

COMMUNITY

Littlest Heroes Project creates lasting memories

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Among a parent's most precious possessions are photos of their children. It's something to treasure not just now, but decades down the road.

But what happens when days and nights are consumed with caring for a sick or disabled child?

Quite often, life's more pressing needs take over and those all-important family photos just never get taken.

Fortunately, an initiative called the Littlest Heroes Project aims to change that. It partners eligible families with professional photographers around the globe who volunteer their time and resources to do free child and family portraits.

And nobody could be more thankful for it than Miltonian Karen Fyffe, mother of six-year-old Maitlyn, who suffers from a severe global developmental disability.

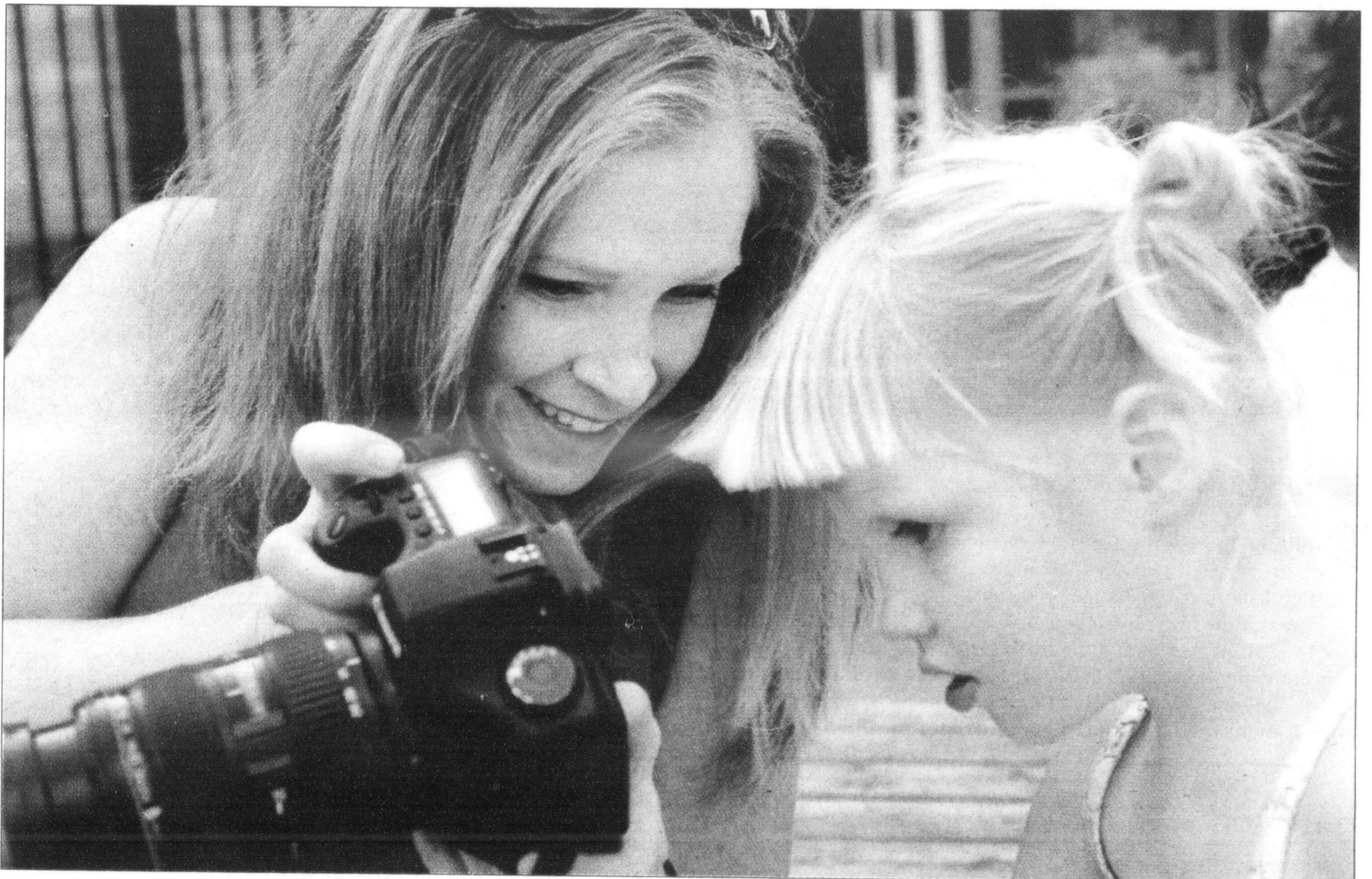
Fyffe recently found out about the Littlest Heroes Project and decided to apply. She was quickly connected with local photographer Meghan Liddle, who took photos of the family at their home last month.

Wonderful project: Fyffe

"Our life is so different from other families so when something like this comes up, it's wonderful," Fyffe said, explaining she was "over the moon" when she was put in touch with Liddle. "It's so heart-warming."

She said not only are photo shoots difficult for families like hers to schedule, they also require photographers with a special patience and understanding of their unique needs. Her family — which includes Maitlyn, her husband and their nine-year-old son — hasn't before had this type of portrait session.

The photo shoot of the Fyffe family went very well, Liddle said, explaining she tried to keep the atmosphere natural so it was more like they were hanging out. By the end, she'd gotten lots of great shots.



CAPTURING A MEMORY: Photographer Meghan Liddle shows a picture to six-year-old Maitlyn Fyffe as part of the Littlest Heroes Project.

MICHAEL IVANIN / METROLAND WEST MEDIA GROUP

"I was very happy with what I got and I think Karen will be thrilled," she said.

Maitlyn is non-verbal, but she quickly warmed up to her, Liddle said, and by the end of the morning she was taking her by the hand and showing her around the house.

Liddle only recently became involved with the project, but she couldn't be more excited.

It's open to families of kids and teens from infant to 21 who have a serious illness or life-altering disability.

Her first portrait session was with a local family of an 11-month-old boy who has already endured two open-heart surgeries in his young life.

After that first session, she was hooked.

"I walked away changed," said Liddle, who runs Meghan Liddle Photography and has two young sons of her own. "Their spirit and strength is inspiring, it really is."

Seeing the love and determination these families have gives her a whole new perspective on life, Liddle said, and reminds her of

what's truly important.

"I feel very blessed. They all say, 'Thank you so much,' but I feel like I should be thanking them," she said.

Liddle said she hopes other local families will take advantage of the program and that the word will spread to recruit additional photographers.

For more information, visit www.littlestheroesproject.org.

Stephanie Hounsell can be reached at shounsell@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



Spokes & Slopes Bicycle Festival

August 14th & 15th 10am - 5pm

- Bike trials competition
- Exhibitors & Suppliers
- Free safety check for your bike and helmets
- Demo bikes to try
- Adaptive equipment
- Children's play area
- Wagon rides around the park
- Park exhibits open





American Civil War Re-Enactment

August 21st & 22nd 10am - 5pm

- Authentic military camps
- Battle re-enactment
- Period music
- Medical demonstrations
- Artillery, cavalry demonstrations
- Expert commentary
- Park exhibits open
- Country Canteen Open
- Kid's scavenger hunt & prizes

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LABOUR DAY WEEKEND: September 3rd to 6th

Ontario Steam: Antique Preservers Association
Steam-Era 50th Anniversary
Milton Fairgrounds 136 Robert Street,
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Gates Open: 8:00 am
Contact 905-878-3144
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