



# Project Give Back

**Meryn**

## **Sick Kids Foundation**

Meryn has quietly taken in all that Project Give Back has to offer this year. She is a kind and compassionate student who had a very important story to tell. Meryn understood the importance of her charity because she has grown up watching Sick Kids help her cousin, Owen.

Meryn's presentation day was spectacular. Meryn and Owen did a phenomenal job helping the classmates to understand how lucky we are that Sick Kids Hospital is in our city and Sick Kids Foundation continues to raise money to make it the best it can be! To use Owen's words, he said, "The hospital isn't a place you want to be, but for kids whose lives depend on being there, Sick Kids is a pretty good home away from home."

Meryn knew that she wanted to do her project on Sick Kids Foundation right from the start and she knew she wanted Owen by her side. Meryn passionately shared her gratitude for all that Sick Kids has done for her family. She had done considerable research and she educated the class about the mission of her charity and the incredible work they are doing. She spoke about the hospital's history and their future. Meryn was proud to share all of the fundraisers that her charity holds to raise money. She beamed as she shared that they raised 136.7 million dollars last year. Meryn is part of the fundraising team! She proudly shared a photo of her bake sale where she personally raised money for this cause!

Meryn ended her speech by sharing that she thought the best way for us to understand this cause was through the eyes of her cousin Owen. Meryn introduced Owen and we were unprepared for what would come next. Owen was amazing! No one moved a muscle as the students listened to him share his story.

He spoke about his diagnosis and his treatment. He helped the students to understand how his "team" worked together to give him incredible care. He explained how programs and facilities like the Clown Program or Marnie's Lounge helped the patients by allowing them to just be kids. He explained why he was always happy to be part of research studies so he could help others. He proudly held on to his 2100 bravery beads and shared that each bead represented a treatment or a surgery or a needle.

The students were in awe of him and his strength. Owen had returned to school this week after a successful bone marrow transplant. It was wonderful of him to take the time to join us after missing so much of his own time at school. Meryn and Owen helped us all to understand how lucky we are to live in a city with such remarkable medical care. It was a privilege to be a witness to this presentation!

Meryn created a fabulous visual display that she used throughout her speech. She focused on facts about her cause, events and a picture of her and Owen. It looked great!

This touching presentation led to a meaningful discussion about why a hospital for kids is so important. We spoke about the different needs of children for comfort and the desire to play. We spoke about the importance of the doctors to be specialized in pediatric medicine and for the equipment to fit small bodies. Owen answered question after question from the class.

We also touched on the fact that other charities, such as POGO or Chai Lifeline sometimes are called in to assist the families when there are gaps in what is needed and what Sick Kids Foundation can provide. We recognized that when a child is sick, it impacts the entire family emotionally and financially. We spoke about Owen's bone marrow transplant and discussed how a complete stranger did this for him. We talked about how that makes us feel about humanity and why this would not only be a gift for Owen, but an incredible gift for the person who anonymously helped to save his life. It was a remarkable discussion made possible by a remarkable presentation!

Congratulations on an absolutely amazing presentation!

Keep Giving Back!