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They're keeping the faith

Airdrie resident Faith Wood's sister is getting closer to a cure

STACIE SNOW
Rocky View Publishing

It's down to the wire for Fern Kwantes. Kwantes, of Victoria, BC, is the twin sister of Airdrie businesswoman Faith Wood. Kwantes suffers from Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD), also known as complex regional pain syndrome, a progressive disease of the autonomic nervous system that has caused her constant and extreme pain for more than two years.

Kwantes recently learned that she has been approved for an experimental ketamine coma research trial, facilitated by renowned RSD specialist Dr. Anthony Kirkpatrick and only available in Mexico. "My sister has run out of all options," Wood said.

"This is her only chance now of recovery," Wood said.

Kwantes recently returned from the first stages of treatment, involving a 10-day stay at a facility in Tampa, Fla., where Kirkpatrick has his practice.

While in Tampa, she underwent a battery of tests to determine if she was fit for the five-day coma treatment, as well as receiving a three-day escalating ketamine infusion.

After successfully completing the tests, Kwantes has been given the go-ahead from the doctor and has been confirmed to start treatment Sept. 11 in Monterrey, Mexico.



FAITH FOR FERN - Sisters Faith Wood and Fern Kwantes smile through hard times. Airdrie resident Wood is raising money for a risky surgery that could cure her sister's rare disease.

Although Kwantes is thrilled for the chance to reduce or even eradicate her symptoms, she is still lacking all the funds necessary to make it happen.

To that end, Wood is putting forth a concerted effort to reach the fundraising goal set through the Faith for Fern initiative, which Wood set up earlier this year.

"She is in constant pain and it is heartbreaking to see her this way," said Wood.

"I wanted to do something about it but didn't know what I could do from here in Alberta. I decided to take the worry of financing out of her hands."

The initiative has raised \$36,000 so far, with \$10,000 of that going toward the

Tampa ketamine trial.

While Kwantes' medical costs in Tampa will be covered by B.C. Health, she still needs about \$20,000 to cover medical and other costs in Mexico, with the hospital in Monterrey requiring a pre-treatment deposit of \$32,000 US.

The journey for Kwantes, who is now in a wheelchair, will not be easy.

Her condition is serious, much worse than originally expected, and the ketamine coma trial is not a guaranteed miracle.

However, she has feelings of renewed hope, with all the support that has flowed in, much of it from people she has never even met.

In a recent letter to supporters, Kwantes expressed her gratitude.

"It is your prayers, financial support and love and compassion for me that has made this possible and I want to give all of you my heartfelt thanks," she said. "I wouldn't have this chance without you."

For Wood, seeing Kwantes' grit and stubbornness in the face of pain has made her all that much more determined to ensure her sister receives the medical treatment that could change her life.

"We're almost there. We will reach our fundraising goal and Fern will go to Mexico," Wood said.

"We're going to make it happen."

For more information on the Faith for Fern initiative or to donate, visit: www.faithforfern.com

CommunityLinks		parentLINKcentre	
Family Resource Services – Programs Fall 2009			
Programs where NO Registration is Necessary			
P.L.A.Y. (Parent Links and You) Airdrie: Tues. – Thurs. 9:00 – 11:00 Crossfield: Mon. 9:30 – 11:00	Parents and/or caregivers of children 0 – 5 years old can join us to play with your child in a high quality Early Childhood Environment while you play and meet new friends & old.	FREE	
Baby Networks: Wed. 10:00 – 11:30	An interactive drop-in program for first time parents with babies from 3 months – 12 months. Parents can access resources and information pertaining to their babies' first year and meet other new parents.	FREE	
Daddy 'N Me at the Library: Sat., Oct. 3, 10:30 – 11:30	In Partnership with the Airdrie Public Library, this is a one-hour program of activities for children 0 – 6 years old and their dads or other male caregivers. Activities will include songs, rhymes, stories, games, playtime and a snack.	FREE	
Baby Time: Mon. 10:30 OR 11:30 Registration is not necessary but recommended. Space each week is limited. To Avoid disappointment, please register at the Airdrie Public Library.	In partnership with the Airdrie Public Library, this program is for parents/caregivers and babies up to 12 months. Based on the philosophy of the Mother Goose Program. This is an opportunity to introduce your child to the sounds and rhythm of language. Group size is limited to 16 children.	FREE	
Toddler Time: Tues. 10:30 OR 11:30 Registration is not necessary but recommended. Space each week is limited. To Avoid disappointment, please register at the Airdrie Public Library.	In partnership with the Airdrie Public Library, the program is for parents/caregivers of children 13 months to 3 years. Includes rhymes, songs and finger plays. Short stories, which encourage participation, will be included. Group size is limited to 16 children.	FREE	
Check out our Registered Programs!			
Please register for the following programs by calling Community Links @ 403-945-3900. Whenever CHILDCARE is available, you MUST register no later than one week prior to the program start date.			
Irricana Rhyme Time: First 10 week session: Thurs., Sept. 24 – Nov. 26	This rhyme and story program replaces our Drop-In program at the Irricana Youth Centre. It is based on Rhymes that Bind and is for parents/caregivers and children 0 – 3 years.	FREE	
COMFORT, PLAY & TEACH: A Positive Approach to Parenting™ Thurs. 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Sessions are Sept. 17 – Oct. 22 OR Nov. 5 – Dec. 10 (Please choose one 6-week session only.)	A six-week program designed for children 18 months to 3 years and their parent(s). It focuses on the key areas of school readiness with modules that include: Learning about Numbers and Counting; Creative Art; Language and Literacy; Science and Nature; and Music and Movement. Participants will engage in fun, interactive activities that will enhance their child's development and build on the parent-child relationship	FREE	
Triple P: Positive Parenting (Primary) Seminar Series: Wed. Sept. 30, Oct. 7 and Oct. 14. You can register for just one session or for all three.	These information sessions are designed to be preventative in nature and focuses on common (minor) behaviour challenges and developmental transitions for parents and caregivers of children 0 – 12 years.	FREE, Child Care is available	
Teen Triple P: Positive Parenting (Teens) Seminar Series: Tues. Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24 You can register for just one session or for all three.	These information sessions are designed to be preventative in nature and focuses on common (minor) behaviour challenges and developmental transitions for parents and caregivers of preteens and teens 10 – 15 years.	FREE,	
Unplug the Christmas Machine: REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Oct. 7, 2009 Sat. Oct. 17 & 24, 9:30 – noon	Myth vs. Reality regarding the holidays. Often it isn't what we thought it would be. Learn to reduce stress, increase enjoyment & include traditions important to each family member.	\$5 & food bank donation. Child Care is available	
Staying Home Alone: Airdrie classes evenings beginning Oct. 18 to Nov. 15 Irricana classes (9 hrs): Sat. 9:00 – noon at the Irricana Youth Centre, Oct. 3, 10, 17	A 10 hour course designed to prepare children ages 10 - 12 and their 8 – 9 year old siblings and parents for the time when they begin to stay at home alone. To register for the Irricana class contact the Town of Irricana office at 403-935-4672. (Program is subsidized by the Town of Irricana.) Fee is paid to the Town of Irricana.	Airdrie: Cost is \$35/child; \$55/2two children – same family Irricana: Cost is \$15/child	
Parenting Your Grandchild: Held the 4th Thursday of the month starting Sept. 24, 6:00 – 7:30.	Grandparents are increasingly involved in the upbringing of their grandchildren. Explore resources together, enjoy guest speakers, and visit with new friends.	FREE, Child Care is available	
For more information or to register (where appropriate) please contact Community Links at 403-945-3900. Information is also available on our website: www.nrvc1.ab.ca			

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Community Links AGM
will be held on
September 21, 2009
at 6:00 pm
at 211 - 125 Main Street NW., AIRDRIE
Everyone welcome!

Got a news tip? Call 403-948-1885