



Equal Opportunity

BY MELANIE TIBISHKOGIJIG

PRO Kids has helped my family for over twelve years. I am a mother of four and a grandmother of five, all of whom I have raised. Six of the children were assisted by and benefitted from PRO Kids.

The service has supported my family in a number of activities like lacrosse, gymnastics, dance and of course, hockey. Hockey is huge for my family! My son is now twenty years old and it helped him through his entire youth. His coaches taught him many skills on and off the ice. My daughter started in IP1 with PRO Kids' help, and now she has finished Midget and is going into her first year of the adult league, Thunder Bay Women's Hockey.

My granddaughter is two years old

and is in gymnastics. She is awesome; she is like one solid muscle! You see so much pride in her little face.

As we know, recreation helps our kids in many ways, but particularly their self-esteem. They are all fighting their demons and discovering who they are. My daughter is going through that right now. What is helping and keeping her and others going is the various recreation activities that they do.

To each organization that accepts PRO Kids and donate spots in their programs, you do not know how much you are helping our kids, how much you are helping our families. Recreation is expensive and many families in our community are low

or single income. Myself, I am in school and working when I can. Regardless of income, we all want our kids to have equal opportunity and not to have to make sacrifices. We try hard to provide for our kids the best we can. PRO Kids really takes a lot of that financial burden away and helps kids participate in activities that instill so many positive skills and values.

You do not know how much this service helps. The parents are the ones who would have to be paying but the kids are benefitting. It is the kids that are taking away all of the positive impacts of recreation, and learning skills that they not only can use on the ice or the field, but at home, school, and for the rest of their lives.

OUR VISION

That all children in Thunder Bay are able to participate in recreation activities, which boost their self-esteem and promote healthy growth through the learning of new skills, increased knowledge, and personal development.

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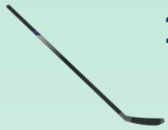
PRO Kids 2019 IMPACT

**1,054 KIDS IN NEED
ACCESSED
RECREATION ...**

**157
LEARNED
TO SWIM**



**126 PASSED
A PUCK**



**25 MADE
MUSIC**



**101
WENT TO
CAMP**

**A TOTAL OF
\$393,090 IN
SPACES ACCESSED**

EVENTS IN 2020

CIRCLE K FAMILY SKATE

PRO Kids spring Family Skate will be returning **March 20 @ the Fort William Gardens**. Only \$3 admission. Don't forget your skates!

QUIZ NIGHT

PRO Kids' second Quiz Night will be held in April 9 @ the **Finlandia**. To register your team call 625-2340!



CONQUER THE TOWER

Returning **November 2020!** Think you're brave enough to take the plunge off the Canada Games Complex diving towers? The more money you raise, the higher you must jump. Call 625-3212 to sign up today!

Dreams Come True

BY ALLY DROMBOLIS

PRO Kids was able to be a part of something amazing this year, and quite literally make "Dreams Come True". In partnership with the Telus Cup, Hockey Canada worked with PRO Kids to provide 27 Thunder Bay children with brand new equipment. These children were from families who would not be able to afford equipment without assistance.

"Two of my children were chosen", remarked one of the parents. "My kids finally have brand new equipment, which is something that I wanted but couldn't provide for them because of the cost. This year they'll be going out on the ice, and they'll be shiny".

Each child was suited from head to toe with brand new helmets, skates, sticks and everything in between. In one case, a young girl was being fitted with a helmet. Surrounded by her family who came to watch and support her, the young girl commented, "Look auntie we won't have to share a helmet anymore"!

The kids were able to test out their new gear with an on-ice training clinic the next day. Fox School of Hockey, a PRO Kids partner, led the kids through a number of drills and a game of hockey to wrap up the day.



Every child left with big smiles, and a sense of excitement to get back on the ice. If that wasn't enough, Hockey Canada paid up to \$450 towards each child's hockey registration the following season.

It was clear the impact recreation has on a child and their family. The children were making friends, building self esteem, and gaining skills. Parents were interacting with one another and cheering their children on. This all took place in less than 24 hours; imagine the impact recreation can have over the duration of an entire childhood.

Giving A Little— Helps A Lot

BY ALLY DROMBOLIS

Over 1,000 children and youth in our community are able to reap the benefits of recreation thanks to the support PRO Kids receives from various donors. The Real Canadian Whole Sale Club has provided kids with the opportunities to build friendships, enhance their self-esteem, and simply have fun through the donations raised from their "Give a Little, Help A Lot" Campaign.

By asking their customers to donate at the till during their weeklong initiative, Deanne and her team raised over \$2,000 for PRO Kids bringing



their 3-year total to \$5,000. That is enough to place 68 children in swimming lessons.

For more information on how to donate and help families in need visit prokidsthunderbay.ca.

For more information,
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