



by Mimi Hudson

INVOLVEMENT SHOWS CHILDREN THE VALUE OF GENEROSITY

Parents often ask, "How can I instill generosity in my children?" Like most things in life, charity begins at home. Generous children come from generous families and generous families make a generous and caring community. We are fortunate that the North Shore is one of those communities.

Parents model for their children that giving can be as much fun and rewarding as receiving. This can be a challenging task. We are an affluent community. Children who have everything cannot imagine what it is like to have little or nothing. It is our job to help them understand that it is the responsibility of those who have to assist those who have less.

Many of our citizens take this responsibility very seriously by giving to our not-for profit agencies on the North Shore who then provide programs and services for those in need. Family Services of the North Shore is one of those agencies. Local families donate more than \$1 million every year to sustain the agency. Five families alone anonymously donated \$65,000 to the I hope family centre. (I hope family centre is a collective of family resource programs that ensures all North Shore families and their children under the age of six have access to innovative prevention programs.)

While the message of giving needs to be delivered year round, the holiday season gives us ample opportunity to demonstrate the

spirit of generosity and put it into action. You don't have to be a philanthropist to make a difference. In addition to your money, there are other ways families can give – your time, your talents and recycling your possessions.

There are many North Shore community agencies that can assist with this. It can be as simple as a donation to the Food Bank. Your children can choose something at the grocery store to put in the Food Bank box, or food and clothing can be donated to the Harvest Project. Every year, the Christmas Bureau provides holiday hampers and a toy shop for nearly 750 low income families and individuals on the North Shore.

Think how much fun your children can have assembling a hamper for a sponsored family in need. They could also choose a brand new toy they might like to own themselves to donate to the Bureau's toy shop. In conjunction with the Christmas Bureau, James Wilson of Obsession Bikes operates the "Bikes for Tykes" program. Children can donate their used bikes to James who will fix them up like new and "recycle" them to less fortunate kids who might not otherwise receive a bike for Christmas.

Our talented North Shore crafts people donate their time and creativity by producing blankets and quilts for those in need. Other families give at Christmas time by attending the Annual Winter Family Ball. While a more expensive

proposition, it demonstrates to children that they can have fun as a family and also help others in the process. The ball has raised more than \$2 million for Family Services of the North Shore counselling programs in the 21 years families have been supporting the event. If attending the ball is not possible, families can contribute by putting together items and donating them to the ball's silent auction.

While there are limited opportunities for children to volunteer their time, parents can model the necessary role volunteers play in the community. Volunteers are an integral part of all not-for-profit agencies. Without their care and dedication, agencies like Family Services of the North Shore could not provide the breadth of services it does. Very special people of all ages and backgrounds make up the backbone of support for many programs including Palliative Care, the Christmas Bureau, Adaptation, Orientation, Integration, as well as special events and the Board of Directors.

The North Shore provides endless opportunities for parents to demonstrate generosity and caring to their children and get the whole family involved. It's what makes us healthy and successful now and in the future.

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