



Camp-Inspired Programs are Critical as Pediatric Hospitals Reach Full Capacity this Holiday Season

Campfire Circle Urges Canadians to Donate Generously on Giving Tuesday

Toronto, Nov 24, 2022: At a time when pediatric hospitals across Ontario are overwhelmed with cases of influenza, COVID-19 and the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), children with cancer or serious illness currently in hospital are most at risk of contracting these infections.

Pediatric occupancy in hospitals across the GTA jumped from 85 per cent in mid-October to over 120 per cent as of November 15, 2022. Kids in oncology and hematology floors are facing longer wait times for surgeries and reporting greater feelings of isolation due to stricter visitor policies and stronger health and safety protocols.

“Campfire Circle’s in-hospital program team plays a critical role in pediatric hospitals across Ontario as we continue to provide support to kids and families experiencing longer wait times,” says Paresa Jensen, Chief Program Officer, Campfire Circle.

This Giving Tuesday on Nov 29, Campfire Circle urges all Canadians to donate to its camp-inspired bedside programs that bring back joy and laughter to kids and families in hospitals, especially during this busy holiday season.

The impact of these gifts, such as a \$25 slime-making kit or a \$250 winter cheer pack filled with arts and crafts supplies to decorate windows and in-hospital rooms, help improve kids’ mental health and overall wellbeing, instills hope and gives kids the space to just be kids.

Taylor* has been in hospital for 87 days.

“When you’re six years old, 87 days feels like a lifetime. In consultation with her medical team, they told me that it’s critically important for her to get moving immediately and keep moving as much as she can, all in the hope that she can walk out of here sometime before the end of the year,” says Samantha Rennie, In-Hospital Program Specialist, Campfire Circle.

“I knew exactly what to do. We play ‘statues’, where we go walking in the halls and we freeze when anyone sees us. Our nurses and doctors got into it right away, and Taylor bursts with giggles when everyone plays along. After a while she gets really tired and we need to head back to her room, but I can see her progress already, and she’s just delighted by the game! Luckily, when we get back to her room she’s always up for playing with slime. With the support of donors, I’ve made huge batches of winter slime—it’s light blue with glitter and snowflakes. Taylor always wants to add googly eyeballs and I’m here for that.”

Donations received on or before November 29 are triple matched by up to \$100,000 by the Ever Hopeful Fund—helping Campfire Circle reach three times more children and delivering three times more crafts, games, and music.

To donate, visit <https://give.campfirecircle.org/page/117667/donate/1>. To learn more about Campfire Circle, visit www.campfirecircle.org.

**Taylor's name has been changed for privacy issues*

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About Campfire Circle:

For almost 40 years, Campfire Circle has been providing healing through happiness by providing camp-inspired programs to kids and families affected by childhood cancer or serious illness. Programs are delivered in hospital across Ontario, at community events and at overnight camp. At no cost to families, these programs help improve overall wellbeing, build self-confidence and resiliency and provide much needed connection with others who share a similar journey. For more information, visit:

www.campfirecircle.org. Follow @campfirecircleorg on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn, and @campfirecircle_ on Twitter.

Media Contact:

John McAlister
Senior Director, Marketing & Communications
647-286-7675 / 1-888-464-6624
jmcaster@campfirecircle.org