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A Place Full of Possibility for Krystyna

In January 2018, Terra and Doug Wilson made the significant decision to grow their family by adopting sisters from Ukraine. Spending three months abroad, the couple brought sisters Krystyna and Nastasiya home to Canada in April. "We tried to have children of our own but couldn't. We did everything under the sun, and nothing worked out. We knew that adoption in Saskatchewan could take many years," explains Terra about their decision to adopt outside of Canada.

Knowing that expanding their family through adoption was the best choice for them, Terra and Doug were ready to support their daughters in adjusting to a new country, language, and school system. "Before we even arrived in Canada, we knew we would need different supports, especially for Krystyna. We had an assessment with the school board as soon as we got here to determine which school they would attend. When we arrived at the school, we quickly realized there were very few supports for children with intellectual disabilities and those facing different challenges," recalls Terra about the early struggles that compelled her and her husband to advocate for their daughter's needs. "Between Doug and me, we spent countless hours researching. We wrote letters to the Ministry, emailed our Member of Parliament, and really advocated for Krystyna, to secure resources for her and other children like her to help them succeed."

With Krystyna now in high school, one of the biggest challenges she faces is forming lasting and meaningful friendships. "Having to navigate friendship relationships for Krystyna over these past eight years has been so difficult. Again, this is us advocating and us trying to find groups she can join where she can meet other kids that are like her, where she feels accepted and can join in and have fun," shares Terra. "That's the best part of Krystyna going to Camp Easter Seal."

"Somehow every summer, when I get put into a cabin, my friend Lyrikah gets put in the same cabin – it's shocking!"

– Krystyna

CONTINUED OVER

The Monthly Giving Program is a simple way to make pre-authorized contributions in support of SaskAbilities' work to improve the quality of life, enhance independence and community participation of children, youth and adults experiencing disability.

As a monthly donor, you can give as little as $10 a month and make a positive impact on our ability to plan ahead and invest further in programs and services that serve thousands of individuals experiencing disability in Saskatchewan every year.

SaskAbilities
2310 Louise Avenue
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❑ $10 ❑ $15 ❑ $20 ❑ $25 or $ _____ per month (minimum $10)

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*I have certain recourse rights if any debit does not comply with this agreement. For example, I have the right to receive reimbursement for any debit that is not authorized or is not consistent with this PAD Agreement. To obtain more information on my recourse right, I may contact my financial institution or visit **www.cdnpay.ca***

Your generosity makes a difference not only for campers but also for families like the Wilsons. We need your support to ensure that Krystyna and all her friends can return to Camp year after year! Hosting one camper for a week-long adventure costs approximately $2,500, which can be a significant burden for families with limited financial resources. The cost of Camp should never be a barrier for campers and their families, and your support today helps ensure that it won't be.

Since 1954, Camp Easter Seal has been a haven for children, youth, and adults experiencing disability where they can truly be themselves, feel accepted, and forge lasting, meaningful friendships. It is also a place where families, like the Wilsons, can trust that their loved ones are being well cared for while enjoying an unforgettable experience amidst the lush green grounds of Little Manitou Lake, providing a unique and inclusive camping atmosphere.

Having heard about Camp Easter Seal from a colleague years ago, in 2023 Terra and her husband made the decision to register Krystyna for the summer. In August of that year, the family drove to Little Manitou Lake to drop Krystyna off for her first week at Camp. "I thought I wouldn't fit in. I thought I wouldn't make friends easily. There were so many kids, and everyone was heading to different cabins," recalls Krystyna from that very busy morning of camper drop-offs. With the initial hustle and bustle behind her, Krystyna easily got into the rhythm of Camp, enjoying the many activities and connecting with new friends her first summer.

Now, in her fourth season at Camp, Krystyna embraces it all! "I'm a water person, a crafty person, a dance person, I love music - I'm all of the above when it comes to activities!" she declares with confidence. But Krystyna's most favourite thing about Camp is the friendships she has formed. "Somehow every summer, when I get put into a cabin, my friend Lyrikah gets put in the same cabin – it's shocking!" expresses Krystyna with much excitement. "I always ask Lyrikah to do my makeup for the banquet, and she does it; she even asks if I want her to do my hair!"

For Terra and Doug, Camp has provided their daughter with a safe space where she is accepted for who she is, allowing her to fully embrace the camp experience and enjoy her time with friends. It has also become a much-needed resource for their daughter at a time when there are limited programs and services available for children and youth with similar needs. "I can't even explain what it's like not to have to pay for Camp, thanks to organizations and countless individuals that raise funds and contribute. I truly can't thank everyone enough for that," shares Terra, becoming emotional.

With hopes for many camp seasons ahead of her, Krystyna has made it clear her top priority will always be reconnecting with friends and creating new memories that will last a lifetime!

Sincerely,

Ian Wilkinson
Executive Director