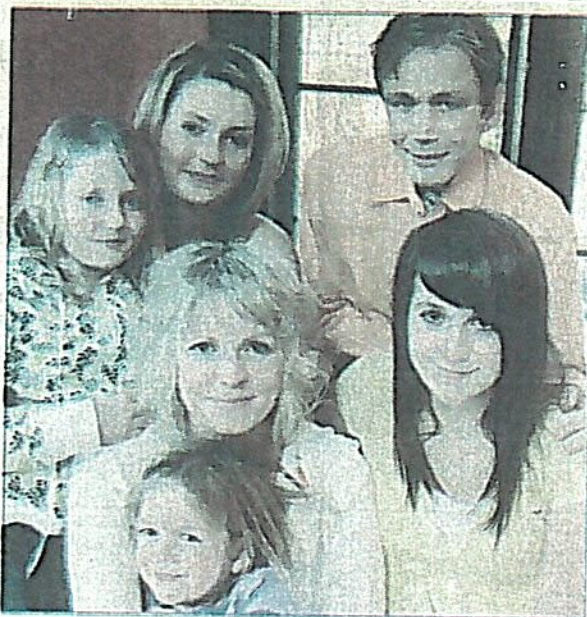


LOCAL NEWS

The Steele family were the most recent family to participate in a Dreams to Memories wish experience: from back left, daughters Keltie, Shannon and Carly with dad Randy. Foreground, mom Maggie holds daughter Randi.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dreams coming true

BY MELINDA CHEEVERS
STAFF

Dreams to Memories are looking for help making their dreams become a reality.

The non-profit charitable foundation is based out of Fort Erie but helps families from all across Ontario by granting wishes to terminally ill parents. Although the wishes are granted to the adult, the 'last wish experience' directly involves children through the parent's last wish to create a memory for their children.

"We're a wish granting foundation that works to create lasting memories for families," said fundraising coordinator, Patt Sinclair. "We send families on vacations so they can spend time together, enjoying each other's company."

In the nine years the foundation has been around, they have helped over 45 families. In order to participate, the terminally ill parent must have children under the age of 15 years living in the same home. Sinclair says they get requests from all over Canada, but can only grant wishes to those living in Ontario.

The most recent family, the Steeles, are from Hamilton. Randy Steele, the father, was diagnosed with throat cancer and wanted to experience one last vacation as a family. Steele was a well-known Hamilton-based broadcaster for CHCH television. In February, Randy, his wife Maggie and their four daughters visited Great Wolf Lodge in Niagara Falls.

"These little girls will remem-

ber this trip forever," said Sinclair. "Spending time with their dad and having fun with him before he passed away."

Randy Steele has since passed away.

The two most popular destinations for trips, according to Sinclair, are Disney World in Florida and Great Wolf Lodge in Niagara Falls.

Dreams to Memories raises all of their operating budget through fundraising initiatives. Their biggest fundraiser, the Dreams to Memories annual golf tournament is once again happening this August. Even though it's more than two months away, they are already noticing a difference in community support.

"Usually all of the pins are sponsored by now," said Sinclair. "But when I call, I'm getting apologies and people are saying they just can't afford it this year."

Each year, organizers get local businesses to support each of the 18 holes at the golf tournament held at Bridgewater Country Club. This year, only half are gone so far.

"It's hard, because we know that the economy is in a bad state," said Sinclair. "But, the less money we get, the less families we can help."

The 7th annual golf tournament is happening on August 24 starting with lunch at 11:30 a.m., followed by the shotgun start scramble at 12:30 p.m. Dreams to Memories are looking for sponsors, volunteers and participants. For more information, visit www.dreams2memories.org or call the foundation at 905-994-9777.

Death Notices



STEELE, Randy
(1961-2009)

Randy found grace on May 22, 2009 after a long and difficult journey with cancer, and having spent his last weeks completely surrounded by a circle of love.