

## Meaghan Zaremba Month

My name is Danielle Zaremba. I am Meaghan's mother.

I watched my beautiful daughter make history when she carried the torch for the 2015 PanAm Games. I was emotional beyond belief. As I took in the atmosphere that surrounded her, everything faded for a moment as I flashed back 30 years to the day I almost lost her when she lay dying on a gurney after that horrific car accident. Her tiny body was unrecognizable. She had a broken jaw, broken arm, face lacerations and a severe brain injury. She would never walk or talk, or be able to take care of herself again. The doctors told me to pull the plug and let her go peacefully. There was virtually no brain activity and it would remain in a vegetable state.

Would you have pulled the plug on your child? Well, I couldn't. I made a promise to God that I would care for her if He gave her back to me, even as an invalid.

My child had other plans. Three months later, she walked out of hospital; brain injured, challenged, sick, but very much alive. So the torch she carried was her destiny, but not her legacy.

Recognizing that Meaghan needed stimulation due to her brain injury, God provided a path to Tisho's Music Academy and the amazing Balinov family that runs it. That's where I enrolled Meaghan in music lessons. She was weak, shy and timid and shaky, but that was almost 20 years ago. Today, she is thriving, as music opened up a whole new world for her. The benefits of studying music rewired Meaghan's brain, and over time, she began to speak clearly, gain confidence, perform at recitals and study piano. She took theory classes and vocal lessons.

That's when I realized my child was spared for a reason.

Today, she is the founder of the Meaghan Zaremba Music Room for Disabled Individuals. Even with her brain injury, she understands the importance of giving back and helping her community.

There are approximately 55 individuals from all walks of life living right here in our community that now benefit from Meaghan's Music Room. Some are physically impaired, autistic and brain injured; some more severe than others. Yet coming to this music haven once a week is the one bright star in their lives. They sing, dance, hug and conquer. It is their hour to shine and make the most of it. And now, thanks to Meaghan, they too experience the joy and magic that music can bring to their lives. This was my child's legacy ? to lead others like herself into believing in themselves.

My child was spared in order to become a hero in her community; a community that raised her and saw her through her darkest hours as she lived through 16 brain surgeries and 20 years of uncontrollable seizures. No one can tell Meaghan Zaremba that something is impossible. She will find a way to show you that everything is possible.

In closing, and as I share my heart with all of you who have children of your own, I want everyone to know that I thank God every day for blessing me with this very special child who lives a life of innocence and gives unconditional love and support to her community.

This month (November) is the fourth annual Meaghan Zaremba Month. Please give generously and donate to keep Meaghan's Music Room alive; a much needed community project that has truly made a difference in so many lives. Meaghan has a gofundme page and has set a goal for herself. She is looking for 1,500 people who care to donate \$20 each. This will fund her room for a year. Please help Meaghan reach her goal at <http://www.gofundme/fwrncw>

For our corporate sponsors, you may drop off or mail a cheque payable to Meaghan Zambera to Tisho's Music Academy, 29 McEwan Dr., Bolton L7E 1H4.

Special thanks to our recent donors: Garden Foods, Zehrs, Giant Tiger, Argo Developments Corp., Dig Con International, Rotary Club of Palgrave, Town of Caledon Golf Tournament, Paradise Developments, Glen Schnarr and Associates, TD?Canada Trust Bolton branch, Bolton Alliance Church, Trans Canada and Brampton Caledon Community Foundation. Your generous donations are appreciated and will never be forgotten

Daniella Zaremba,

Mother of the true hero