

# Acton boy, 6, facing leukemia fight with the help of family and the community

By **Melanie Hennessey**  
Special to The IFP

They're the words no parent ever wants to hear a doctor say: your child has cancer.

As little Austin Hunak's parents reeled from the recent diagnosis of leukemia in their six-year-old son, the Acton boy showed remarkable strength beyond his years.

"He looked at his mother and said, 'Don't worry mom, I'm going to kick cancer right in the face,'" recounted Austin's grandfather, George Hunak.

While the Grade 1 student is busy fighting his battle at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Hunak is back in Acton taking action of his own.

The local man recently launched a fundraiser to help offset Austin's medical bills and the "hidden" costs that a family incurs when supporting a loved one with cancer, such as travel expenses, take-out food, etc.

"In the first three weeks we spent well over \$2,000 on hidden costs," he said. "It's a huge burden on families."

Hunak created a fundraiser page on GoFundMe— a crowdfunding website— and was amazed at how quickly the donations began

pouring in, with \$14,000 being contributed within the first two weeks.

Austin's journey began in the middle of August when he woke up one night with his mouth full of blood. Terrified, his parents rushed him to Milton District Hospital, where he was quickly transferred to Sick Kids. By the time all was said and done, Hunak said Austin had lost 80 per cent of his blood. Testing at Sick Kids quickly revealed Austin's diagnosis of leukemia.

"It was a huge shock to everyone. It threw us into a whole different world," said Hunak. "This is a nightmare I wouldn't wish on anyone."

Austin remains at Sick Kids, where he has been undergoing chemotherapy and treatment for a stomach infection, which has now cleared. Hunak reported that Austin's latest check up revealed good news.

"All his blood counts are up. The doctors say his cells and body are recovering perfectly," he said. "We are heading in the right direction."

His mother, Ashley Kendrick, has been staying at Sick Kids while father Dennis Hunak has been travelling between the hospital in Toronto and his job in Acton.

In addition to the GoFundMe campaign, Hunak is planning a fundraiser at the Acton Legion on Saturday, Oct. 17. The event will kick off at 8 p.m. and include live music from the Larry



Six-year-old Austin Hunak of Acton is facing a battle with leukemia at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children. But his grandfather, George Hunak, has started a crowdfunding page to help ease the family's ease the additional expenses. Submitted photo

Melton Band, games and a wide variety of prizes. Tickets cost \$15 and are available to purchase at Jonesy's Sports Hub and Grub (372 Queen St., Acton) or by contacting Hunak at 905-702-4183.

Those who can't make it to event but still want to contribute can purchase a support ticket for \$10.

Beyond the monetary donations, Hunak is overwhelmed by the moral support he has received from the community.

"Friends, family and even strangers have

been unbelievable with support and prayers," he said. "You just can't thank people enough when something like this happens."

Remaining funds that aren't needed by the family will be donated to Sick Kids, Ronald McDonald House and the Canadian Cancer Society.

Hunak's fundraiser page can be found at <http://www.gofundme.com/zj257ses>.

GoFundMe campaigns across the province have raised over \$12.5 million for more than 50,000 campaigns to date.



**IMPLANT SECURED DENTURES**

**IMPLANT SECURED DENTURES  
THE CLOSEST THING  
TO YOUR OWN  
NATURAL TEETH – MAYBE BETTER!**

**CALL US TODAY**  
TO BOOK YOUR COMPLIMENTARY CONSULTATION.  
YOU WILL BE SURPRISED JUST HOW AFFORDABLE  
STABLE DENTURES CAN BE!

Let our professional team offer you the very latest in implant denture technology. Let our kind, caring staff, exceed all your expectations. "Diana Dental" for diagnostic and implant placement, and "The Georgetown Denture Clinic" for the fitting and fabrication of your implant dentures. Together, creating the comfort you deserve.

**YOUR SMILE AWAITS**



**diana**  
DENTAL

**Dr. Stephen Diana DDS**  
DIANADENTAL.CA **905.873.6485**



**GEORGETOWN  
DENTURE  
CLINIC**

**Alexander Trenton DD**  
GEORGETOWNDENTURECLINIC.CA **905.877.2359**

