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'Haldimand's best source for news & local event coverage since 1868'

Keeping Cole Brown's Vision Alive

By Kaitlyn Clark
The Haldimand Press

YORK—While Benjamin Cole Brown had his life cut short in a tragic plane crash, his passion for humanitarian aid is being kept alive by those who know his story.

"He was a GI Joe, ever since he was a little boy," said Cole's mom, Katie. "He was a beautiful person and there wasn't anybody that met him who didn't love him ... It's still surreal for me."

Cole, originally from York, was living in Cabarete, Dominican Republic since buying land "at the top of a mountain" in Cap-Haitien, Haiti to build a school there as a part of his work as Live Different's Project Manager for the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

He was returning home from delivering medical supplies to Port-au-Prince, Haiti on October 17 with Chuck and Candy Ritzen when the plane disappeared.

"It was a good plane, but they ran into one of the worst electric storms that they had seen in years.



YORK—Cole Brown of York disappeared October 17, 2016 when the plane he was in hit an electrical storm in the Dominican, where he has been living in recent years while managing humanitarian aid projects. His mom said he went to volunteer "and fell in love with the people". He is shown here in a photo he posted, saying "Mis Chicas Locas", which is Spanish for "my crazy girls".

Whatever happened, we don't know, so they're still in the ocean," said Katie. "Chuck and Candy loved him like a son and he loved them."

The school is a first for the town, which already has about 270 students and is

also working to teach parents how to read and write. Since it was built, an art room and library were created and Cole's next plan was to create a safe house for young girls.

"They were just going to keep going and going. The

vision was not stopping," said Katie. "So we're just going to keep going ... everything that he was doing, we want to honour him the best we can with our lives."

(Continued With Photos On Page 13)

Hospital Auction Raises \$50,000

By Jillian Zynomirski
The Haldimand Press

HAGERSVILLE—The West Haldimand Hospital and Healthcare Foundation (WHHFF) hosted its 17th Annual Charity Auction last weekend and raised about \$50,000 to purchase new hospital equipment at West Haldimand General Hospital (WHGH).

"The auction went very well," said Jean Waite, WHHFF Manager of Development, adding that WHHFF has now reached its \$250,000 fundraising goal for the New Hospital Equipment Project it has been fundraising for since last January.

Waite said most items sold for close to retail price. Some high-ticket items included two quilts that both sold for over \$1,200, \$1,000 landscape gift certificates that sold for \$850 and a

stand-up paddleboard and paddle that sold for \$1,100.

The WHGH Ladies Auxiliary provided guests with beef on a bun and their proceeds will be donated back to WHHFF. The Hagersville Lions operated the cash bar and were a live and silent auction sponsor.

Waite would like to thank all who helped make the event possible including Home Hardware Stores Ltd., (for their 17 years of donations), Hagersville Lions, WHGH Auxiliary, auctioneers Gary Bartlett and Ed McCarthy, sponsors, gift donors and the team of volunteers that made everything happen.

"The community also deserves a huge thank you for being so incredibly supportive of the hospital," said Waite. "We are now able to purchase new equipment to help care for our families and friends."

WHHFF AUCTION PHOTOS ON PAGE 13

Lock's Future Called "Tentative"

By Jillian Zynomirski
The Haldimand Press

PORT MAITLAND—The Port Maitland Lock faces an uncertain future as current landowners Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) is increasing its lease fee from \$1 to \$2,000.

"The future of the lock is tentative," said Bill Warnick, President of the Port Maitland On The Grand Historical Association (PMHA).

The first clean-up at the lock took place in 2003 and since, visitors can drop in to learn about the lock's preserved history on its maintained grounds, which includes park benches and storyboards.

In 2003, PMHA was under the impression that the 9.7 acres of land was county-owned. It wasn't until about 2006 when they discovered the lands were in fact owned by CPR and have been for a long time.

PMHA then worked to find the right people at CPR to create a lease agreement. Almost a decade later, a lease agreement was put into effect in 2015. Last year's lease agreement outlined a payment of only \$1 for the lands in addition to the administration fee of roughly \$560.

"Now, they want \$500 for this year, they want \$1,000 for next year and then \$2,000 every year thereafter," said Warnick. "And that is giving us a break because they normally charge 10 per cent of what they feel the property is worth. They feel the property is worth \$30,000, so they're giving us a \$1,000 per year break."

PMHA decided to pay last year's and this year's fee, but they must decide by spring whether or not they will pay the increased \$1,000 lease fee for 2017.

(Continued On Page 11)

New Scoreboard Coming To Cayuga

By Kaitlyn Clark
The Haldimand Press

CAYUGA—The Cayuga Minor Baseball Association (CMBA) will be installing a new digital scoreboard. Council approved the group's request November 21 to undertake the project on County property.

The current scoreboard, which was paid for by the community, has not worked for more than a decade.

"Cayuga has a long history of baseball in its community, with organized play first reported in 1903 and the first ball diamond lights installed by the Cayuga Kinsmen Club in 1952," said the staff report. "CMBA has spent the past three years enhancing Upper Cayuga Kinsmen Park ball diamond for the benefit of users and residents."

One of the largest projects undertaken so far was

the installation of new lights last year, which the County funded 35 per cent of. The new scoreboard, which is expected to cost about \$14,000 altogether, will use the remainder of the lights budget, so they did not request any further funds. It should be installed for the 2017 season.

CMBA is now looking to sign an agreement with the Grand Erie District School Board to use and maintain the diamond at J.L. Mitchener Public School (JLM). It would be used as a practice field primarily.

"With baseball growing we need more diamond availability and this will be a perfect fit!" said CMBA President Jenelle Richardson, adding they plan to pay for upgrades at the new field. "We're hoping all work to the JLM diamond will begin in the spring of 2017. Exciting times ahead!"

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Benjamin Cole Brown: A Beautiful Life Remembered



Cole Brown posted this photo to his Facebook page with students from the school he built, saying "Education and information just can't be stopped. These are exciting days to be a part of change and making a difference."



Cole has multiple albums of Haiti directly after the 2010 earthquake. In the following months he participated in relief efforts and years later the organization he worked for, Live Different, built new houses for those affected.



Portraits of Dominican and Haitian people were a focus in Cole's photography, especially those he helped with either a new school or a new home. His Facebook page also has an album of before and after photos for new-home builds.



CAYUGA—Madison Domjancic (left) is fundraising to keep Cole's dream alive. Cole's mom Katie came out to show her support. Madison made a book of Cole's photography for viewing. —Haldimand Press photo by Kaitlyn Clark.



A man named Pierre is seen through Cole's lens as he fetches 10 gallons of water for his family up the mountainside. "What's most amazing is the incredible attitude he does it with," posted Cole about the man.

(Continued From Page 1)

Katie and her husband Grant have plans to go on an aid mission in January with Live Different. They will also take over Cole's business Cambio (Spanish for "change"), which offers leather goods produced by people in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, giving them a stable income. She also spoke about the possibility

of creating a table book of Cole's photography, since it was a dream of his. Some of his photos can be seen above.

Twelve-year-old Madison Domjancic of Cayuga never knew Cole, but she has been inspired to raise enough money to send 10 kids to the school Cole built in Haiti.

"I went to high school with Cole," said Madison's mom

Breann. "We followed what he was doing in the Dominican and when he died we were talking about it and Madison said, 'Mom, I just have to do something'."

"I was in a group called Me To We in my school and we were doing a lot of fundraising and then I heard about the plane crash, so it inspired me to start doing things, since I wanted to make a change too, like

Cole," said Madison. She chose to send kids to school since "that was one of Cole's dreams."

Madison has started a campaign called We Can Live Different. When she reaches her \$4,800 goal, "I am going to want to do more because you can't just stop there."

Katie was one of the first in line to buy raffle tickets for Madison's first fundraiser,

which has 17 prizes donated by local businesses.

When asked what it feels like to volunteer, Madison said, "It feels like I'm putting myself second to help others. We sit here and think we don't want to go to school because it's boring, but those kids think they would do anything just to get an education."

Katie added that she would challenge everyone

to challenge themselves and what they're doing.

"Ask are you helping anybody?" said Katie.

Cole's photography can be viewed at

benjamincole.ca and his company Cambio can be found at cambiogoods.org.

To learn more about Madison's efforts, go to facebook.com/WEcanLiveDifferent.

WHHMF Auction Raises \$50,000 For New Equipment



HAGERSVILLE—Jo-Ann Duns, Betty Peirson and Bev Makey of the WHGH Ladies Auxiliary sold beef of on a bun at the auction with 100 per cent of profits going to the Foundation.



HAGERSVILLE—Betty Fitzgibbon and Gilbert Getty of Hagersville attended the auction to check out the dozens of items up for grabs. —Haldimand Press photos by Jillian Zynomirski.



HAGERSVILLE—Rick Mitchener was one of the volunteers from the 1st Hagersville Rovers Club and is shown here hoisting a basket of goodies for the audience to view and bid on.