



## Meet Emma—A Camp Meridian Camper

Emma is a delightful 12-year-old from Southern Maine who went to Camp Meridian, a special camp for children with heart defects, for the second time this year. Emma had syncopal episodes (passing out) with seizure like activity due to the lack of blood flow and oxygen to the brain beginning at 18 months old. It took time to realize that she would not outgrow her heart condition, and that her condition was life-threatening. When she was 6, Emma's heart stopped for 20 seconds. The next day, she went in for surgery to have a sinus pacemaker put in. Emma exclaimed, "I haven't had a problem since!" In fact, one of her favorite activities is competitive gymnastics!

For Emma, going to Camp Meridian is a highlight of her year. She has made lifelong friends, one of whom lives close by. Emma described camp as a place where she was encouraged to accept herself. The scars from her surgery are part of who she is and she talks about them with some pride.

At Camp Meridian, one of Emma's favorite challenges was rock climbing. She didn't think she would be able to make it to the top—but she did! Another proud moment at camp was the chance to talk at the closing ceremony.

When Emma is 16-17, she wants to do the Navigator Program, where she will have a chance to develop her own camping and hiking challenge. We may hear more from wonderful Emma!



## What Stronghearts Did This Year—With Your Help

*Thank you for another year of supporting Stronghearts. It is an honor to be able to hear of a need, and to be able to offer support. This year we raised \$4,807.28 to help families. We sent 3 children to Camp Meridian, supported a family caring for a young child with a CHD, and provided funds to help a family with funeral expenses. Our events, Winter Sports and Fun in February and Around the Lake for Stronghearts in October have become beloved community events in our town, and simply would not be possible without numerous volunteers and the incredible Pottle Tree Farm. Have you come to one of our events?*

## Memorial Gardens Around Town



Over the last couple of years, we have planted memorial gardens at the Pottle Tree Farm. This year we decided to share the gardens with participants at the Around the Lake for Stronghearts event. Everyone went home with red tulip bulbs in memory of Madeline, purple tulip bulbs in memory of Katie, and acorns in memory of Jim Pottle. Share your garden pictures with us! We planted ours along side the Pennamaquan River in Pembroke. Where did you plant yours?

## Small Grant Application for Families

Do you know a family caring for a child with a CHD? Let them know we can help! Word of mouth has been our best way of finding families in need.

## Memorial Donations in Loving Memory of:

Connor Whitaker Ireland, Patricia Bridges, Mary Ann Weston, Nancy Jane Carroll Butler, Sandy Bull, Katie Fugel, Anna Auditore, Chris Guida, Gina Patterson, Madeline Schaafsma, Mike Duffy, Patricia McDonald, Millie Gomez, Kip Gormley, Ginnie and Leonard Ritchie, Scott and Mary Metcalf, Evan Jewell Weston, Paula Louise Weston, 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



## Saturday February 10th at the Pottle Tree Farm in Perry Winter Sports and Fun

**Sled..Skate Cross Country Ski..Ice Fish..SnowShoe..Hike..Dead River Raffle..Potluck**

From Rt. 1 in Perry Maine, go 2 1/2 miles down South Meadow Rd. The Pottle Tree Farm is on the right.

The event is held in honor of Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week and in loving memory of Jim Pottle and Seamus Duffy.

No Admittance Fee. Donations support Stronghearts in their effort to support families caring for children with congenital heart defects.



*Seamus Carroll Duffy Memorial Foundation  
PO Box 177, Perry, ME 04667*

Phone: 207-214-2117

E-mail:  
stronghearts@roadrunner.com

On the web at Stronghearts.org

Stronghearts is a Perry based foundation established in 2002 by Brian and Sue Duffy in memory of their son Seamus who died of a congenital heart defect, Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome. Stronghearts supports families caring for children with congenital heart defects.

### Board Members

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