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To help spread awareness about a largely unknown disease called Tuberculous Sclerosis Complex— which is actually more prevalent than Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS) affecting one in 6,000 births—the students at Silver Creek showed their support for Junior Kindergarten student Keira Poff (left) by sporting blue clothing Wednesday.



Photo by Eamonn Maher

Silver Creek students get blue to show support for classmate

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

Students at Silver Creek Public School wore blue yesterday (Wednesday) and it has nothing to do with a certain pro hockey team called the Maple Leafs.

To help spread awareness about a largely unknown disease called Tuberculous Sclerosis Complex— which is actually more prevalent than Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS) affecting one in 6,000 births—the students at Silver Creek showed their support for Junior Kindergarten student Keira Poff by sporting blue clothing.

Wednesday was TSC Global Awareness Day and the CN Tower in Toronto was lit up in blue to show support for the campaign.

The four-year-old Poff is in her first year of school and was diagnosed at the age of seven months with TBS after suffering from frequent seizures. The illness affects all of her organs in some way and has caused a development delay in her learning abilities, requiring her to have a full-time education assistant on hand at school.

This past November, Keira was incapacitated by seizures an average of 20 times an hour, but she's now taking five different medications to help minimize them and has reverted to a strict diet of fats and proteins, avoiding sugars and starches altogether.

Her mother, Lee-Ann, said that Keira's condition has improved greatly over the past few months and that she loves being in school, but there's still no cure for TSC. Lee-Ann had to give up her job as an EA with the Peel Board of Education to care for Keira.

"As she gets older, there will be more obstacles for Keira," said Lee-Ann, who also has a six-year-old daughter who has no TSC symptoms.

"(But) going to school has been the

best thing for her. Being exposed to other kids has really helped her and it's helped them too, because they know what her feeding tube does and she just loves to be with kids her age. She's learning from them as well. Right now, her development is the equivalent of a two-and-a-half-year-old. She makes great progress when the the seizures are under control and because her new strict diet has been wonderful, she's down to just a few seizures a week."

TSC causes non-malignant tumours to grow in the brain and other organs and is caused by the mutation of two genes, resulting in autism or behavioural problems as well as seizures and development delay.

No one in Poff's family has TSC, but it can be inherited from a parent in approximately half of all cases and most of those people afflicted are able to live independent, healthy lives.

Keira is a regular visitor to Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto and has a specialist for each of her affected organs. She is not yet a candidate for brain surgery that would hopefully alleviate some of her health problems, although Lee-Ann is optimistic medical advancements will eventually neutralize the symptoms.

"Keira is the happiest, most loving person, despite all she's been through," added Lee-Ann.

"She takes everything that comes her way, no matter how difficult it is, and pushes it aside with a smile on her face. She's actually taught me a lot of things about how to deal with things and move forward with a positive outlook."

Ted Brown will return next week



2013 Spring Fundraiser

Saturday May 18th • 9am - 1pm

Spring Plant Pick-Up
Garage Sale

Barbecue - Chicken Dogs & Deli Sandwiches
Thanks to Maple Lodge Farms for hosting the BBQ

E-Waste drop off- Drop off

Drop off old electronics such as computers, tvs, dvd players, scanners, etc., copper pipe, electric motors, car parts, pots & pans, kitchen sinks, garden tools, appliances, aluminum doors, windows, siding, tin sheds, filing cabinets, stainless steel ladders, bikes, bbq, lawn mowers.



All proceeds go to:
 Halton Hills Christian School
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