

Student receives memorable graduation thanks to teacher

By Julia Le
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Kristen Hancher was able to participate in her Grade 8 graduation from a hospital bed thanks to technology and the strong will of a teacher.

The 14-year-old, who was diagnosed with scoliosis in March, was able to watch the entire ceremony at Tiger Jeet Singh Public School via FaceTime on her iPad while she sat in her hospital bed recovering from major surgery to straighten her spine.

Her homeroom teacher, Sarah Fulmer, set it up so that Kristen's mother could hand her the Award of Excellence in Art/Drama as her name was announced during the procession. Kristen, a gymnast and a competitive dancer, said she feels lucky to have such a thoughtful, caring and supportive teacher during the most challenging moments in her life.

"She's like my second mom," she told the *Champion*. "She would visit me in the hospital and she would care for me like I was her own child. When there was a huge knot in my hair she would brush it out."

She said even Fulmer's family went above and beyond to help her be a part of everything, with Fulmer's husband using his iPhone in

the front row to connect Kristen to the ceremony and her friends.

Kristen's mother, Shari Hancher, added that what's truly remarkable about Fulmer is that she "lives by her words — there are few people who do."

"She stated right from the beginning of the school year that she is a mom first and a teacher second," she said, noting that Fulmer has been especially helpful over the last few months.

Fulmer has offered strong words of encouragement while her daughter comes to terms with the possibility that she won't be able to dance competitively because of her spine condition and the major surgery she underwent, said Hancher.

Fulmer was the mastermind behind the pre-grad rehearsal where she encouraged Kristen to dress up and enjoy some dancing with her friends before her surgery. She also made an arrangement with counsellors at Kristen's high school in September to ensure she shares all the same classes as her best friend so she'll have someone close by to provide assistance, like carrying her bags and bringing homework to her should she miss class.

"Without the support of Mrs. Fulmer and her friends, I don't think she would be in the state



Recovering from major surgery, Tiger Jeet Singh Public School graduate Kristen Hancher poses with her teacher Sarah Fulmer while showing the Award of Excellence in Art/Drama she received at her Grade 8 graduation.

she is with a positive mindset," she said. "She (Fulmer) was instrumental in that."

Kristen added Fulmer would do this for any one of her students, which speaks volumes about her genuine character.

"She's an all-around wonderful person and she would always take anyone who had trouble under her wing and help them through that," she said.

"I'm really going to miss her next year, but I'm

definitely going to visit her."

Fulmer told the *Champion* Friday there isn't anything she wouldn't do for her students.

From making calls to removing a tough knot like the one Kristen had in her hair after sitting in the hospital bed for several days, she said she believes it's part of her role.

"I love my job and I love teaching," she said, adding that she's flattered by the Hancher family's kind words. "I have a really good connection with my kids at school."

She noted what motivated her to reach out and help Kristen and her family is her role as a mother.

"I have a daughter too and I believe very strongly that my job isn't just to educate (the kids) with the curriculum," she said. "Parents trust me with their kids and I feel strongly they need to know they are loved and that I care for them."

Fulmer said she also had the help of all of Kristen's peers as well as the school's administration in orchestrating the graduation plan.

She said it was all worth it to see Kristen a part of such a milestone day like one's Grade 8 graduation.

Julia Le can be reached at jle@miltoncanadianchampion.com or on Twitter @JuliaMiltonNews.

save.ca

GET CLEAN FOR LESS



Save \$1 on any
Dove® Men+Care Body Wash



Save \$1 on any
Dove® Body Wash

VALID ONLY AT SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Get your coupon at Save.ca
(while supplies last)

[facebook.com/savedata](https://www.facebook.com/savedata)

is a division of metroland media

Spend \$20
on July 20th



On Saturday, July 20th we are asking
the people of Milton to spend \$20 locally.

Milton is a growing and vibrant community.
The small and independently owned businesses
are the mainstay of our town. The Milton Canadian
Champion is proud to partner with many locally
owned business. Starting in July we are introducing
a new way for consumers to spend their money
where it matters most:

Close to home.
Look for more details in
Thursday's newspaper.

The
Canadian
CHAMPION
Milton's Community Newspaper since 1860.