

KAREN'S
Flower Shop
since 1966
487 Laurier Ave.
(905) 878-2881
www.karensflowershop.com

COMMUNITY

Single mom facing tough struggle head on

Young son has cerebral palsy

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

They say everything happens for a reason. These are words that local single mother Krista Brown lives by, even in the toughest of situations. The 27-year-old's faith in this sentiment has certainly been put to the test over the past two years as she's worked hard to deal with the day-to-day realities of having a child with special needs.

Her 23-month-old son, Kristopher, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy (CP) earlier this year after extensive testing for everything from terminal illnesses to diseases that would've left him severely mentally and physically disabled.

"It's a relief to get a diagnosis, but to label him with something is hard," said Brown. "It's been a really long struggle."

Along with the label comes expenses for medications, equipment and treatments like physio and speech therapies.

To make Kristopher's plight a little easier, the community has stepped up to help out, with several fundraisers being held recently. The proceeds will be put into a trust fund that's being established by Brown's employer, Troy Newton of Troy's Diner.

Kristopher's journey, although short so far, has been filled with medical problems from day one. It started when he was born at Milton District Hospital with a deflated left lung. After waiting for seven hours for a specialty team from McMaster Children's Hospital to arrive, Brown was told that her son's lung had re-inflated on its own.

He was ambulanced to Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital for monitoring and after 48 hours, he was able to go home. But at a mere 18 days old, he developed his first lung infection — something he now gets about every four to six weeks.

Shortly after that, Brown noticed her son's eyes were flickering back and forth rapidly. She was told he had a condition known as Nystagmus.

At six months old, he was admitted to McMaster for a week and tested for neuroblastoma (cancer of the nervous system).

"When the results came back negative, we began testing Kristopher as an outpatient and we've been testing him ever since," said Brown.

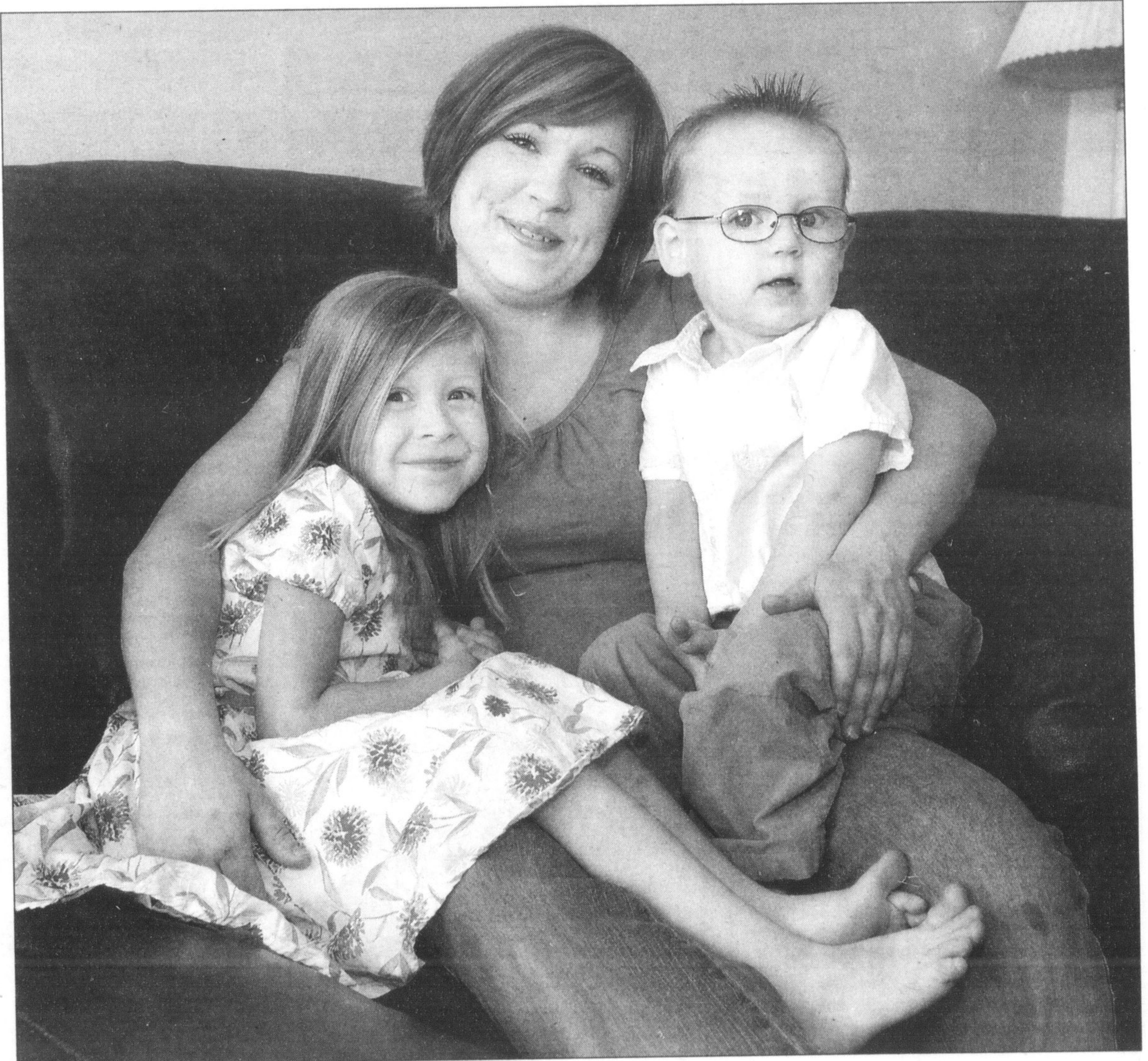
The sweet little blond-haired, blue-eyed boy was ultimately diagnosed with CP, which essentially means he has damage to his brain. Brown said from her own research, she discovered that many CP cases are caused by a lack of oxygen at birth.

While such a diagnosis may knock some people down, Brown has taken a different approach to the situation.

"Kristopher has changed my life for the better," she said. "He's taught me more so far than most people learn in a lifetime. This horrible issue we're dealing with has helped me be a better person."

Brown said her daughter, four-year-old Erika, gets a little jealous from time to time about the attention her little brother gets, but at the end of the day "she's like a second mother."

"Kristopher has a peanut allergy, so Erika always asks people, 'Did you check that for peanuts?'" she said.



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

THE TIES THAT BIND: Krista Brown gives four-year-old Erika and 23-month-old Kristopher — who has cerebral palsy — a big hug.

Although Kristopher's health issues continue, he's also made some amazing progress thanks to extensive therapy. He learned how to hold his own head up and sit when he was younger, and now he's walking. Brown also taught him how to sign a few words, since he can't yet verbalize.

"That (walking) is a miracle to us," Brown said. "He's very high functioning."

Tests and therapies for Kristopher are ongoing, and the toddler will also be going in for surgery in September to fix his blocked tear ducts.

To help cover some of his costs now and in the future, Brown's co-workers at Troy's Diner have stepped up to the plate, like Greg Mountain. The 16-year-old recently held a yard sale and raised about \$650.

"I thought it would be nice to do something for Krista," Mountain said.

Another Troy's employee, Linda D'Entremont, organized a 'Kare for Kristopher' concert that brought in just under

\$2,000.

Roses are also for sale at Troy's Diner and Grower Direct Flowers, with proceeds designated for Kristopher. Other local businesses have come to the youngster's aid as well.

All of the money will go into the trust fund once it's set up. Brown will only be able to access the money for Kristopher's expenses.

"I just can't get over the fact so many people are willing to help out someone they don't know," she said. "I'm very thankful."

Despite their ongoing plight, the single mother said she continues to truly believe things do happen for a reason.

"I believe I'm supposed to be Kristopher's mom. He's taught me so many things, like how to live life to its fullest," said Brown. "Would I go back and change things (for him) if I could? Of course. But then he wouldn't be Kristopher."

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@milton-canadianchampion.com.

TV COGECO

Truly Local Television

www.cogeco.ca

NORTH HALTON STUDIO

Laurier Plaza

500 Laurier Avenue

Milton, ON L9T 4R3

905-878-9306

Cogeco Cable Channel 14

Wednesday, July 2		Thursday, July 3		Friday, July 4		Saturday, July 5		Sunday, July 6		Monday, July 7	
1:00 PM	Halton Hills Council Council meeting of June 23, 2008	1:00 PM	Milton Council Council meeting of June 23, 2008	1:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	1:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	1:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	1:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.
6:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	6:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	1:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	1:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	1:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	1:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.
6:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	6:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	6:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	6:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	6:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	6:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.
7:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	7:00 PM	The War Amps Present... The Boys of Kelvin High: Canadians in Bomber Command.	6:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	6:30 PM	Seniors Showcase Magazine show produced by Halton Seniors.	6:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	6:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.
7:30 PM	Seniors Showcase Stories for seniors, by seniors in North Halton.			7:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	7:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	7:00 PM	Milton Council Council meeting of June 23, 2008.	7:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.
8:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.			7:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	7:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	7:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	7:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.
8:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.			8:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	8:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	8:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.	8:00 PM	TVCogeco News News, Sports & Events in Milton, Halton Hills and Rockwood.
				8:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	8:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	8:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.	8:30 PM	Your Lifestyle It's "Your Lifestyle" in Milton, Halton Hills & Rockwood.