

Vets hoping to make a dream come true

Cash donations for Penny can be made at the Hald-Nor Community Credit Union Ltd. in Hagersville. The veterans association donated \$500 to the fund.

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OHSWEKEN — Penny Montour sat under hot lights and endured flashing cameras with a gentle grin, playing with her necklace and sometimes flirting with her captive audience.

There was little evidence of a terminal illness until the raspy cough, or until one realized that, at 22 months, she still can't crawl.

The Six Nations Veterans Association held a press conference Wednesday to begin a fund-raising campaign to send Penny and her parents, Ervin and Shirley Montour of R1 Ohsweken, to Disney World in Florida for a week in April.

Penny has Werdnig-Hoffman

disease, a degenerative form of cerebral palsy that attacks the skeletal muscles. Death in early childhood is usually caused by respiratory complications.

Doctors have told Mr. and Mrs. Montour that their daughter is unlikely to live past her third birthday.

She was diagnosed with the disease about seven months ago after her parents noticed she could not move her legs.

Amidst the bustle of the press conference a boy sat at the back of the room, mostly silent.

Penny's brother, Walter, 14, and the rest of the family happily help out when she wants to go places. Penny also has two

sisters, Patty and Trudy, both 12, and another brother, Josh, 11.

"You can tell she knows she's the centre of attention," said Walter. "She knows a lot of words but you have to be more patient with Penny because she repeats things a lot."

Walter said his sister is very familiar with the Disney characters. "Probably, when she sees Mickey Mouse she won't want to leave."

Penny gladly confirmed Walter's suspicions when she confidently told reporters that Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse are her favorite characters.

Donald Duck also received an honorable mention and Pluto is a character Penny calls her friend.

Joe Hill, president of the veterans association, said the group is looking for volunteers to help canvas for funds. Jars will be put in local stores and gas stations for coin donations.



Wayne Roper, Expositor Staff

A Six Nations veterans group is raising money to send 22-month-old Penny Montour, a cerebral palsy victim, on a trip to Disney World. Penny appeared at an Ohsweken press conference on Wednesday with her parents, Ervin and Shirley Montour.