

## Skate for Daniel scores \$47.5K

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It may not be a nice round number, but \$47,511.11 sure holds a lot of meaning.

That's the amount organizers of the 2008 Skate for Daniel donated to two brain tumour-related research and support groups last week.

The elevens in the sum are a tribute to the jersey number worn by Daniel Bertoia, the namesake of the event.

In 2007, when he was just 16, Daniel was diagnosed with a brain tumour.

The first Skate for Daniel was held just months later.

The original one-hour skate was planned more to keep Daniel in touch with his friends, event co-chairperson Jennifer Goffenberg said.

Last year's successes led to this year's expanded four-hour event, complete with a silent auction and other activities, at the Thornhill Community Centre in May.

"The demand was huge," Ms Goffenberg said. "There were so many kids wanting to skate."

People paid \$30 to participate in the hockey games, where every player wore a jersey bearing the number 11.

They also got the chance to skate with Edmonton Oiler Andrew Cogliano, a Woodbridge native.

Unlike last year, Daniel was unable to attend this year's event because he was too weak, explained his dad, Stan Bertoia.

"Daniel is struggling," he said. "He's maintaining. He's a tough and fearless warrior. However, the illness has its symptoms and it's difficult for him. He and us remain hopeful and positive."

Organizers of Skate for Daniel had a life-sized cutout of the teenager at the event and Mr. Bertoia said he went home and told Daniel all about the skate.

He was thrilled, Mr. Bertoia said.

The \$47,511.11 far surpasses any fundraising goals the organizers had originally set out for this year, said Ms Goffenberg,

At the Hospital for Sick Children last Thursday, they handed over two donations — \$15,000.11 to the Gerry and Nancy Pencer Brain Tumour Centre at Princess Margaret Hospital and \$32,511 to b.r.a.i.n.child.

Daniel was initially treated at Sick Kids.

That's where b.r.a.i.n.child is based, an organization providing assistance and information to families of children with brain tumours and funding for research into the cause and treatment of pediatric brain tumours.

It's also where proceeds from last year's event were donated.

Since Daniel is now 18, he's being treated at Princess Margaret. So, this year he decided he wanted some of the funds raised at this year's skate to go there, too.

Skate for Daniel is an amazing event and Ms Goffenberg is certain it will continue to grow.

"This experience confirms for myself and our family that the world is made up of many, many, many and mostly good people," Mr. Bertoia said.

"I think we're overwhelmed. At the same time, there's a good feeling of Daniel getting recognized and how he's touched people and the good he's bringing out in people."