

Le May Doan supports children's cause

BY CLAIRE YOUNG, CALGARY HERALD DECEMBER 21, 2011

Calgary Herald
daily newspaper
Calgary, AB
December 21, 2011

Presented By



Catriona Le May Doan sits in Sadi'a's home in Ethiopia and enjoys a moment with an engaging little girl. As a result of interventions from Christian Children's Fund of Canada, the house will be repaired for this family living in poverty.

Photograph by: Courtesy, Philip Maher, Christian Children's Fund of Canada

Fifteen years ago, Catriona Le May Doan decided she just needed to do it. She'd talked about it long enough - it was now time to ante up. She started sponsoring a child in Ethiopia through Christian Children's Fund of Canada.

"I was skating then, and you'd travel around the world and you'd come home and you'd realize how much we have," said the retired Olympic champion speedskater.

Le May Doan was able to see those dollars in action during a visit this fall to Ethiopia with Christian Children's Fund to distribute goats, mosquito nets, blankets, school supplies and emergency kits purchased by Canadians through the Christian Children's Fund of Canada gift catalogue.

While on the visit, Le May Doan saw the difference sponsorship can make for an entire community. Homes are better maintained, fences are mended to keep animals safe from hyenas, children are going to school, and some medical aid is distributed.

"People keep asking, 'Does the money and the support get there?' I believed that it did, but it was so nice to be able to see that it does and to be able to tell people that it does," she said.

Le May Doan wants her own children to appreciate the gift of giving.

"I looked through the catalogue with our kids, and I let them choose what they wanted to give this year," she said. Her daughter Greta, 7, chose an art package while her son Easton, 4, chose a sheep. "It is something you can do as a family, even if you don't sponsor kids, and there's something from \$10 to \$1,500."

With the Horn of Africa facing one of the worst droughts in more than 60 years, these gifts can make a world of difference. ccfcanada.ca

Canadian comedian Colin Mo-chrie wrote to Giving to issue a holiday challenge to readers:

"For me, the holiday season is a chance to spend time with my family, and to sit back and look at all the wonderful things in my life. I'd encourage all Canadians to do at least one charitable event as a family during the holiday season.

"When my son was younger, we would do things like get involved in a soup kitchen and collect toys for the less fortunate. As a result, we have some wonderful memories, and my son is a very giving person who often thinks of others.

"My wife and I have also enjoyed giving charitable gifts through the World Vision Gift Catalogue. The act of giving isn't a muscle we always use - and like any muscle it needs to be exercised to be made stronger.

"And then there is that fun, goofy element to the season, where we can all get away with being a kid again. So please, take the time to slow things down and enjoy the season."

worldvision.ca/gifts

Brewster Travel Canada stuffed a bus with 140 bags of clothing and accessories donated by Calgarians for the United Way.

Grade 5 students at Webber Academy raised \$1,320 for new toys to give to Toy Mountain.

The children earned their do-nations by being rewarded \$2 by their parents for each day they went without television, computers or video games, to experience themselves what going without means.

University of Calgary students raised about \$25,000 to send an ill six-year-old boy to Disney World through the Children's Wish Foundation.

Chance, an avid snowboarder and skateboarder, has thrived de-spite a congenital heart defect that has required two open-heart surgeries in his lifetime. Students in a sales management course raised the funds through their project Selling Smiles 101.

Seven [Avison Young](#) Real Estate Alberta colleagues shaved their heads Friday in celebration of the record amount raised by the office for the United Way: \$36,391.

Jeunesse Classique Ballet's artistic director Umran Sumen presented Alberta Children's Hospital with a cheque for \$10,000 just before the company's Dec. 14 performance of The Nutcracker.

The Canadian Progress Club Calgary Downtown donated \$188,000 to Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Calgary. Forty years ago, Canadian Progress Club Calgary Downtown was the founding club for Uncles at Large in Calgary, which later merged with Big Brothers and Sisters National.

Today, members of H-TRIO are travelling around Calgary visiting fire stations, homeless shelters and any place where they can give back as part of the organization's Big Give.

They are armed with gift certificates, treats, hugs and smiles as they aim to make a difference in someone else's life. Other H-TRIO groups are doing the same in Edmonton, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

Mount Royal University and the Metis Nation of Alberta announced the creation of a \$500,000 endowment to fund five \$3,500 bursaries for Metis students enrolled at Mount Royal University. The \$500,000 endowment is made possible in part through a generous donation from the Metis Nation of Alberta through the Me-tis Education Foundation.

Reindeer's Anonymous - Simone Jensen and her grand-daughter Arielle McEwen - sews and fills stockings for children attending Children's Cottage Society, which provides a crisis nursery, respite care and family support. Donations of small items such as gloves, hats, toothbrushes, hair elastics and small toys are greatly appreciated. Contact Arielle McEwen at 403-234-9083.

Have you raised funds for or given your time to a good cause or organized a charitable event? Send an e-mail to giving@calgaryherald.com

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