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Community-focused company celebrates fifth anniversary

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AROOSTOOK COUNTY - Chris and Cindy Johnson, founders of Cubby Thriftstores located across Aroostook County, are celebrating the organization's fifth anniversary by giving back to the communities they say have given them so much.



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In 2001, doctors told the Johnsons their son Kaleb (also known as "Cubby?") would not live to see his fourth birthday. Kaleb was born with a life-threatening illness called Neurofibromatosis Type 1, where tumors grow on nerves. Kaleb's health took a turn for the worse; but the Johnsons attribute the grace of God and the faithful prayers of their community to helping Kaleb live to see his fourth birthday... and beyond.

Kaleb recently celebrated his 17th birthday.

The Johnsons were inspired by the many acts of kindness which community bestowed upon their family, so they decided to give back to the community by creating Cubby Thriftstores.

The couple created the limited liability corporation, named after their son, to serve a humanitarian purpose. Along with selling clothing, furniture, and home décor, they began The Cubby Gives program (formerly the Cubby Fund) to provide financial support to County children who are living with a chronic or life-threatening illness.

The program helps families cover physician fees and also helps pay for transportation costs, lodging, food, vehicle repairs, medical adaptive equipment, digital monitors, customized car seats, protective gear, CPR/First Aid classes, medical ID bracelets, and more.

Cubby Gives also supports the monthly Hero Program, which recognizes a child for their bravery in the face of adversity. The child receives \$100 (or a similar gift), a story in their local

media outlet, and in-store recognition. Since the store's inception in 2010, over 55 children have been the Hero of the Month.

"Through our efforts we have watched some of these special children thrive and others succumb to their illness. Our investment in their welfare is more than just monetary; it is heart," the couple wrote in a recent press release.

The Cubby Thriftstores staff also work with local agencies, shelters, nursing homes and churches to assist the needy in surrounding communities by donating mattresses, bedding, furniture, kitchen items, medical equipment and clothing. They also recently partnered with Full Circle Health Care, LLC to collect hearing aids and supplies for re-furbishment, re-adaptation, and donation to the elderly.

In addition, Cubby patrons have collected over 200 pounds of aluminum tab tops for Shriner Hospitals, which the Shriners then redeem for cash to help fund the organization's efforts in helping sick children.

According to the press release, the Cubby recycles thousands of pounds of clothing annually. The clothing is picked up by a New England-based company to be used for residential and humanitarian efforts instead of winding up in a landfill. The Cubby also recycles: metal, plastic bags, newspaper, magazines, glassware, ink cartridges, cell phones, tv's, and computer monitors. "If it can be recycled or repurposed we'll do it," they shared.

If you know of a child with a chronic or life threatening illness and would like to nominate them for the Cubby's Hero of the Month program, contact Cindy Johnson at 760-7070 or stop by one of the stores in Presque Isle, Caribou or Madawaska.

Powered by ProsePoint One user remarked, "It ain't simple, but eventually even an idiot can do it."

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