

**Nomination of Kids Cancer Care Foundation of Alberta
Distinguished Partner in Family Health Award - International Family Nursing Association
Nominated by Nancy J. Moules, RN, PhD**

“A cure for every child, care for every family” is the vision of Kids Cancer Care Foundation (KCC), a non-profit foundation that funds research and creates services for children and families who are experiencing, or have experienced, childhood cancer. It is with strong conviction and admiration that I proudly nominate KCC for the IFNA Distinguished Partner in Family Health Award.

History of KCC

In 1986, when Christine McIver’s (nee Wandzura) son Derek was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumour, there were very few programs in the province to help children and families navigate the frightening diagnosis of childhood cancer. There were no Alberta cancer camps at the time, so Christine registered Derek in a British Columbia camp. Seeing the smile on his face and the laughter in his eyes when he returned home strengthened her resolve to build an Alberta cancer camp. Christine wanted her son Derek to have a chance to be a kid again and she wanted to ensure other parents like her would not be alone in their battle with childhood cancer. Working out of her basement in the late 80s, Christine and a group of dedicated parents and volunteers set to work to build a support system for children and families facing childhood cancer. In 1991, after the death of Christine’s son, this group established the first cancer camp in Alberta under the auspices of the Canadian Cancer Society. In 1994, Christine founded the Kids Cancer Camps of Alberta (later to become the Kids Cancer Care Foundation), an organization dedicated solely to helping children with cancer and their families. Recognized for the quality and diversity of their programming, these life-affirming camps are uniquely designed to meet the needs of the whole family at each stage in the cancer journey from diagnosis, through treatment, and even bereavement.

Buoyed by the success of the camps, the volunteers and staff of Kids Cancer Camps knew it was time to begin addressing the full spectrum of childhood cancer. In 1999, the foundation expanded its mandate to include funding of childhood cancer research and hospital programs and became KCC foundation. In 2008, the foundation established the first scholarship fund in Alberta for cancer patients and survivors. In 2015, collaborating with health care professionals at the Alberta Children’s Hospital and educators at the Calgary Board of Education, KCC introduced an educational support program to help young people build a solid base - socially, emotionally and academically - to set them up for success in life.

Today, KCC is one of the largest childhood cancer research funders in the country. It has donated approximately 10.5 million dollars to research at the University of Calgary, including a first ever 5 year, 1-million-dollar **nursing research Chair in child and family cancer care**, the first of its kind in Canada, and an 8-million-dollar science research Chair, the only one of its kind in Canada (see next section for details). The foundation now offers more than 20 year-round and summer camp and outreach programs, along with education support program and services to Alberta families. KCC is one of only a handful of charities in North America dedicated to supporting the entire continuum of childhood cancer, fighting the disease on all fronts: with laughter at camp; the best treatments at the hospital for children; support for families, including siblings, parents, and grandparents; innovative science in the lab; brighter futures through education support and post-secondary scholarships; and lifelong bereavement support for families who, like Christine did not achieve cure.

Financial Commitments of KCC

Since 1999, KCC has funded over \$ 10,438,563.00 in pediatric oncology research including Chairs, establishment awards, equipment, research, infrastructure and summer studentship grants. In 2002, Christine's passion for research allowed KCC to fund and name the \$8M "Kids Cancer Care Foundation Chair in Pediatric Oncology Research," the largest Chair of its kind in Canada. In 2005, KCC provided \$1.8 M to create the Hughes Children's Cancer Research Centre (HCCRC) which is a state-of-the-art research centre at the University of Calgary designed to advance interdisciplinary research into childhood cancers. In 2007, again in partnership with the University of Calgary, KCC began funding three-year international fellows and has since completed three such fellowships and is in the middle of the fourth. In 2010, KCC began a \$3.75M investment into the experimental and applied therapeutics (ExPAT) program which supports collaborative research between researchers at the Alberta Children's Hospital and University of Calgary. Most recently, Christine championed the establishment of a five-year "Kids Cancer Care Foundation Nursing Research Chair in Child and Family Cancer Care" in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary; this is included in the pledged amount of \$2.5 M for the next five years (exPAT, clinical research, Chairs).

Sustained Investment and Excellence in Advancing Family Focused Health Care

It is difficult to distill into a few words what KCC has contributed to family health, but I put it down to community. KCC offers people, who may otherwise be isolated, frightened, and lonely, a caring and healing community of families who understand, a place where families can share their stories and find support in each other. They share their stories personally and publically at fund raising events, in the media, on social media, in hospitals, and in KCC's own videos and blog site <http://www.kidscancercare.ab.ca/stories>. All of the families' stories reflect, over and over in different words, how important it is to have a community when facing childhood cancer.

In the hospital, families from the KCC community volunteer their time to support newly diagnosed families. KCC has for 18 years hosted a family pizza night at the pediatric oncology unit at the Alberta Children's Hospital. Research funding is not all that the foundation supports. KCC funds and runs 5 cancer camps: *SunMaker* for children and siblings; *SunSeeker* for teens; *SunHaven* for children who have a parent with cancer; *Family Camp*; and *Family Bereavement Camp*. They offer a *Teen Leadership Program*, *Time to Remember* candlelight vigil for bereaved families to remember children lost to cancer, and *Cooking and Caring*, where volunteers cook healthy, home cooked meals which are delivered to families who are in the midst of the cancer experience. KCC even employs a "family outreach coordinator." These are only a sampling of the things KCC does to support children and families. KCC has made a profound difference for children and families experiencing cancer at biological, emotional, psychosocial, social, and spiritual levels. Christine McIver has turned "every parent's worst nightmare" into a philanthropic organization (KCC) that selflessly serves the 150 children newly diagnosed with cancer each year in Alberta, who will collectively spend 6000 days in hospital every year, and children and families who live with the long-term sequelae of cancer treatment.

Summary

"Changing the course of childhood cancer one day, one child, one family at a time" is the mission of KCC, guided by values of respect, trust, responsibility, fairness, and care. KCC, indeed, is making a difference to children and families experiencing cancer. Family is at the core of its work and KCC is most deserving of this award. As a family nurse researcher and educator, I could not ask for a better "partner."