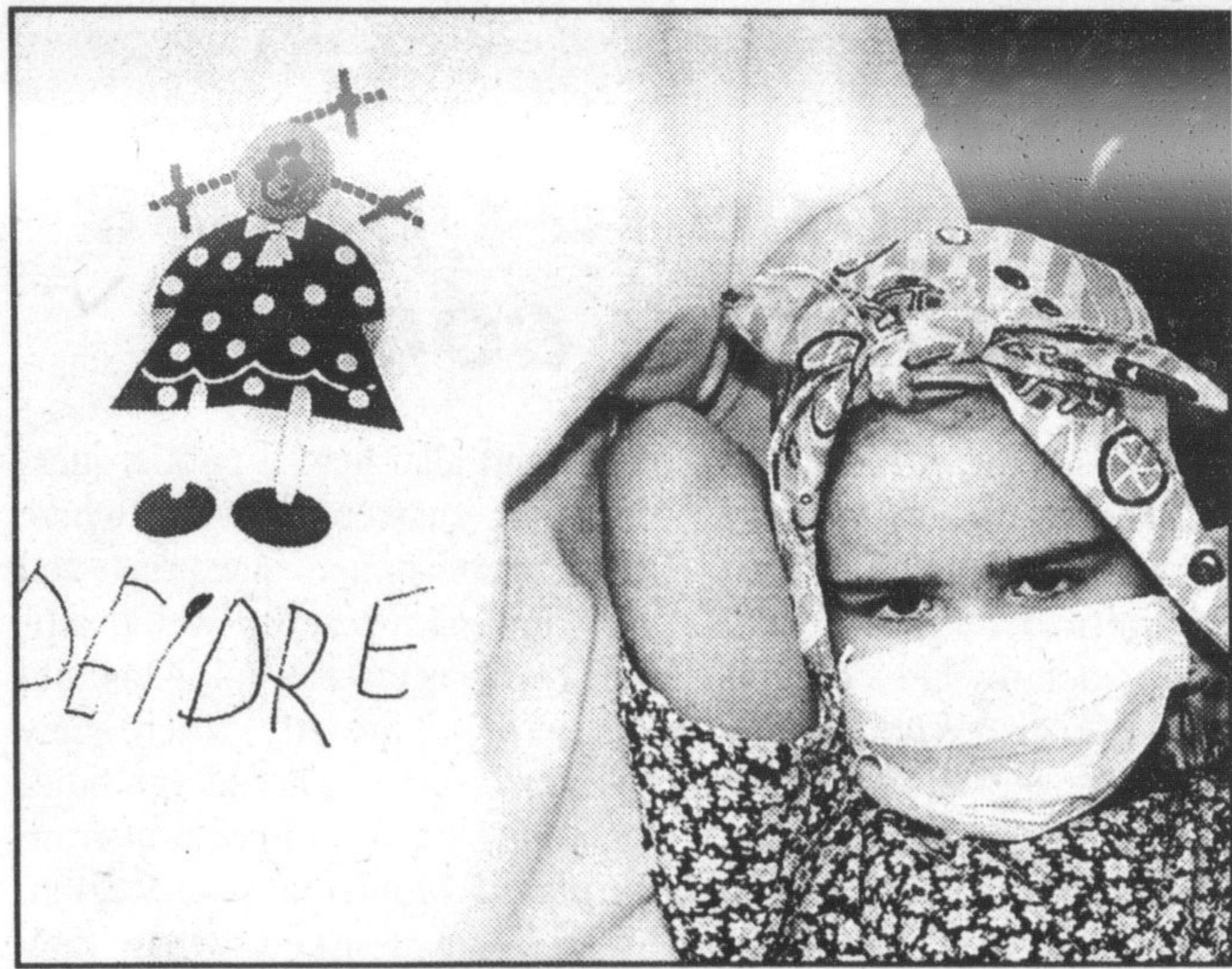


Deidre and Friends Foundation now helping others



File photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Little Deidre arrived home from the hospital after her bone marrow transplant five years ago this month.

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Everything just fell into place and we didn't have anything to do with it," explained Mr. Scholtz, talking about the generous fundraisers held and gifts the family received. "I don't think it could have happened in any other community."

Members of the community not only raised nearly \$100,000 to pay for the donor clinic, they also delivered hot meals to the house and helped in any other way they could. The couple even received use of several vehicles when theirs broke down.

Following the transplant, Deidre was placed on several medications to ensure the bone marrow took hold.

An unfortunate side affect of the medication saw Deidre swell from about 45 pounds to about 90 pounds in the month after returning home — earning her the nickname 'Little Buddha'.

"I used to carry her up the stairs because she couldn't walk," said Mr. Scholtz. "On top of that, her face was so swollen her eyes were shut — she couldn't even see."

But within months the medicines became unnecessary and Deidre returned to her natural state.

Having lost a year between the transplant and recovery, Deidre demonstrated her strong-will by making the most of the summer of 1997. In addition to joining her friends on the soccer field, she took up the

task of learning to skateboard, roller blade, and even taught herself to ride a bicycle.

"When she saw all her friends doing those types of things (the summer of her transplant), it bothered her that she couldn't. She became determined to do it," Mr. Scholtz said. "She wouldn't even let me help (teach her to ride a bicycle) she was that determined."

Deidre told The Champion she doesn't remember much about the transplant or the public outpouring of support. The only thing she remembers are the friends she made along the way.

During her annual check-ups at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Deidre said she likes to stop by and visit the doctors and nurses she met during her lengthy stay. She also likes to visit some of the children in similar situations today.

"It's just basically to say 'hi,'" Deidre said. "We gave them t-shirts when we went for this year's visit. One girl, her name is Deidre and she was really happy to have a shirt that had her name on it."

The shirts she hands out are part of an awareness campaign started by Mr. and Ms Scholtz through the Deidre and Friends Foundation.

The foundation raises money for bone marrow research, promotes community awareness and provides support services for families of bone marrow



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Deidre recently got her wish of having a pet dog after waiting five years. It was a precaution in the event Deidre needed another bone marrow transplant — in which case she couldn't be around animals. Here, she lovingly holds Lucky.

disease patients.

"It's something we felt we had to do," said Mr. Scholtz. "There are people out there that aren't getting the kind of support we did. Not everyone feels comfortable turning to the community for help. It can be an incredible invasion of priva-

cy, but for us it was worth it."

For more information about the Deidre and Friends Foundation or to make a donation contact Clem and Liz Scholtz at (905) 693-0743 or e-mail them at deidre.friends.foundation@ympatica.ca.

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