

Trevor's on top of his game 10 years after transplant

By Anja Kardeglja

Local News - Monday, June 25, 2007 Updated @ 11:20:48 PM

As 11-year-old Trevor MacDonald ran around the Arrowdale Public Golf Course on Saturday practising his swing and putting, those around him couldn't help but think 10 years back.

Friends, co-workers and family gathered for a golf tournament to celebrate a decade's passing since Trevor received a bone-marrow transplant to help treat his Hurler Syndrome, a severe and progressive genetic disease.

"We wanted to celebrate," said his mom, Maureen MacDonald. "And Trevor loves to golf."

His dad, Ken MacDonald, explained Trevor's ordeal has received a lot of media coverage and he wanted to bring people up to speed.

"We just thought after 10 years we'd let people know how he was doing," he said.

And Trevor, for the record, is doing very well.

"I never thought it would be this good. I didn't think he'd be that healthy," said Maureen MacDonald.

"His health is amazing. He's doing everything he's supposed to be doing."

If untreated, children with Hurler Syndrome suffer mental and physical disabilities and rarely survive past the age of 10. They have enlarged livers and spleens, heart, skeletal and eye problems, as well as mental disabilities and experience changes to the shape of facial features.

Trevor's only problem is a pair of inwardly-turned knees that will require surgery soon. He also is visually impaired but that may not be related to the Hurler Syndrome.

Maureen MacDonald said the celebration came on the heels of a fantastic year for Trevor. He was in a regular school up until a year ago, but Trevor's visual impairment, and the lack of understanding from other children, would make him frustrated.

She said the move to W. Ross Macdonald School made all the difference for Trevor.

"Everybody says he's like a different kid. He comes home from school and he's happy, and that's so much better."

The vision and knee problems haven't managed to slow down the "sports fanatic," as his dad described him.

"I bought him a new set of golf clubs and we had them cut down to size a week ago," said Ken MacDonald. "So he's been really excited."

Trevor joined the roughly 40 golfers that competed while raising money for the Canadian Society for Mucopolysaccharide and Related Diseases.

Trevor's parents said they were happy to see all those who helped and supported them 10 years ago - including one guest from Mississauga.

At the time when Trevor was diagnosed in February 1997, the only option for treatment was the bone-marrow transplant. His family's bone marrow was not a match, and Trevor had to wait and see whether someone on the Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry could help him.

Stephen Attfield's name came up. The transplant took place, and 10 years later, Attfield, now married with three children of his own, came to the golf tournament to see Trevor's progress.

"Obviously, it's pretty fulfilling for me," said Attfield. He said after he joined the registry and found out how low the chances were of a match - around one in 20,000 - Attfield never thought he would actually have a chance to help anyone.

"It's been just truly rewarding experience. Overall, it's a simple procedure," he said, "and Trevor is living proof it works."