



10 years of comfort  
a decade of joy



# Welcome



It has been an incredible journey. From the initial vision to the reality of a home away from home providing care to medically complex children for over a decade, this book is a celebration of a home filled with love.

From the original building purchased from the Basilian Fathers and named The Cedarbrook Home, to the six bed Rose Cherry's Home for Kids, and the now state of the art twelve bed facility and therapeutic space known as The Darling Home for Kids, this book tells the story of 10 years of comfort and a decade of joy.

In the pages to follow we pay tribute to the caring people who have touched the organization in many ways; our generous donors, committed volunteers, building partners, the community, and all of the friends who believed in us and helped us along the way.

In the years to come may the children and families at The Darling Home for Kids continue to inspire us all to dream.

## Acknowledgments

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"It's a place where she is safe and well-cared for so we can have time to recharge, sleep and spend with the boys."

- Jodi Peters, Rheanne's Mom

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"When Mark came to stay at The Darling Home for Kids my heart was filled with so much happiness because I knew this was his last Home. It was perfect, just for him. A beautiful home, filled with AMAZING people for Marky to know he is still loved. Marky passed away in the most beautiful way...surrounded by LOVE."

- Lynn Rumsby, Mark's Sister

Hours of Care since Opening  
our Doors:

273,270

Number of  
Families Served:

170

## Family Reflections

"There is something that makes The Darling Home for Kids a special place, a secret ingredient. This mysterious ingredient has no material properties, it is a presence that holds everything together, but is not wrought into, rather flowing through."

We can build a beautiful building in the woods, with all the technology to care well for the weak, but if we don't have love, then all you have is an institution. Love is the mystery that holds all things together, and The Darling Home for Kids is overflowing."

- Wayne Rumsby, Mark's Dad



"After a tour of the Home and meeting the staff, my husband and I felt comfortable with the facility and programs. We have never looked back on our decision."

- Sian Gray, Cery's Mom

"The Darling Home for Kids takes care of our son as we would take care of him, and that is a comfort that you cannot imagine. It lets us recharge our batteries, ready to tackle another week and appreciate ourselves, our daughter and especially Graham."

- Todd and Dawn Stewart,  
Graham's Parents

"It is a great relief knowing that she is happy and comfortable in the care of the Staff at the Home."

- Souzan, George, Natalie  
and Michelle Assaad,  
Melody's Family

## Our Guardians

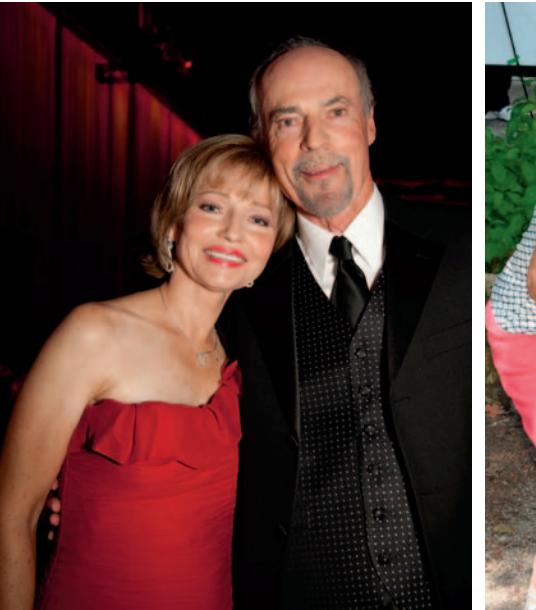
When we had the chance to support The Darling Home for Kids, we leapt at the opportunity to help create a wonderful place for medically fragile and technology dependent children and their parents. We have always felt that this is by far and away the best investment we have ever made.

There is something magical that happens when you drive up the driveway at the Home. As I watch kids playing on the play structure, or sitting in our sculpture garden listening to the birds or enjoying pet therapy or music therapy, I know that we have created not only a respite home for parents, but a great place for kids- one that is designed just for them.

The Home has surpassed the many dreams and hopes that we all had so many years ago. I am thankful for the support of so many donors – individuals, companies, foundations – and for the dedication of our Board of Directors, our volunteers and our remarkable staff.

We are so proud and honoured to be part of this great organization.

– Michele Darling and Mike, Dan and Ryan Eagen



"If you can dream it, you can do it."

– Walt Disney



In our original logo, Maggie was the Angel whispering in the bear's ear.

## Our Founder

Maggie Waligora had a vision for the Cedarbrook Home and her significant efforts are where it all began. She was the original champion of the cause and she worked tirelessly to promote it.



## The Dream... The Early Years

The Early Years were filled with enthusiasm, drive, fun and perhaps some naïvety as to the complexity of establishing the Home particularly as it related to zoning, licensing, renovation costs and government funding.

The original home, although initially holding out much promise as an ideal home-like setting, soon revealed serious challenges as to the cost to renovate which ultimately necessitated a new design.

During times of uncertainty there was always an angel waiting in the wings to help; the MacLean family who helped mortgage the original property, the Bowker family who filled our propane tank so the pipes wouldn't freeze, and countless others who believed in our vision and gave us what we needed to keep the dream alive.



Ruth Matheson with David Bowker



Original home



William and Barbara McLean with Don Cherry

## Partnering with Government



In the early years, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services aligned with our philosophy that out-of-home respite for parents caring for medically complex children was essential to the health and well-being of families. With their support and funding, we opened our doors to provide much needed respite services in 2004.

The Darling Home for Kids was the first paediatric hospice in Ontario funded by The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Recognizing the necessity and benefit of hospice care for children, the Ministry provided funding that allowed us to welcome our first palliative child in 2006.

Today we continue to provide respite and hospice care to medically-fragile children thanks to our strong partnerships with the Ontario government.



Hugh Robinson was a Program Supervisor at MCYS and as an early champion of our cause he was instrumental in helping us secure respite funding. Hugh passed away in 2013 but his legacy lives on in our programs.



George Smitherman, former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, tours Ontario's first paediatric hospice.



## Cherry Family Legacy

The Cherry family's efforts dramatically changed the destiny of the Home by putting it on a path to become the first class facility that we now enjoy. Don, Cindy and Tim's efforts remain a lasting legacy for Rose.



Don and Rose Cherry with  
grandson Del



Don Cherry with his daughter, Cindy  
and grandson Del



Don Cherry helps break ground on  
Rose Cherry's Home for Kids



77  
acres

The Darling Home for Kids was built on 77 acres of woodlands on the Niagara Escarpment in Milton, Ontario.

The towering trees, abundant wildlife, and serene natural environment provide peace and tranquility.

## Service Clubs

Service clubs demonstrate a commitment to give back to the community, and The Darling Home for Kids has been fortunate to have the support of many clubs, including the Rotary Clubs of Ontario, Junior League of Toronto, Optimists Clubs and many others. From raising funds and furnishing our Home to helping at our events, the support of service clubs has been vital to our organization.



## Milton Community

Milton residents were early champions of our cause, helping to raise funds and increase awareness for this unique resource in their local community.



"I was originally approached by The Cedarbrook Society in 1998 to personally support a project located in rural Milton – Ontario's first hospice for children in a home-like environment. As a result, this home has a soft spot in my heart as our community proudly came together and the Society's vision became a community vision and the home was built with passion and dedication by volunteers and donors."

- Milton Mayor Gord Krantz

# The History of The Cedarbrook Society



## Our Signature Events

With the knowledge that the organization would need steady revenue to build our Home and provide care, we established our signature events. From our first Gala at The Toronto Eaton Centre, our Day of Racing, and every time a golfer teed off on the golf course, the proceeds from these events were vital to opening the doors to The Darling Home for Kids, and are what allow us to keep our doors open today.



## The Bowker Family

"To have the opportunity to make a difference in our community has been magic. We have been blessed to be surrounded by dedicated individuals, generous supporters and a compelling destiny. A wonderful journey."

- David Bowker and Blythe Ward



We thank all of the supporters of  
our signature fundraising events,  
including attendees of our Annual  
Comfort & Joy Gala.



## A Home Away from Home

The Darling Home for Kids was designed by HOK Architects and Red Studio Architects to be a place that feels like home. More than bricks and mortar, it is a true oasis. From the pull out trays in the kitchen island, to the low window sills and accessible spaces, every feature has been thoughtfully selected, and the result is a beautiful home made specially for medically-fragile children and families.

## Together We Built A Home

The demolition of the original building made way for a state of the art facility with details designed for medically fragile and technology dependent children. PCL Constructors Canada Inc., the Home's builder, and many others in the Ontario construction community were moved by our vision and were instrumental in the Home's construction. Working together, and with significant donations of labour and building materials, our vision was made into reality.



## Opening Our Doors

The Home was strategically designed for construction in two phases. In 2004 we celebrated the grand opening of Phase I, which was a Home with the capacity to provide care for six children. In a few short years, thanks to the support of our Guardian and all of our donors, we were able to expand our Home and we celebrated the grand opening of Phase II in 2009. Each ribbon cutting marked the beginning of a new chapter for the unique home that can now accommodate up to twelve children.



## We Couldn't Have Done It Without You!

With too many supporters to name, we thank and appreciate all who have contributed to The Darling Home for Kids. From each individual buying a key chain or teddy bear at the Milton Mall, to our event attendees and major donors, every penny raised has gone beyond our walls to help children and families in need. You have shared in our vision and together we have made The Darling Home for Kids possible. Thank you to all of the friends who have helped us along the way.

Our warmest thanks and appreciation to our Guardians, Michele Darling, Michael Eagen and their family for their incredible support of our special home, which is named in their honour.



"The quality of care and professionalism is above and beyond my expectation. Knowing that Pierce is loved as I love him, and knowing all his developmental needs are met helps me to be at peace when I leave him. As well as the joy he gets from all his "friends" at The Darling Home for Kids."

- Nicole Valentine, Pierce's Mom



Over  
500

"The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others."

- DeAnn Hollis

Volunteers have rolled up their sleeves to help our organization over the past decade.

## Our Volunteers

In 1996 a small group of people recognized a need in their community for a paediatric respite and hospice that could support families caring for medically complex children. If that group of individuals were merely visionaries, we would still be talking about this need today – but instead they were volunteers.

From the initial board members who worked tirelessly to raise awareness and the funds to build our Home, to the many event committee members, corporate groups and front line volunteers who assisted us in providing compassionate care to our children and families, volunteers have been instrumental in shaping our organization and enabling us to fulfill our mission.

## Community Events

Companies, individuals, book clubs and families embraced our vision of creating a special place that brings comfort to children and their families. Fundraisers organized by our friends in the community took on many forms, such as pool parties, golf tournaments and lemonade stands. Every dollar raised was done with commitment to a cause that would transform lives for years to come. Today, our community fundraisers continue to bring comfort and happiness to children and their families and we are thankful for this precious gift.



## The Dream Continues

Ten years is a milestone to celebrate; however, it represents only the very beginning of a journey of service that is intended to last many decades. In the years ahead, we will continue our efforts to ensure financial sustainability for our programs, to increase services and supports for medically fragile and technology dependent children, to maintain this unique oasis that is our Home, and to enrich the lives of families who depend on The Darling Home for Kids. Thank you for celebrating this milestone with us, and we look forward to continuing on this journey with you in the years to come.



"Your commitment to providing exceptional, compassionate and professional care at The Darling Home for Kids is deeply appreciated by our family."

- The Wilcox Family



Our Mission:

The mission of The Darling Home for Kids is to optimize the quality of the lives of children with life-limiting or life-threatening illness requiring complex and/or technology-dependent care.

Our Vision:

Our vision is to be an oasis of comfort and joy for the children and families we serve.

## Video: A Determined Destiny





**The Darling Home for Kids**

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