



Champion COMMUNITY Page

Dealing with alopecia not easy for young boy, but luckily it's not life-threatening, says mom

By RICHARD VIVIAN

The Champion

For seven-year-old Luke Campbell, life hasn't really changed since an immune system deficiency made his hair fall out. But people's perception of him has.

"It's not life-threatening, but it can definitely be a tough one," said his mom, Nancy, explaining many people assume Luke's hair loss is the result of chemotherapy treatment for cancer.

"There was one mom whose eyes welled up with tears and asked if Luke was okay. And I tend to forget it because I'm so used to him running around with no hair."

Luke's hair began falling out almost a year ago as the result of alopecia areata — a condition in which the body's immune system turns against hair follicles, leading to hair loss. About 1 per cent of the population is effected by alopecia to varying degrees. There are no ill-health effects related to alopecia.

Hair loss started slowly

For Luke, hair loss began slowly, with more and more of his scalp showing throughout the school year. By January, half of his hair was gone.

"It just thinned right out," his mother said. "Now you can see that his eyebrows are gone and some of his eye lashes are going."

Though there's nothing medically wrong with him, being bald sometimes made it rough going to school, Luke told The Champion.

"All the kids were making fun of me because I was bald. One kid called me a 'big, ugly, bald kid' or 'baldie,'" he said.

It was comments like those that inspired Ms Campbell to approach both Luke's teacher and principal at Robert Baldwin School. And soon after, acceptance of her son's new appearance began to grow. He was also permitted to wear a baseball cap if he wanted to.

"His teacher talked to all the children in the class and then the children in the class were very accepting and were pretty good about it," Ms Campbell said. "But then, we found that at recess or in the hallways, that the kids that didn't know became a problem."

But Luke seems to take it all in stride, crediting his friends for treating him as if his appearance had never changed.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Nancy Campbell believes educating people about alopecia will help make things easier for her son Luke.

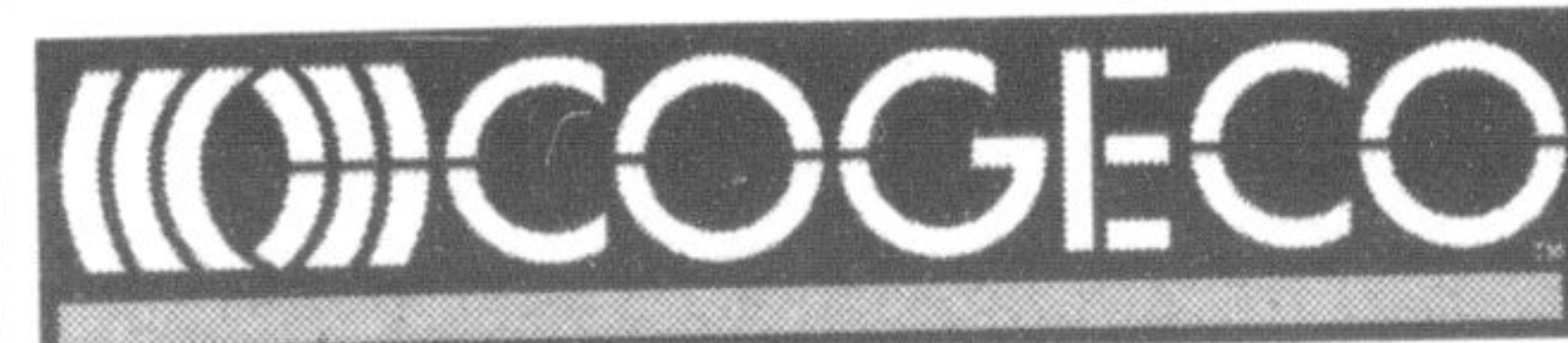
Attending a conference of the National Alopecia Areata Foundation in St. Louis earlier this month has also helped, Ms Campbell added. "It was medically informative and we met a lot of other people (with alopecia). We heard a lot

about what other people have done (to make school easier)," she said, adding she came home with a video explaining the phenomenon, which she intends to play for Luke's classmates this coming school year.

While at the conference, Luke also had the opportunity to meet and play with other alopecia-affected children.

"I made a lot of friends there," he said. "It was fun."

COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — July 22nd - July 29th, 2002.



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Monday, July 22nd	Tuesday, July 23rd	Wednesday, July 24th	Thursday, July 25th	Monday, July 29th
9am, 10am, 11am & 12:30 pm Plugged In! - Late Week Edition	9:00am, 10am Plugged In! - Late Week Edition	9:00am, 10:00am Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	9:00am, 10:00am Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	9am, 10am, 11am & 12:30 pm Plugged In! - Late Week Edition
5pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	11:00am Monday Replay	11:00am Tuesday Replay	11:00am Wednesday Replay	5pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition
6:30pm Faces - Sladek/Spicer	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Late Week Edition	6:30pm Faces - Sladek / Spicer
7:00pm With Good Taste	6:30pm The War Amps Present... "The Bow & The Ballad"	5:30pm Kid Connection	6:30pm Money Week	7:00pm With Good Taste
8:00pm SportsZONE Live	8:00pm	7:00pm Cable in the Classroom	7:00pm The issue is...	
		8:00pm Milton Council, July 22nd, 2002	8:00pm Neighbour To Neighbour - July 8, 2002	

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