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KIDS CANCER CARE STORY/TESTIMONIAL

There's a fact of life that Christine McIver, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Kids Cancer Care Foundation of Alberta accepts and that is kids will always get cancer. Losing her son was the catalyst for creating Kids Cancer Care. But, she says "More and more children are surviving cancer. And more and more will survive it in the future." However, cancer treatment often causes chronic health issues which means kids usually miss a lot of school and may fall behind their peers, making it harder for them to graduate and go further with their education.

That's why the Board of Directors launched the Kids Cancer Care Derek Wandzura Memorial Scholarship Fund in honour of Christine's son in 2007 to help level the playing field for these families and thereby enable kids to pursue their dreams with the help of post-secondary education.

While working with Calgary Foundation on Donor Directed Funds, conversations started around how to establish a meaningful legacy and ensure it would last. Christine noticed that other charitable organizations were listed in the Foundation's annual report as having their own endowments so after learning what was involved, the organization decided to pursue setting one up for this new scholarship fund.

The Kids Cancer Care team kicked off the process on Christine's 50th birthday by asking people to "bring a cheque" to her party. Many discussions with her Board about the commitment it would take from the organization and many more subsequent charity events later the endowment was put into motion. Every year, Kids Cancer Care awards substantial scholarships to between 10 to 20 young adults who have survived cancer and overcome many other obstacles.

Through it all Christine says she's "thrilled with Calgary Foundation's service. They have built such an knowledgeable team of fund managers that are so fair and transparent that it inspires confidence the endowment will continue to grow and be there in perpetuity to give kids who've survived cancer that extra boost for their education". And she can't say enough about the application portal the Foundation supplies for applicants. "It's brilliant! And so easy to use for our applicants!"

Does she recommend setting up a fund to other non-profits? "Wholeheartedly!" she beams, "Make sure to know what your end game is. Having that focus from the Board level down through the organization will help Calgary Foundation advisors determine what the best solution is for your mission. The endowment path was the right choice for us because I know Calgary Foundation has a commitment to managing funds responsibly to keep building community forever."