

# Kirstin's Walk cancelled this year but memories continue

## Organizations that give back in community continue despite pandemic

By Katelyn Boulanger

Laurie Sutherland wants residents in Selkirk and area to remember that even though we can't have our regular events in the community that doesn't mean that we have to forget them this year.

Sutherland is one of the creators of Kirstin's Walk, a fun five-kilometer walk around Selkirk Park that normally takes place in June. This year it is not able to happen because of COVID-19 safety restrictions.

The walk is a memorial walk for Laurie's daughter Kirstin Rae Sutherland who passed away at the age of 27. Her family wanted to keep her love of children and community alive and so decided to create a yearly walk as well as a fund through the Selkirk and District Community Foundation that supports children's projects in our communities.

"[Kirstin] had a zest for life and real compassion for giving. She had a beautiful spirit and personality and was a very engaging person. She loved people, especially young children," said Sutherland.

Kirstin didn't have her own children but that love came out in her choice of profession as she worked at Rivercrest Early Learning and Child Care.

Sutherland wanted to speak out and remind people that even though the walk can't happen right now, that everyone will be back together when we are able to do so safely as Sutherland has received many questions about when the event might be happening and how donations are happening this year.

"I don't think [Kirstin's Walk] will be forgotten because of COVID. I think that it'll probably come back bigger than ever," said Sutherland.

Bev Clegg the Executive Director of the Selkirk & District Community Foundation encourages residents that have the ability to at this time to donate to the Kirstin's Walk fund or other funds that may not be able to have events this summer so that they can continue to give back to our community.

Even though the event couldn't take place this year, money from the the Kirstin's Walk for Kids Fund was still able to be given to the St. Andrews Childcare Center to be able to put up a gazebo .

Last year, the Kirstin's Walk for Kids Fund and



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Above: A photo from the 2019 Kirstin's Walk. Below: Kirstin Rae Sutherland who inspired Kirstin's Walk.

the Gaynor Family Fund were able to sponsor Nova House's Summer Wonder Day Camp.

"[The camp] was a children's summer program that had to take a whole lot of different approaches, because of COVID last year with more [home-based] activities and upgrading some spaces for the kids to play outside," said Clegg.

Clegg also says that just because there isn't an official event this year that doesn't mean that you can't participate in a private event with your family.

"I would encourage people to remember the events that the Kirstin's Walk for Kids had in the past and conduct your own little private walk. A 20-minute walk around and enjoy a lovely afternoon, maybe down at the park or somewhere local, and then make a gift in honour of that," she said.

Gifts can be made through the Selkirk and District Community Foundation's website at <https://sdcf.ca/> or by phone at 204-785-9755 and residents who want to specify that it goes to this cause should specify that they want their donation to go to the Kirstin's Walk for Kids Fund.



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