

Entire family of medically fragile child supported, included

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doesn't get the attention she needs and deserves, she adds.

Admittedly, caring for a child with chronic and complex medical needs is exhausting and until they discovered The Darling Home, there was no other option for the family, says Blackburn.

"It's a soothing and comforting place for these kids. So much of their time is spent in hospital. It was tough the first few times to leave Callum, but we finally realized that Callum being here is an experience for him as well. They know his needs. It's a godsend for us."

While in attendance, the children can participate in assorted therapy sessions including hydrotherapy, pet therapy, music and recreational therapy.

At The Darling Home, the entire family of a medically-fragile child is supported and included, says Blackburn.

"There are parties, Halloween and

Christmas parties. There are opportunities to meet other parents. It's a family-centered philosophy, making sure everyone feels supported," she says.

Being the sibling of a chronically-ill child can be isolating outside of family boundaries, says Blackburn and the all-inclusive nature of the home not only helps in the siblings' understanding and awareness, but enhances the level of care for the child.

A sibling can be one of the child's greatest advocates, adds Horrell.

Respite also offers a break for the child from their own routine, offers Blackburn.

The Darling Home's vision to be an "oasis of comfort and joy" isn't only reflected in its grand interior and the smiles on the faces of its specially-trained staff, but the tranquility of its grounds. A new feature is the totally accessible playground, built with funds generated by the Rotary Club and the Milton Wheels Ride for The Darling Home for Kids, an 80-km ride taking place Tuesday, led by



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

Bruno, 14, tries his hand at a few notes during a musical therapy session on The Darling Home's outdoor deck with therapist Sommer Johnstone and her guitar.

Peter Gilgan, founder and CEO of Mattamy Homes.

The playground was an important addition because of the lack of one, not just at The Darling Home, but in families' communities, says Horrell.

Future initiatives are to build a trail from the home to a pond on the grounds so the children can enjoy the natural setting, and to add to the sculpture gardens, says Horrell.

Anyone who opines that her place of employment must be a sad one, Horrell begs to differ.

"There is just so much joy here," says Horrell. "When you spend time with the kids, they are so expressive. Parents embrace their life. It is a real place of joy."

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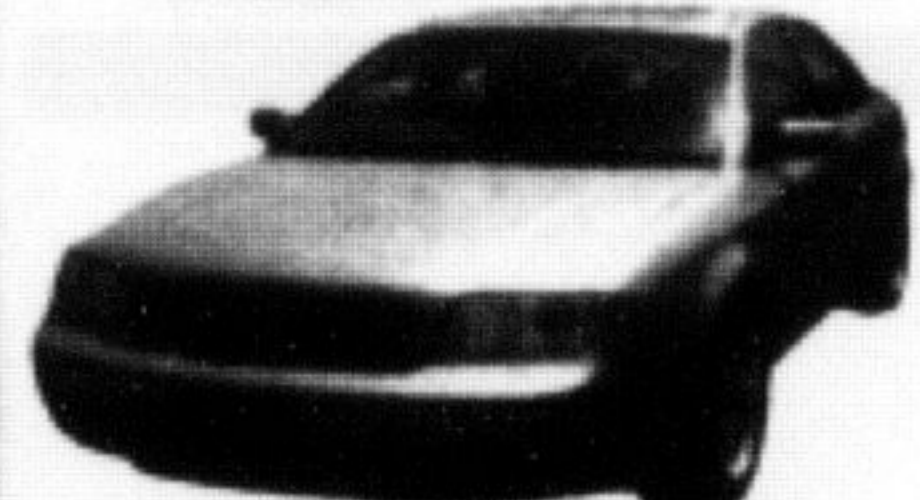
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Town of Milton
Community
Fund

Milton Community Fund

Milton Council has approved the distribution of \$164,974 in Milton Community Fund grants to 14 organizations and 22 individuals during the first six months of 2011. The purpose of this funding program is to provide financial support for activities that enhance the quality of life within Milton or enhance the image of the Town with a priority given to organizations that provide recreation, artistic and cultural programs and services.

Council is pleased to provide individual travel grants to: Aislinn Fisher, Anthony Richard, Charlie Barnes, Chris Leeder, Christian Arseneau, Colin Scarffe, Colm Whitford, Duncan Moffat, Heather Sadler, Jack Whitford, Jade Lacsamana, Jason Lacsamana, John Swan, Johnathan Scripnick, Joseph De Villa, Madelyn Dunley, Madison Harley, Martin Marinov, Quincy Brozo, Sarah Gillard, Sydney Townsend and Travis Gerrits.

Grants have also been awarded to the following organizations whose proposals included equipment needs, event support/promotion and training of volunteers/program leaders:

- Fine Arts Society of Milton
- Halton Agricultural Society
- Milton Choristers
- Milton Marlin Swim Team
- Milton Minor Lacrosse Association
- Milton Referees Association
- Milton Santa Claus Parade Committee Inc.
- Milton Speed Skating
- Milton Stags Basketball Club
- Milton Youth Soccer Club
- North Halton Girls Hockey Association
- Ontario Electric Railway Historical Association
- Optimist Club of Milton
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 136 Milton

For more information about the Milton Community Fund, and this round of approved grants, please visit our website at www.milton.ca or contact Joy Anderson, Senior Manager, Recreation Services, at 905-878-7252, ext. 2529.