

In the 10th annual Toss 'Em Up for Childhood Cancer, fundraising surpasses \$500,000

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The majority of the 500-plus crowd was made up of young adults who laughed and enjoyed the heat with cold brews in hand on the VanDyk farm. When it became time for the opening ceremonies of the 10th annual Toss 'Em Up for Childhood Cancer to start – respect was given with total silence by all.

Annually, swapping back and forth between Seaforth to Woodstock, the tournaments have now surpassed the \$500,000 mark in funds raised.

Every dollar goes towards childhood cancer; roughly 75 per cent for cancer research with the remaining 25 per cent going directly to kids fighting cancer.

This year \$1,000 will go towards purchasing a new wig for local resident Tracy Lee – a survivor of brain cancer for the last 15 years.

Two people cut their hair for the cause along with a man who shaved his beard off- he raised \$1,400.

Childhood cancer is relatively uncommon, however, the Canadian Cancer Society says it remains at the top for fatal diseases.

"More than asthma, diabetes, cystic fibrosis and AIDS combined. It is second only to injury-related deaths among Canadian children," it stated on the CCS website.

First launched a decade ago, some 90 family members connected to Nick VanDyk, 19, who died of a childhood cancer, decided to hold a ring-toss tournament in his memory.

That year 110 teams signed up.

An easy choice of games to compete in since the family as a unit usually meets every year and plays habitually, said Tracy Rossetti, cousin of VanDyk and organizer for the Toss 'Em Up for Childhood Cancer event.

After the introduction on stage many families who lost loved ones released balloons into the atmosphere, the parents of Rebecca Kipfer-Pryce were part of this emotional process, many tears were shed.

In its tenth year "Toss Em Up for Childhood Cancer" surpasses \$500,000 in fundraising for childhood cancer. Story online soon. Check out last Saturday's crowd. #seaforth #huroncounty pic.twitter.com/Mae24NOfbE — Huron Expositor (@C4thExp) June 5, 2018

"We've all endured a lot of rain, a lot of tears, but after the rain will come a rainbow, and that is exactly what this community in Seaforth has done, you've created a beautiful rainbow from a horrible storm," stated Rossetti fighting back the tears on stage.

She said this event has three strict guidelines they follow, "we are here for three reasons, we are here to remember those who we loved and lost, second we're here to build awareness and funds for childhood cancer, but we're here to build community."

This year, 225 teams registered in the ring toss, with roughly 450 set to compete.

Nick VanDyk's father Ken was on hand sporting the orange like many of the other family members, he said for such a small community, "Seaforth really steps up" to the plate each year.

He jokingly made a prediction that a VanDyk will most likely walk away victorious in the tourney, he believes the extensive experience over the years at family functions will be the deciding factor.

The event has been held on the VanDyk farm for many years but Rossetti admitted that this will be the last year, next time around will most likely take place at a recreation centre, she predicted.