

Many Hands Doing Good is mother's tribute to children, father



York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe speaks at the Foundation's launch last week. Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

By Brock Weir

The lives of Daniel, Harry and Milly Neville-Lake were cut tragically short in a fatal car crash in September 2015, but their legacies will live on through Many Hands Doing Good.

The Many Hands Doing Good Foundation was officially launched in Richmond Hill last week.

Created by Jennifer Neville-Lake, the mother of the three children, and daughter of their grandfather, Gary Neville, who also lost his life in the crash, it was born from the community response and, in turn gives back to the community.

The vision of Many Hands Doing Good is to foster a ?community where every child and student is encouraged to express themselves through inspiration and nurturing they gained from art, dance and music.?

The pillars of the foundation were formed by the lives and loves of each person who lost their lives that day. Daniel, a familiar face in Aurora through his participation on local Beaver and Scout troops, had a passion for dance. Harrison, a War AMPS champ who often accompanied his big brother to local Beaver meetings to inspire other youngsters to create a more inclusive community, was hailed for his love of art. Milly's passion was music, while grandfather Gary had a ?fascination with everything broadcasting.?

As such, the Many Hands Doing Good Foundation will help other children suffering from the effects of trauma through funding for art and music therapy as well as helping students financially as they begin to study broadcasting in college, following in the footsteps of Gary.

?Our goal is to provide funding to as many children as possible who are suffering from the effects of trauma and will benefit from art and music therapy,? said Adrianno Rucchetta, President of the Foundation. ?We also provide funding to children interested in dance, as well as Centennial College students who are interested in studying broadcasting. Each of our areas of funding align with the interests of four very special people: Daniel, Harrison, Milly and Gary Neville.?

The value of art therapy ? musical, visual, or otherwise ? was underscored by Julia Beth Kowaleski, President of the Music Therapy Association of Ontario.

The Association, she said, is proud to support an organization like Many Hands as it is ?giving back to the community as was given to them.?

?Music therapy can benefit many people in many different ways,? she said. ?It can benefit people physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. Music therapy works in a lot of different ways. We know that music therapy activates the brain differently than a lot of other mediums do. Music therapy is accessible to everyone. You do not need to know how to play an instrument to participate in music therapy.

?People have a lot of fun participating in music but they can also get a lot of meaning by participating in music. A lot of people ask what music therapy is. It is not necessarily working on learning to play an instrument or learning to sing a song; music therapy includes an assessment process in which you establish functional goals. These could be physical goals, working on range of motion,

either maintaining them or learning new physical skills. It can work on social goals [like] dealing with anxiety, depression, anger, or other behaviours that may be occurring because of trauma. The Music Therapy Association of Ontario truly appreciates and is proud to support Many Hands Doing Good.?

Many Hands Doing Good also received the endorsement of both the York Regional Police and Victim Services of York Region. ?I want to say on behalf of the men and women of York Regional Police, we're honoured to be invited here today to lend our support and offer congratulations on the launch of Many Hands Doing Good,? said York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe. ?I have nothing but admiration for Jennifer Neville Lake and her husband Ed, who are still dealing with tragedy few of us could even cope or fully understand. That she has poured her time and effort into the initiative to help children is no surprise to me. I am humbled to stand here to help spread the word. The horrific event of September 27, 2015, that claimed the lives of Milly, Harry, Daniel and Gary Neville Lake is one I will never forget, nor will many of the officers at York Regional Police. Our community was devastated as well, as I can tell you Jennifer has had all the support she will need from our organization here at York Regional Police.

?Jennifer is truly an inspiration to us all. People here today in our community know that what she has been through but none of us can imagine the pain that they continue to live with day in and day out. It is truly a testament to her bravery and her love for her children that she has been able to find strength to build an organization like Many Hands Doing Good. I hope that in time [the support] the foundation gives to other children will ease some of her pain. Please understand that you will always have our unwavering support at York Regional Police and our community. The memories of Daniel, Harry, Milly and Gary will never be forgotten.?