

## Little Abby Eveson leaves a legacy of perseverance

By Mark Pavilons

King's smallest heroine, little Abby Eveson, leaves a legacy of perseverance.

And that legacy will hopefully transform into a lasting physical memorial.

Abby passed away suddenly Oct. 24 and her death has the community reeling.

A Celebration of Abby's Life will be held at the Trisan Centre, 25 Dillane Drive, Schomberg, on Thursday, Nov. 1, starting at 2 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to wear Abby's favorite colours, either pink or purple and a We Believe in Abby t-shirt if you have one. At 3:20 p.m. the ice surface will be available for public skating until 6:50 p.m. From then until 8 p.m. the family invites you to join them in common areas at the Trisan Centre for a time of fellowship and refreshment.

The community came together to support the Eveson family, and outpouring has been truly remarkable.

Mom Becky Eveson noted on Facebook said they are working with the Township to build an accessible memorial park in Abby's name in Schomberg. They are hoping to include a pavilion and make it a park that will be able to have community events and fundraisers held at it, to help give a location to inspire young and old to give back to charities that are close to their hearts.

Rory MacKinnon, owner of the Schomberg McDonald's, was quick to offer his support. From Oct. 26 to 28, 100% of the sales of their charity cookies will go to the We Believe in Abby fund.

We have come to know Becky Eveson, Craig and their family over the last two years since we opened the Schomberg restaurant, MacKinnon commented. We are also very strongly invested in the Schomberg community. We are so honoured to be part of this great community that cares so much.

Signs of support have sprung up throughout Schomberg, in form of pink ribbons.

The last few days have been uplifting, Becky wrote on Friday. A community mourning our loss with us. You drive through town and all you see are pink bows everywhere. The town is literally painted pink.

They say it takes a village. There is no doubt in our minds we picked the best one. From the beginning, the support for our family has been unimaginable.

Abby's story is one of hope in the face of almost insurmountable odds. Abby fought like a champion throughout her short life. Abby suffered from a rare congenital heart defect. Born without her main pulmonary artery, Abby had her first surgery 14 hours after birth and has had three open heart surgeries since.

Parents Craig and Becky had gone above and beyond ensuring that Abby has more than enough love and positive energy.

From Front Page

She was the driving force behind the We Believe in Abby campaign, raising tens of thousands of dollars for Sick Kids Hospital. Condolences flooded social media and Facebook the day Abby passed.

In his post, Craig said he's absolutely gutted. I have no way to express what a hole in my life this morning has left. Nothing is going to be able to replace the way she looked at me. The last 5 years have been the most emotionally difficult times I will ever face, but they are nothing compared to the joy my sweet little girl gave me every time I saw her. I have been reading the kind words that have been posted and texted to us today and I know I was not alone. She truly was one of a kind and I wouldn't trade one second of her extraordinary life. She has made me a better person and the luckiest dad in the world. Daddy loves you so very much my sweet sweet little girl, I will miss you today, tomorrow, and every day, and for the rest of time.

Mom Becky poured her heart out on her Facebook post.

I never thought I would ever be writing this especially when Abby has been doing so well. Attempting to walk more, eat more, and in general just looking better than ever. This morning has rocked our world as I sit in the ER holding my baby girl for the last time. She had a cardiac arrest this morning and wasn't able to fight anymore.

I said it last week after the Wiggles concert. This girl had a twinkle in her eye and a love for life. She had that special gift of making everyone around her fall in love with her. She gave everyone so much hope. She was a miracle. We made sure that she has the opportunity to live life as we knew we never had any guarantees.

How do we move on without her smile, her laughter, her love.

She is my sunshine. In my heart of hearts I honestly thought she had beat this as had beat this.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini extended his condolences to the Eveson family, noting Abby was an inspiration to us all.

“For a little girl, she had such a big impact on the lives of everyone in King,” he said. “She was always smiling. For all of the difficulties she endured, people can learn a few things about having a positive outlook. She was an inspiring little example of courage.”

Abby has touched the community forever according to Councillor-elect Bill Cober.

“Abby has been an inspiration throughout her life journey. Abby, her family and many community volunteers have worked to support many others through the ‘We Believe in Abby Campaign.’ Our entire community sends our thoughts and prayers to the Eveson family at this time. Our community is a family and we are all grieving but are blessed that Abby touched our lives and will always remain a part of our community.”

Ward 2 Councillor-elect David Boyd, who serves with Craig on King Fire and Emergency Services, said he's deeply saddened and praying for the Evesons, their extended family and for everyone who was fortunate enough to have known Abby.

“Abby's light shone bright. The impact she had in the community will never be forgotten,” he said.

Public support also poured in on the Go Fund Me page set up in Abby's memory. It surpassed its goal within the first two days. To contribute, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/3h3hur-in-memory-of-abby>

The Evesons have spearheaded the We Believe in Abby Day for the past four years. The 2018 event, held this past June 16, raised a little over \$10,000 for Sick Kids.

Abby's presence helped redefine “family” in Schomberg, within the ranks of King Fire and Emergency Services, and in fact, all across King Township.