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WILBA hosts annual Sian Bradwell/West Island Lakers All-Star Weekend

By Mike Hickey

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Matt Hickey photo

"I played baseball with Sharon and she asked me if the Lakers could do something for the Fund and that is how it got started," Nancy Tallman said in a recent interview. "Over the years we have raised over \$200,000 and every cent goes directly to the hospital."

Every weekend the sounds of basketball echo through the halls of John Rennie High School as the West Island Lakers intercity and house leagues hold court from early morning to late into the evening as aspiring basketball players work on their game. However, the venue will take on a different look on the weekend of Jan. 30-31 when the Lakers host the 16th annual Sian Bradwell/West Island Lakers All-Star Weekend. The

two-day event will include a charity basketball game involving the Montreal Alouettes, including the participation of longtime supporter CFL legend and current member of the Als' coaching staff Anthony Calvillo. Halftime entertainment will be a Michael Jackson Dance Medley featuring the amazing talents of Sarah Steben. There will be a silent auction for Montreal Canadiens tickets and autographed sweaters as well as a 50/50 raffle and a raffle for West Jet tickets.

The Sian Bradwell Fund was started in 1986, to help children with cancer and their families by purchasing medical equipment for diagnosis, treatment and research. Sian was an infant when she was diagnosed with a 'primitive neuroectodermal tumour' in her liver, spine and foot and she died a year later.

The Lakers began being involved in the Fund because of a friendship between Sian's mother, Sharon, and longtime Laker parent and administrator Nancy Tallman

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A few years back, Tallman decided that it was time to tone down her involvement with the weekend.

"I was ready to stop with my involvement with the weekend, then my grandson was rushed to the Children's with an emergency and I remembered how important the Children's Hospital is to Montreal and I knew that I needed to keep being involved."

All activities are conducted by volunteers, and 100 percent of all donations go towards purchasing medical equipment for the hospitals. Income tax receipts for donations are provided by the hospital.

The main objective of the Fund is to purchase medical equipment and other items deemed necessary for better diagnosis and treatment of children with cancer. Upon special request, the Fund may purchase items other than medical equipment for compassionate reasons. Items purchased in the past include special mattresses to ease the pain of children in the terminal stages of their illness and wigs for children who have lost their hair due to chemotherapy.

Sian Bradwell's life was cut short but her legacy is helping countless children lead better,

healthy lives.



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