$10,000 to help McPhee

Bel - Bury (collector)

By Jennifer Bell
The Intelligencer

Bill McPhee says it will be "nice to be able to breathe again."

The 35-year-old Belleville man and his family were given a huge financial boost by local Nortel workers Friday that will put him on the road toward a desperately-needed double lung transplant.

McPhee, hooked up to oxygen and in a wheelchair, suffers from a rare syndrome that is destroying the capacity of his lungs.

And unless he can relocate to Toronto to be put on a waiting list for a transplant, his family physician says his condition will eventually be fatal.

McPhee's family had managed to collect \$5,100 through donations and community fund-raising, but were afraid it would take too long to bring in the \$20,000 McPhee and wife Deborah would need to live in Toronto for up to a year while waiting for a transplant.

Friday, an overwhelmed McPhee was presented with a \$10,000 cheque by Nortel employees after the plant conducted an in-house fund-raiser Wednesday and Thursday.

"This is just wonderful," he said after Nortel Canadian Auto Workers Union Local 1839 president Bill Carson handed over the funds in a brief ceremony Friday morning. "It will be so nice to be able to breathe again."

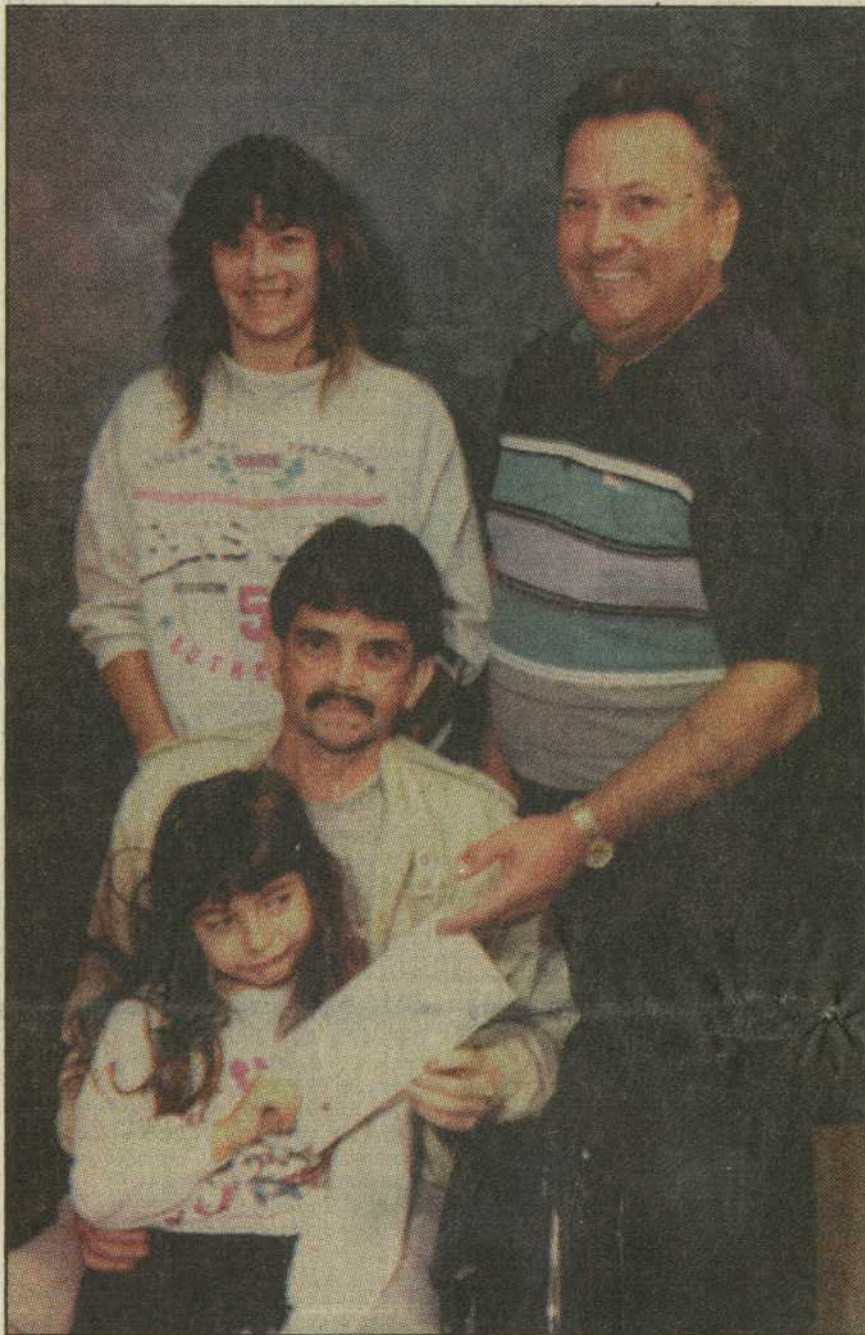
Carson said the \$10,000 represented the efforts of the entire plant: Locals 1839 and 1530, the Northern Telecom Club, and employees who participated in a gate collection at the Sidney Street plant Thursday.

McPhee's brother-in-law Bill Duffy, who has been spearheading local fund-raising efforts, said the family now has enough funds to start organizing the move.

"We are going there next week to finalize the location of an apartment near Toronto General Hospital," he said.

He hopes McPhee can be moved in by the first part of October, but adds they have had some difficulty obtaining an apartment with a year's lease by paying strictly cash.

He says Capt. Rick Sheasby of the Belleville Salvation Army has



Intelligencer photo by Frank O'Connor

Bill McPhee with daughter Michelle, 5, and his wife, Deborah, accept a \$10,000 cheque from Bill Carson of Nortel Local 1839.

been negotiating with the Salvation Army in Toronto to help find accommodations. "They (Toronto) have also generously agreed to furnish an apartment, if we find a suitable one that is unfurnished."

Because of McPhee's condition, an apartment with sufficient protection against Toronto's often-poor air quality is a necessity,

added Duffy. (Bill and Carol Duffy can be reached at 966-4025.)

Nortel's Bill Carson said with approximately \$5,000 still needed, he challenges other area locals "to help raise the required dollars."

Donations may also be made to the Bayshore Credit Union, North Front Street c/o William McPhee Trust Fund, account 0006312.

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