

## Family, friends host hockey game for youth suffering from brain tumour

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For Daniel Bertoia, 11 has long been a special number.

An avid hockey player, the 18-year-old has used the number on his jersey while on the ice and his favourite NHL player, Montreal Canadiens centre Saku Koivu, also sports the number.

Mr. Bertoia was diagnosed with a brain tumour last February.

When his friends and family organized a hockey game for him three months later, the Skate For Daniel raised about \$2,000, said Jennifer Goffenberg, a fellow Thornhill resident whose son Shaun played hockey with Mr. Bertoia for three years with the Markham Islanders.

The purpose of the game was to offer support to Mr. Bertoia. But when the event ended up raising cash, it was donated to Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children's brain tumour research assistance and information network — call b.r.a.i.n.child.

The original amount was rounded up to \$2,011, to reflect Mr. Bertoia's jersey number.



Daniel Bertoia, seen here playing hockey, was diagnosed with a brain tumour last February. In 2007, his family and friends hosted a fundraiser hockey game and made \$2,000. The second anniversary game is Saturday.

Based on last year's success they are doing it again, this year on May 24, to again support Mr. Bertoia and to raise money for b.r.a.i.n.child.

The game kicks off at 3 p.m. at the Thornhill Community Centre at 7755 Bayview Ave.

Ms Goffenberg is co-chairing the event along with Ali Torabi and they have big expectations for the tournament.

Organizers have booked four hours of ice time and scheduled four games for what Ms Goffenberg described as something like a hockey marathon.

And all the players will wear the No. 11 on their jerseys.

Several items are available during a silent auction to raise money during the event.

A Toronto Maple Leafs jersey signed by this year's roster is featured in the auction, Ms Goffenberg said.

The Oshawa Generals have donated a signed photograph of first-round draft pick John Tavares and the Toronto Raptors have provided a basketball jersey signed by player number 11.

"It's just amazing, the stuff that's coming," Ms Goffenberg said. Also, Edmonton Oilers team member Andrew Cogliano is planning to attend and play during the game, she said.

Organizers hope to pull in about \$30,000 from this year's game.

But, of course, that number will be rounded up by \$11.

Still, the fundraising aspect was a spur-of-the-moment addition to the hockey game originally, said Daniel's father Stan Bertoia.

Mainly, the two events were organized to show support for his son and allow him to connect with his hockey friends and the community, the elder Mr. Bertoia said.

Although Daniel played in last year's game — even scoring a winning goal when the game was tied — he will remain a spectator during this year's event.

The senior Mr. Bertoia's cousin in British Columbia has also set up a website [coffee2help.com](http://coffee2help.com) where visitors can buy items and a portion of the cash goes to b.r.a.i.n.child.

"It's overwhelming, the support for Daniel and our family and how many good people are out there," Mr. Bertoia said. "People you know and people you don't know who are coming out to support a good kid for a good cause."

Donations can be mailed to b.r.a.i.n.child, care of Sick Kids with a note specifying the donation is for Skate For Daniel. Mail b.r.a.i.n.child c/o The Hospital for Sick Children, 555 University Ave., Toronto ON, M5G 1X8.