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Georgetown youth stares down adversity with first-pitch strike

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A recent trip to the Rogers Centre in Toronto with her Centennial Public School classmates to watch the Blue Jays should have been a carefree field trip for Grade 7 student and big baseball fan Marjie Snow.

But the 12-year-old had some important business to attend to before the game against the Los Angeles Angels in a Thursday matinee school day promotion. She had been selected to throw out the ceremonial first pitch and was quite concerned that it would either fall short or sail over pitcher/designated catcher Joe Biagini's head.

"I was really impressed with myself. (Biagini) called it a strike down the middle," said Snow, who was accompanied to the mound by Blue Jays' mascot Ace and her good friend Abby Harris.

"We had a really good day even if the Jays lost."

Toronto got thumped 8-1 by the Angels and Snow had hoped to meet her favourite player, Marcus Stroman, but he was away from the team on an injury rehab assignment.

Not a big deal, she remarked

with a wide grin.

However, the past few months have been painful for Snow, diagnosed with diabetes nine years ago, as well as coping with arthritis that has prevented her from catching the school bus a few mornings and kept her from returning to the Halton Hawks' rep fast-pitch program, although she is playing part time with a house league team, preferably at first or third base.

Centennial principal Joyce Jermyn said she's never heard Marjie complain or get upset over her situation when she needs medication or has to tend to blood-sugar levels.

At times Snow needs to use a wheelchair like on the day of the trip to the Jays' game, which was organized by Kelly Kilbride, a former teacher of hers at Centennial.

"In front of 43,000 people, I don't know if I could've thrown a strike," laughed her proud mother Jen Charter, Marjie's house fast-pitch coach and an avid softball player herself.

"She really needed it, and as much as Marjorie is such a leader and has a smile on her face all the time, she was getting a little down and tired of being arthritic and had enough of every-



Michelle Prata photo

Twelve-year-old Marjie Snow threw out the first pitch at a recent Toronto Blue Jays' game against the Los Angeles Angels at the Rogers Centre. She tossed a strike to Jays' pitcher Joe Biagini with some guidance of the club's mascot, Ace.

thing.

So at my end I'm asking, 'What do I do to bring her out of this?' and that day totally changed things around. She's doing great now."

Snow said she's still coming to grips with the sudden passing of her father Brian in January 2017 at the age of 45.

A popular figure in the local sports community, Snow is also survived by three stepdaughters and Marjie is referred to as

Mini Brian due to their resemblance.

When Charter was unable to coach Marjie's team a couple of years ago due to work commitments, Brian stepped in to volunteer. As a tribute to him last year, players on two Hawks' teams wore "Coach Brian" on the sleeves of their uniforms.

Marjie says she'd like to play hockey as her dad did, but her health issues make it difficult, so she watches games on TV to

remind her of him.

"I've been through a lot and I've just kind of learned to deal with the facts," she added.

"He's not coming back but I'm not going to forget him. That was my problem at first, that 'Oh no, I'm going to forget him.' My mom and my grandparents and my family around me have helped me realize that you're not going to forget if you have us, so that's really helped."

Charter said her daughter recently started using a "life-changing" OmniPod insulin pump to better manage the diabetes and the goal is that she'll be self-sufficient and independent when she starts high school next year. Physiotherapy sessions are helping with the arthritis and the Hawks' organization has been doing a lot of pinch-hitting for the family as well.

"I like to say that we've built a tribe to be able to support her," Charter added.

"We lost a pillar of support with Brian's passing, so the sporting community has stepped in and made sure she's been able to play and get to games. There are so many people who do so much for us it's incredible. I can't thank everybody enough."

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