



York Region Carrier of the Week

ISRAEL
1988 - 2001

Israel will be remembered—His impish smile, his optimism, his love of basketball and his attachment to a certain hockey sweater were all part of his winning personality.

Following a valiant battle with bone cancer, Israel Kapalisok, 12, died in the Hospital for Sick Children on the weekend. Plans are in the works to send his body home for burial in a family plot in Uganda. A community fund-raising drive has been launched to help pay for the final burial plans.

Yesterday, Israel's family, lead by his mother, Lydia, welcomed fellow church members, friends, neighbors, teachers and students from Summitview Public School to Stouffville Missionary Church and said their final good-bye to Israel. Pastor Gordon Alton of the Community Mennonite Church officiated.

Israel's family came from war-torn Sudan, arriving in Stouffville in 1998. At the time, Israel's mother had a goal: Lydia would build a better life for Israel, his sister Rachel, his brother David, her twin nephews Mark and Zake and her teenage sister Lily. When baby Nelson arrived a year ago, Israel was thrilled.

Before embarking on a new life in Stouffville, through the sponsorship of the Stouffville Mennonite Church, Israel's family had struggled, indeed: A pregnant Lydia escaped her ravished village and, with the children in tow, made her way to a refugee camp in Kenya. For the next five years, the family shared the camp with 10,000 others.

While in the camp, Israel's family was offered the chance to settle in Canada. Lydia didn't hesitate. But, she had her terms: Lydia could take all of her children, including her sister and her nephews. Canada agreed to Lydia's demands. While Lydia knew little of Canada, she knew there was no war. Once in Canada, her children would be out of harm's way.

After settling in Stouffville, Lydia enrolled in an English language course, while Israel and the others went off to school in Stouffville. There, they, too, learned to speak English.

Israel soon got a job. He became a newspaper carrier with The Tribune. Three of his siblings also got paper routes in the east end of Stouffville.

When Arlene Maddock, distribution representative for the Tribune, met Israel, she was reminded that family closeness is an international trait. When ill health prohibited Israel from delivering his newspapers, his sisters and brothers took over on his behalf. "The family cared for each other. This is very sad. Our sympathies are extended to Lydia and her family," said Maddock.

Israel made friends quickly—a sportsman usually does. While he was diagnosed with cancer close to two years ago, Israel maintained his spirits, putting on a brave face when forced to endure radiation treatment and major surgeries.

While usually confined to a wheelchair, Israel could, on occasion, still make it to school and to the basketball court. Sometimes when Israel shot the ball, he'd get a basket. Sometimes, he didn't.

"Even when the cancer progressed, Israel remained optimistic," said school principle Eva Carter. "He never gave up hope," said Carter.

A few weeks ago, a nurse from the Hospital for Sick Children visited Israel's Grade 7 classroom and explained to the children Israel's health situation and his treatment. This was done to prepare the students and to give them some understanding of what their dear friend was experiencing, said Carter.

A while ago, Israel was thrilled to receive a very special gift. Keith Acton, assistant coach with the Toronto Maple Leafs and Stouffville resident, had the privilege to meet Israel. After the meeting, Acton had the entire Toronto Maple Leaf hockey team sign a jersey. When Acton presented it to Israel, it was a moment to cherish. "He loved his Leafs jersey and wore it everywhere," said Carter.

Summitview Public School plans to honor Israel at a special memorial service soon. Meanwhile, the school will present athletic awards in Israel's name. Earlier this week, a grief counsellor visited Summitview to help the children deal with his death.

Pastor Alton is inviting Stouffville residents to join the church community in the drive to return Israel's body home. Donations can be sent to Community Mennonite Church, 114 Glen Gall Lane, Stouffville, Ont. L4A 1W4.

I'm bigger than them, so why do I feel bullied?

Can we please have a pet, mom?" They stand there looking all innocent—eyes fluttering, lips pouting and, yet, somehow, they appear ready for battle.

Them against me. Standing firm. Side by side. Siblings united.

I frantically go over the standard parental arguments in my mind. I'm taller than they are and smarter, too. I have more seniority than them and I could, certainly, take them both in a fight. I earn more money than they do, too.

So why, why, why do I feel like I'm being bullied here?

They sense my moment of weakness and move in for the kill.

"Mom, I swear on a bag of Sunkist oranges, which I promise to eat every week, that I'll take care of a pet. Please, mom. I'm the only kid in my class who doesn't have a dog or a cat."

That's my eldest child, Kody. A handsome, tall, persuasive devil who is really getting on my nerves these days.

He's starting to argue more now that he's nearly 10, he catches mistakes I make and he is constantly looking for ways to



Tracy Kibble

move in on my paycheque.

I squint my eyes suspiciously. Him, I gotta watch.

"Yeah, Mommy, and I'm gonna name my cat Emily and a dog Elizabeth and I want one, right Kody?"

That's Kendall. She's three, short but sharp as a tack. Persuasive, too, and rather fickle.

But I think with that last statement, I may have found the wedge I need to break them down. Conquer and divide.

"Forget it, midget. I'm not namin' no pet Emily. How do you expect me to walk around the neighbourhood, calling that sissy name? Besides, you can't name a German shepherd Emily."

"Yes, you can, moron. Emily is a good name. Right Mom?"

"Don't get me involved. And

there's no reason to argue about a name when we haven't even got a pet."

I tell them matter-of-factly and with the confidence of someone definitely in the winning position.

I remind my children who really gets stuck with "the pet."

I remind Kody about Poochy, our first hamster. Yes, Kody was only five at the time, but that furry little rodent was a lot of work.

I remind them of Taz, our second hamster, and of Zena, our third and final four-legged gnawer.

I remind them of how it was me who changed the cage, water and food and I show them a hole in the drywall where Zena escaped her home and decided to try and wreck mine.

"Yeah, but things would be different with a dog, Mom, I promise." Kody informs me.

I point to our newt, Buddy, who, incidentally needs feeding. Who empties the water from the tank, cleans it out, scrubs the rocks and feeds Buddy his daily fix of frozen bloodworms?

Kendall looks at me with that wide-eyed optimism.

"Can I have a pony then, Mom?"

Sheesh!

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