

## Support the Music Room

By Danielle Zarembo

My name is Danielle Zarembo. I am the proud mother of Meghan Zarembo.

For those who have not heard of my daughter, I will give you a short story of a mother's love and strength, and a young lady who has overcome tremendous odds to become a hero to those individuals who cannot always speak for themselves.

Meghan was in a severe car accident when she was just five years old. It crushed her skull and broke almost every bone in her tiny, little body. Because of that accident, she was in a coma for three months. At the end of those three months, she had sustained a traumatic brain injury.

I was told to take her off life support and let her go. That was never going to happen. At the end of those three months, Meghan walked out of the Hospital for Sick Children on her own two little feet, ready to face the world, not as the daughter I knew before, but still my daughter.

After surviving 16 brain surgeries and at the end of the day having the left frontal portion of her brain removed, after suffering severe seizures for 20 years, after learning all the basics of speaking, dressing and taking care of herself, she was finally ready to show the world that she would stand for those who needed her help. As she grew up, she and I began to realize that out of this tragedy, an opportunity to give back to her community was born.

Meghan began music lessons at 17, eventually taking classes at Tisho's Music Academy, where she still studies. This began a road to her recovery and a transformation which I had not foreseen.

Music began to change Meghan's personality, her perception of the world around her and her ability to interact with others. She was processing logic and common sense. Her reading, writing and math improved. I believe that music created a change in Meghan's brain and began a process of healing and opening up new avenues in her brain, which I believe without music would never have occurred.

In 2013, we embarked on a mission of bringing music to other unique individuals such as Meghan. We created the Meghan Zarembo Music Room, which we envisioned being available to all unique individuals, regardless of age or gender. This was to be run strictly by donations with no cost falling on the shoulders of these individuals, their parents or caregivers.

Since that time, Meghan was honoured in 2013 with a Volunteer of the Year Award, and being a torch bearer for the Toronto Pan Am Games in 2015. Again in 2015, she was presented with the Distinguished Citizen Award from the Town of Caledon, and the Commemorative Medal of Honour in recognition of Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017. She also donates out of her own pocket three musical scholarships every year to people with special needs, and she also sponsors two children from needy families in our community that can't afford to pay for music lessons.

With all the above being said, I wish to ask every person reading this, "Would you not donate \$20 to fulfill this young girl's dream?" November will be the fifth annual Meghan Zarembo Month, when we ask the community to give back to one of their own and donate \$20 to her room. Every year, Meghan sets a goal of 5,000 people donating \$20. That would fund her room for the next three years. And every year, she believes she will reach that goal. But she never does, and she never gives up.

"This is the year," she says with a smile.

I am asking our community to adopt Meghan's dream and goal to reach 5,000 people who can donate \$20.

Go to <http://www.gofundme.com/fwrncw>

During October, Meghan and I will be visiting local businesses to introduce ourselves and this worthy cause. If you can donate an item or a gift certificate for our November raffle, it would be so appreciated.

I am a single mother of three and I have seen difficult times. We all have. I have raised my children to always be aware of those less fortunate than themselves and to give where they can. We are living in dark times, but believe me when I tell you that there is a joy to the heart and a light in the darkness when you give to others without thinking about yourselves. You teach everyone around you what it is like to be selfless and honourable.

Meghan and I ask you to give to the Meghan Zarembo Music Room in order that we can continue our work and provide healing and happiness to others.

God Bless.