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BRADWELL JUST BETWEEN US SOFTBALL THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2009

Sian Bradwell Softball Tournament is more than just a sporting event

POSTED BY [BOFARRELL](#) AT 8H35

The 21st edition of the Sian Bradwell Softball Tournament kicks off this evening in Kirkland. Twenty-four teams, mostly from Quebec and Ontario, will be hitting the ball diamonds at several parks in what has become one of the friendliest sports events of the summer for adult athletes.

The four-day event showcases some great softball. But more than that, it embodies a community spirit that is unique to the West Island region. Over the years, the Sian Bradwell Fund, through a series of events including the annual tournament, has raised \$860,000 for the Montreal Children's Hospital and the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children. That's an incredible feat.

Organizing an event like this is not easy. It takes two basic elements: an army of volunteers and a driving force.

The volunteers will be easy to spot if you drop by any of the venues where games will be played this weekend – Benévoles, Meades and Holleuffer parks. You will see many of them in action behind the concession stands.

The driving force is a little tougher to catch a glimpse of, but you will get an idea of who they are if you talk to some of the participants who have returned to the tournament year after year. They will tell you stories of Ken and Sharon Bradwell.

The tournament was named in memory of the Bradwells' infant daughter, Sian. Born in October 1984, Sian was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer, primitive neuroectodermal tumours. And despite aggressive treatment, Sian succumbed to the disease in March of 1986, at the age of 17 months.

In 1988, Sharon Bradwell who was a member of the Kirkland ladies' softball league, approached officials with the Town of Kirkland with the idea of holding a fundraising tournament. And a few months later, the first edition of the Sian Bradwell Softball Tournament was held. All money raised goes to purchase medical equipment for the children's hospitals.

Job transfers have forced the Bradwells to leave the West Island, but they return every year for the tournament.

Diane Carignan is a captain in the Kirkland ladies league and has known Sharon Bradwell for many years.

"Everybody knows her. Everybody adores her," Carignan said. "They are incredible people."

And that is not an exaggeration. It takes incredible individuals to turn a personal tragedy into a prosperous and meaningful event that so many people are honoured to be a part of year after year after year.

I will be playing on the Momesso's team from St. Lazare in the mixed division. We will be the ones wearing the bright orange jerseys. Our first game is tonight. And hopefully, we will be playing in the finals on Sunday afternoon at Meades Park. If you're in the neighbourhood, drop by and say hi.

Brenda O'Farrell

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