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Annual softball tournament helps keep mom's spirits up

KATHRYN GREENAWAY, MONTREAL GAZETTE

[More from Kathryn Greenaway, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: July 28, 2015 | Last Updated: July 28, 2015 11:40 AM EDT



The 27th annual softball tournament to raise funds for the Montreal Children's Hospital takes place in Kirkland, July 30 to Aug. 2. The event is organized by the Sian Bradwell Fund to raise money to buy equipment used to help treat children with cancer. Sian Bradwell died in 1986 of a rare form of cancer when she was 17 months old. RAY FRANCOEUR — MONTREAL GAZETTE

VIDEO

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It's been 29 years, but the pain is still raw for Sharon and Ken Bradwell.

On March 15, 1986 their daughter Sian Bradwell died of a rare form of cancer called primitive neuroectodermal tumour which attacked her liver, spine and foot. She was 17 months old. The couple wanted to keep their daughter's memory alive and her death to bring about good, so they established the Sian Bradwell Fund for Children With Cancer.

The 27th annual Sian Bradwell Softball Tournament to raise money for the Montreal Children's Hospital takes place at five parks in Kirkland, from Thursday to Sunday.

Over the years, fundraising activities have expanded beyond Montreal to reach Burlington, Ont. — now the couple's hometown — Hamilton and Toronto.

The activities vary. Next month, a backyard party is booked at a private home in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue with the band Strum providing live entertainment. Early next year there's the Sian Bradwell-West Island Lakers Basketball All-Star Weekend (Jan. 29-31).

The couple first turned to softball as a way to raise funds because it had long been one of Sharon's favourite sports to play. Born and raised in England, she played a version of the game called "rounders" and then played with the Kirkland Ladies Slo Pitch Softball League for 20 years.

"It's not just a sport, it's a social activity," Sharon Bradwell said. "It's how friendships are made."

Sian's death took a tremendous toll on the couple. Early into the grieving process Sharon came close to committing suicide by jumping out of an office tower window, but stopped herself at the last minute.

"I still try to remember everything Sian went through," Bradwell said. "I don't want to forget."

They did not have any more children.

"Doctors told us that there was a significant enough history of cancer on both sides of the family that it might happen again," Bradwell said. "I told Ken I *would* kill myself if it happened again, so we didn't try."

Over \$1.2 million has been raised since the first fundraisers in 1986. The money has purchased equipment including \$5,000 pain-control pumps, a \$115,000 cell counter and a \$135,000 ultrasonic aspirator. The next goal is to raise \$100,000 to buy two operating tables.

Bradwell said the fundraising doesn't ease the pain but "it does make me feel like I'm doing something to help."

The couple settled into life in Ontario but they still have strong emotional ties to Montreal and think of the West Island as home. It is also where Sian is buried, so the first thing Sharon does when she arrives for the tournament is visit the grave at a Pointe-Claire cemetery. She spends the rest of the whirlwind visit photographing the softball action and catching up with old friends.

In conjunction with the softball tournament, there is a high-thread-count line

TRENDING STORIES

UPAC raid targets Gérald Tremblay's house

Cycling accident sends one to hospital

Books for Kids: Land Shark will reel them in

Longueuil police searching for suspect in sexual harassment case

NEWS FROM MONTREAL

LOCAL NEWS

SQ chase leads to arrest after handgun found

An 18-year-old man was arrested early Wednesday morning after a police chase on Highway 40. Around 2 a.

LOCAL NEWS

British Airways flight diverted to Trudeau airport after threat

A British Airways flight from Las Vegas to London was forced to land in Montreal Wednesday morning.

LOCAL NEWS

New Zealand confirms two bodies found are missing Montrealers

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — New Zealand police have confirmed that two bodies found in avalanche debris near a popular hiking track are those of two missing Canadian students.

LOCAL NEWS

Two armed young men arrested in a car early Wednesday

A young man and a teenager were arrested early Wednesday morning after they were spotted driving around with a firearm in the northeast of Montreal.

MONTREAL @ THE MOMENT

The Story So Far: MUHC hit hard by new order to cut health care costs

Hello and welcome to The Story So Far for Wednesday, July 29. Click on the audio player below to hear the rundown on some of the stories we're following for ...

LOCAL NEWS

Montreal this morning: The heat goes on
It's another scorcher today in Montreal.

LOCAL NEWS

Altercation in Montreal North leaves two

sale but move quickly because online orders will be accepted only until the end of the day on Wednesday (July 29). Linens are available for pickup at Parc des Bénévoles in Kirkland, on Saturday between 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Donations are welcomed year round. For details about the softball tournament in Kirkland, the line sale, the fund, how to donate and upcoming fundraisers, visit www.sjanbradwell.com.

kgreenaway@montrealgazette.com



men in hospital

Two men are in hospital after a violent confrontation Tuesday evening in Montreal North.

LOCAL NEWS

Quebec aiming to slash health care spending by \$583 million

In total, the Health Department is aiming to chop \$583 million in spending through so-called optimization measures. And in a bizarre twist, the government has decided that it won't provide ...

PREVIOUS	 Bill Tierney: For our veterans, bureaucracy can be a struggle to...	 Community pools in Pierrefonds on survival watch	NEXT
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