

# Most festive Christmas sweater fundraiser at Hardball

By Stephanie Hounsell  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Miltonians are being invited to search high and low for their most festive Christmas sweater — i.e., the ugliest Christmas sweater — to wear to an upcoming fundraiser to help a local boy.

"We're all frantically trying to

find the worst sweater," laughed Ross Smith, one of the organizers.

The humorous idea was set in motion recently by a long-time group of friends who decided they wanted to do something to raise money for 10-year-old Christopher Lambert and his family after reading in the *Champion* about the family's efforts to fundraise for a

wheelchair accessible van.

So, next Friday, a concert and Christmas Sweater Party for Christopher will take place from 7:30 p.m. until about 2 a.m. at the Hardball Café on Regional Road 25, about a kilometre north of Hwy. 401.

Included in the evening will be three Milton bands/artists — Carly

Malone Smith, Khalel and From the Bridge — plus a raffle, a 50/50 draw and more.

Organizers are hoping to sell 500 tickets.

Tickets cost \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door.

Smith said the idea came to him and a group of area friends who grew up together to do some sort

of charity function for Christmas. After reading about Christopher, they decided they wanted to do their part to help him in whatever way they could.

Smith said it's only recently that he's come to know the Lambert family — Lisa and Pat and their children, Christopher and seven-year-old Ryan — but already he's been struck by how close-knit they are and their positive attitudes.

"They're so down to earth, such amazing people, and you see how much effort they put into everything," he said, adding it was easy to get excited about the fundraiser.

Christopher was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at the age of nine months.

He has limited use of his arms, his eyesight is damaged and he can't feed himself or grab hold of objects. He also can't operate his wheelchair on his own, and can speak only a few words.

But, said his mom, his smile can light up a room. He also has a high level of comprehension and is very social.

Lisa said she can't believe how much effort Smith and his friends are putting into this event.

"I haven't met anyone quite like him — to want to do all that to help out," she said.

"I'm quite overwhelmed by the whole thing."

It's an amazing group of friends that has devoted their time to this fundraiser. Although they've each gone their separate ways — Smith actually lives out of the country and is just home for the holidays — a group of about 70 friends remain close and keep in contact, often seeking out charity opportunities.

Two years ago, the group travelled to Chicago to participate in the "Embrace Race," where they broke the record for giving the most hugs in 24 hours.

Anyone who would like to donate a prize for the Christmas party or buy advance tickets can call Smith at (905) 462-1887.

Stephanie Hounsell can be reached at [sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

## Friday & Saturday December 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>

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## Local bands to perform for Sick Kids

Three local bands will rock the house for charity at Hardball Café next weekend.

Classic rock group Traffic, Foo Fighters tribute band In Your Honor and prominent local ensemble The Randalls will hit the stage Saturday, December 20.

Tickets cost \$10 at the door, with a portion of the proceeds going to the Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.

Concert-goers are also asked to bring a non-perishable food item donation for the Halton Food Bank.

The music begins at 9 p.m.