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Connor Couple Back at Home!

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HARRY HUNT PHOTO

Maria Martini and Helen Lee of Langley's Food for Famine society awarded Aldergrove Secondary student Tiana Beirnes (centre) with a new iPad as her prize for her contributions to the cause.

Students learn to 'be the change'

By KURT LANGMANN
Aldergrove Star

An Aldergrove Secondary student was among local youths who were deeply moved and inspired by the relief work being done in countries where too many of the populace are malnourished.

Tiana Beirnes, a grade 12 student at ACSS, attended World Food Day at the Langley Events Centre on Oct. 16. Here she heard renowned speakers like Mark Moore of Mana Nutrition, Michael Messenger of World Vision Canada, David McKenzie of Hope International Development Agency and Daniel Germain of Breakfast Clubs of Canada.

"Watching the people live in poverty in the malnourished countries just breaks my heart and I dislike seeing them living like that because it was not their choice to live in poverty," said Beirnes.

"I have had and still have the dream and goal to fundraise enough to go to Africa and help people in need and I am going to accomplish that goal in the next year or two.

"Once I heard about World Food

Day I knew it was the right action for me to participate and hear the special guest speakers talk from World Vision Canada, Breakfast Clubs of Canada, Hope International, and the partnership Food For Famine and many others. It was so inspiring to learn more in-depth about what they do to help out malnourished countries."

World Food Day Canada 2012 was the fourth annual World Food Day celebrated in Langley, and one of the largest events in all of Canada. World Food Day Canada is organized by the Food For Famine Society. Maria Martini is the founder of Food for Famine and organizer of World Food Day in Langley.

"When I saw all the students that were taking part in World Food Day it put a smile on my face because I knew the more people that were there, the more the message gets spread," said Beirnes.

"I know I will keep on spreading the message. The quote that I heard the speakers say that day that will stick in my heart and in my head is, 'If everyone makes a difference then the world will and could change.' That would be

amazing if that happened!

"The other quote was 'Our/your generation is the one to make a difference.' I truly believe in this one because we, as younger kids, are learning more and more about what is going on in the countries with poverty and what needs to be done. Seems like more teenagers also want to try and take action which would be awesome, so I truly hope that my generation cares as much as I do and is inspired as much as me."

Food For Famine is a Langley-based society formed to provide Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), free of charge to children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Thanks to relief organizations, like World Vision, which distribute the product free of charge, 100 per cent of all donations to Food for Famine go directly to the purchase of RUTF.

Food for Famine provides RUTF products from various sources. These have included: Plumpynut, Mana (Mother Assisted Nutritive Aid), and Cibo (Food for Famine's own RUTF product).

Visit their website for more information: foodforfamine.org

Organ recipients spreading cheer

By MONIQUE TAMMINGA
Aldergrove Star

Three organ transplant recipients and one organ donor hand-delivered some Christmas cheer in the form of big tins of popcorn to Langley Memorial Hospital's physicians and nurses in the Intensive Care Unit and operating room on Dec. 17.

"We try to go to as many hospitals as we can this time of year," said heart transplant recipient Kristy Coldwell.

"They may lose a patient here and those persons organs may save a life somewhere else. We want to acknowledge the work they do."

The 30-year-old Cloverdale woman received her new heart at the age of 17 after having congenital heart failure and three surgeries to keep her alive. "I'm getting married in June, I'm working. There's a lot of rejection medication we have to take but we aren't complaining. It's amazing to have the 12 years I've had."

Coldwell was team captain for "Operation Popcorn." The group said it's important to let the doctors and nurses see the "living results" of all their hard work.

"A group like this shows them the work they do saves lives. At LMH, they deal with the tragic side of the story because the transplants take place at Vancouver General," said BC Transplant's Megan Williams.

"But you never know where a potential donor can come from."

This year marks the most transplants B.C. has ever seen, at just over 300. When they made up the cards last week for the popcorn, it read 287.

That's how many more transplants have taken place in such a short time.

For double lung transplant recipient Darvy Culleton, 35, this time of year is extra special, but not because it's Christmas. "I had my transplant, Dec. 19, 2006," said the Coquitlam resident. He was born with cystic fibrosis.

Now he is breathing better and enjoying life.

Don Campbell, 46, is on his third kidney transplant, but this one has "worked the best," he said.

He has participated in Operation Popcorn six times because he feels it is that important to let doctors know the important work they do.

Todd Reid, 36, gave his kidney to his best friend of 20 years on July 6, 2010. "He was dying. It was a no brainer. I'd do it again. Ten people were tested and I was a match," he said. Reid lost his mom the year prior to him donating his kidney. She died waiting for a liver, he said.

To find out more go to transplant.bc.ca or go to the Facebook page.



MONIQUE TAMMINGA PHOTO

Langley Memorial Hospital OR nurse Manny Dela Cruz hugs double lung transplant recipient Darvy Culleton after a group of organ transplant recipient including Don Campbell, left, and organ donor Todd Reid, brought popcorn for doctors and nurses.

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