

'NOTHING CAN BE SAVED'

FIRE LEAVES FAMILY IN NEED

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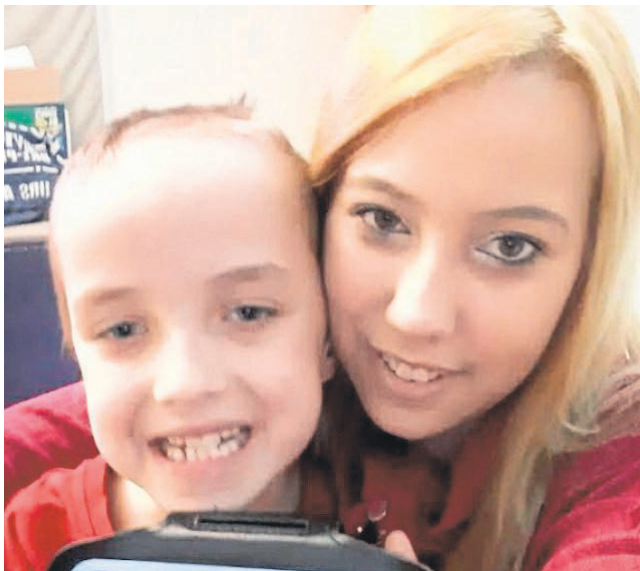
A Halton Hills family is struggling to get back on its feet after a weekend house fire left the local residents homeless. The Miller/Payne family says they've lost almost everything they own to fire and smoke damage after a Feb. 14 blaze started in the master bedroom of their home on Hwy. 7, near 22 Sideroad.

Now, the local clan — including a pregnant woman, seven-year-old child with cancer and elderly man — are living in a hotel room and trying to get funds together for necessities like food and a future home.

A GoFundMe page has been established, with a goal to raise \$10,000 to secure a new rental house and furniture.

"Nothing can be saved in our home, so we have to start from the beginning," said Jessica Miller, a mother of two who's expecting her third child in June. "We don't have tenant insurance — nothing is covered."

It has certainly been a challenging year for the Miller/Payne family. Since last April, the local residents have received a cancer diagnosis for their son Bentley, who has a tumour impacting his brain and spine, and endured a car accident and motorcycle accident, the latter of which has left Miller's husband, Allan Payne, unable



Jessica Miller photo

Jessica Miller and seven-year-old son, Bentley, who's currently battling cancer.

to work.

She said it's believed the fire was caused by an electrical issue stemming from an extension cord used in the master bedroom.

Shortly after putting her son to bed at 9 p.m., Miller said she and Payne started smelling smoke.

"We raced down the hallway and opened the (master bedroom) door — a puff of black smoke came out, and we could see the fire," she recalled. "My husband yelled, 'Fire, everybody out of the house!' My son was sleeping in the room across (the hallway), so I grabbed him and ran outside."

After Payne and friend Sean Laws had made sure everyone got out safely — including 11-year-old daughter Savanna, Miller's grandfather Ken Elliott and Payne's brother Angelo Cook, who also lived there — the two men went back in with fire extin-

guishers.

"They did put out the fire before it made it through the whole house," Miller said, but noted smoke damage throughout other areas of the home was extensive.


While the family has secured emergency shelter at the Quality Suites in Oakville, Miller said that support will run out in about two weeks, making it all the more urgent for the family to find a new home.


In the meantime, the local residents are also in need of grocery store gift cards and donations of hygiene products and clothing (men's size large/extra-large, women's size medium, women's size large and children's size 7/8). Board games and crafts for the kids would also be welcomed.

Donation drop-offs can be arranged by texting Miller at 647-615-7892.

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Visit the Affordable Housing project page on Let's Talk Halton Hills to register for the Virtual Open House. Tell us your story and help shape the future of affordable housing in Halton Hills. We want to hear from you!

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