

Sweet Tribute Paid to Heather Snell's Memory

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London, Ont. - When Heather Snell, an Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis sufferer and a champion of ALS research, lost her five year battle against the disease at the early age of 49, her family refused to give up on her mission of hope.

In a sweetly inspirational tribute, Heather's uncle, David Kelman, and his wife Marie hosted a unique fundraiser. Using

elderberries labouriously harvested from Heather's property, the family baked pies and tarts, which they then sold to their church and surrounding community.

Revenue from the sales plus a generous donation from Heather's aunt, Carolyn Kelman, amounted to \$1,000, which the family donated to the ALS research lab at London Health Sciences Centre, headed by world-leading ALS researcher and neurologist Dr. Michael Strong.

Also known as Lou Gehrig's, ALS is a devastating disease with an 80% mortality rate within two to five years of diagnosis. The leading cause of neurological death in Canada, ALS destroys motor neurons, the links through which the brain controls voluntary muscles in the body. Those diagnosed with ALS experience symptoms such as muscle weakness, spasms, twitching, cramping and eventually paralysis and death.

For five years following her diagnosis, Heather hosted Heather's Hootenanny for Hope annually, along with four mini-hootenannies. The musical fundraisers engaged and inspired her community and raised close to \$300,000 in support of ALS research at LHSC.

Inspired by his niece, David Kelman says "Heather was my hero. After she was diagnosed, she didn't put her head down and cry. Instead, she and her friends decided to get busy and raise money for ALS. Right until the end she was always upbeat –and that encouraged people to do better themselves."