

*“When asked to reflect on the impact of our fundraising dollars on our day to day operations, my answer is simple – it is, quite literally, everywhere I look.*

*It's in the smell of home cooked meals in the kitchen, in the bears that sit atop the beds the children curl into at night, and in the vibrant coloured markers, construction paper and glitter that bring wondrous imaginations to life. It's in the tent that becomes a castle, the garden hose that transforms into a water park, and in the gentle touch of a hand on the forehead of a child being soothed to sleep. It's in the tired faces of our families who come through our doors, and in the look of relief as their eyes start to smile, as a pep goes into their step, and the sag of their shoulders as they leave, feeling a weight being lifted off them.*

*As the Clinical Manager, I am blessed to see the incredible impact that our programs have on families. I am reminded of a child who came to us first in our respite program, and became our resident. He had the sweetest little face and would wiggle to let us know how he was feeling. He would let out giggle-sighs as we laid him to bed, and kick his arms and legs as if he were making an angel in the snow. His family felt safe knowing he was in good hands, and they were free to just be his family again instead of being his nurse and doctor all rolled up into one. Last year after he had left us for a short while, he came back to us for one final stay before leaving this world for a better one. When his family made that drive up our long driveway and brought him through our doors for the last time, I could see in their faces that for them, it truly felt like coming home, because it was. We laid him in bed and he let out one of his giggle-sighs because he too, knew he was finally home. As the hours went by, his family stayed by his side, until his giggle-sighs became just sighs, and his sighs became silent. Surrounded by love, curled up in his bed with one of his favorite nurses reading Dr. Seuss to him, heaven called back one more beautiful angel.*

*It is because of you that this peaceful, serene home was there for this young child and his family. For many of our children, they cannot go out and experience the world – travel to far off places, engage with new and exciting things, or reach new heights. At The Darling Home for Kids, they need only go as far as our home nested in the woods. Here children “travel” the world through recreation therapy like a safari in Africa and seeing a samurai in Japan. They experience the wonder and magic of our Snoezelen room with all of the lights and colours and are provided an enriching space to embrace life in all its forms. You help to bring the world to our kids, and I have the amazing job of watching them light up with smiles, giggles and bright eyes as they experience this place of joy.*

*From the bottom of my heart I thank you for your support. I wish that I could capture what I see every day and share it with you, because then you would know that everywhere I look, I see the joy that you have created.”*

*~Sharleen Sun, Clinical Manager, The Darling Home for Kids*

