

Community Matters

Improving the lives of children in our community one step at a time



Mike Belliveau, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Thunder Bay Community Foundation presenting the Community Fund Grant to Cindy Levanto, Stephanie Paxton and Aldo Fata from the George Jeffrey Children's Foundation.

So many of us take the ability to walk easily for granted. The reality is much different for too many children and youth in our community. Their struggle to perform something as basic as walking from one side of a room to another provides them with a daily challenge that significantly affects their quality of living.

As more and more clients are needing assessment for their different walking abilities, George Jeffrey Children's Centre physiotherapists were able to identify a need for a new type of walker called the Crocodile Walker. This advanced piece of equipment is a walking aid for children and youth with disabilities who require supplementary assistance with their daily walking activities.

When the George Jeffrey Children's Foundation applied for a grant from the Thunder Bay Community Foundation's "Community Fund", they saw the impact and importance of having one of these walkers available for the youth in our community.

The purpose of the Thunder Bay Community Foundation is to inspire, promote and facilitate philanthropy to support the ever-changing needs of the District of Thunder Bay. The benefits of independent walking are so important in the development of child's growth. It promotes independence and freedom, which allows children to make more decisions about their movement and exploration through their environment. Not only that, walking is fun and interesting, it allows for more social time with their peers, and

it has countless health benefits for both the body and mind! Physiotherapists at the George Jeffrey Children's Centre require access to a selection of different walkers to test with their clients, each of whom have various needs. Having the most up-to-date equipment and devices on hand assists their physiotherapists in determining which walker will work best for a specific client. Once a model has been decided, a family can then borrow the walker to trial at home for several days, or even weeks to know that it is the best option for their child before purchasing one of their own. Thanks to the generosity of the Thunder Bay Community Foundation and their donors, George Jeffrey Children's Foundation was able to fund the purchase of a brand new Crocodile Walker for their Centre!

"It is truly a remarkable thing to see a child who has never been able to walk independently take their first steps down our halls," says Cindy Levanto, Executive Director of George Jeffrey Children's Foundation. "We are so grateful for the support of the Thunder Bay Community Foundation. Without their generosity, purchases like the Crocodile Walker wouldn't be possible." Placed behind the child, the Crocodile Walker allows freedom of movement and facilitates walking in an upright position. It has adjustable handles that can be individually adapted to a position conveniently close to the child's body providing support and stability.

The Crocodile Walker is an essential piece of equipment, and as George Jeffrey Children's Centre continues to serve more unique clients, there is an

increased need for more specialized equipment and devices. The purchase of this new walker has added an integral tool for clients in our community to make excellent use of. "Being able to fund a Crocodile Walker for the George Jeffrey Children's Centre and help children have the ability to walk is truly a remarkable gift that we were able to provide thanks to our generous donors", says Athena Kreiner, CEO of the Thunder Bay Community Foundation. "Our donors are caring, compassionate and are making a positive impact. Thank you very much to all of our donors who helped give the gift of a walking aid to the children in our community and are improving their lives one step at a time."



Stephanie Paxton, Donor Relations & Communications Officer at the George Jeffrey Children's Foundation, displaying the Crocodile Walker purchased by a grant awarded by the Thunder Bay Community Foundation.

Passionate about our Community?

Consider starting a Fund at the Thunder Bay Community Foundation!

- Support organizations and areas of need that are important to you.
- Give students the gift of education by establishing a scholarship or bursary.

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