



2014 Beneficiaries



Lydia (11) at Camp Meridian.

Photo by Emily Adams

This year Stronghearts paid for 6 campers to attend Camp Meridian, a camp for children with congenital heart defects. Lydia, is 11 years-old, and attended Camp Meridian last October, for the second time. Lydia has Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD). Lydia's mother, Emily, explained that she was born with a big hole between her two ventricles. After having difficulty gaining weight as an infant, at 8 weeks she had surgery to fix the hole. At 9 weeks she had an additional surgery to have a pace maker implanted. Lydia has had two additional surgeries to replace the batteries and expects to need surgery again in 5 years or so. Lydia remarks that right after surgery, she couldn't go on the monkey bars, but now she can. In fact, she can do everything except for football which she doesn't want to do anyway!

Lydia has a new baby brother, a big sister, 2 cats and 2 fish that she keeps in her room. She likes to play in the snow and make snowmen for fun. Lydia had never gone to overnight camp before. She felt everyone was nice and welcoming and her doctor was there!

Lydia loves Camp Meridian. She explained, "I like that at Camp Meridian you don't worry about what other's think. Everyone understands what I had to go through. Kids have a chance to be themselves." Lydia described "a ton" of things to do—rock climbing, games, songs and on the last night a bonfire. Lydia's heart condition has not stopped her from doing what she wants to do—at Camp Meridian she finds other children with the same resilience and joy.

2014 Events

By Sue Carroll Duffy

We held our Twelfth Annual Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day "Winter Sports & Fun" at the Pottle Tree Farm in Perry Maine to increase awareness of Congenital Heart Defects and raise funds for families affected by CHD's. We had over 200 people gather.

We were so excited to have Perry Elementary School attend this year as a make-up snow day. The Perry School children also selected Stronghearts as the charity to benefit from their reading time fundraiser. Including contributions by mail, we raised close to \$3,000.

We raised several hundred more dollars this year at the Around the Lake for Stronghearts event in October. We have a core group that looks forward to trekking it around Boyden's Lake. It has been a dream of mine to be able to run around. Over four hours later and by mile 12 the ditch looked really comfortable. A group of friends and family must have sensed my struggle, and joined me for the last mile. I got around—not exactly with the style I imagined, but I did it!

It is an apt metaphor—together we, the Stronghearts friends and family did it again for the families caring for children with congenital heart defects. No event goes as we imagine, but is always wonderful, and full of great memories, triumphs, the occasional disappointment, and best of all community.

Deep felt thanks to everyone near and far who year after year help families caring for children with congenital heart defects.



Asa, Siobhan and Roy were the Olympians of the Cross Country Ski Race. Photo: By Don Dunbar

Online Small Grant Application for Families

We are working on a new website that will include an online application for families in Maine caring for children with heart defects. Please send families that need support, our way! It should be up and running in the next month. Go to:

www.Stronghearts.org

Prepare for Surgery Workshops

Dr. Duffy offers Peggy Huddleston's Prepare for Surgery workshop at the Cobcook Learning Center in Lubec, ME the first Saturday of every month from 9-11 AM. Stronghearts will pay the fee for any families caring for a child with heart defects. The workshop also addresses anxiety, headaches, insomnia and pain.

Memorial Donations in Loving Memory of:

Mike Duffy, Scott and Mary Metcalf, Evan Jewell Weston, Paula Louise Weston, Mary Metcalf, Jim Pottle, Seamus Carroll Duffy, Diane Bassett, Lewis Bassett, Elizabeth Matera, Dale Sherrard, Elliot Fishbein, Bob Dolan, Caroline Dopyera, Lee and Irene Carroll, Judy McDonald, T.Way McDonald, Dana Bowen, Jr., Philip Clement, Sid and Hazel Bahrt, Dr. James Bates, Leiana Howarth, Moses Holbrook Walker, Jim Neal, John Benvenuti