



Giving Back

Meet Rilla Nickerson, a six year old girl from Gimli Manitoba. She is the daughter of Holly Elsworth and Jay Nickerson and granddaughter of Dale and Sam Elsworth Empire street Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. Rilla has big dreams and commitment. As a small child Rilla has had to use the services of the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg. Early in March of this year, on a cold and overcast day in Gimli, Rilla, all on her own, approached her Mother and said she wanted to do something to help other children. She suggested asking people coming to their home for donations. Her intention was to raise money to give back to the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg to help other unfortunate children. Rilla's Mom told her that if that's what she wanted to do, she should provide a service, and donate the proceeds, as opposed to just asking people for money. Rilla wasn't sure what she could offer, but after thinking about it, and being a visitor to "the Forks" in Winnipeg, that, like the buskers there, she could play her guitar, and hopefully people would throw their spare change in her bucket. So Rilla ventured out, sat on a little chair on the lawn, and played and sang. She waited patiently for someone to come by and place a coin in her bucket. Unfortunately her house was located in a new Subdivision with little traffic. Her mother watched her patiently from the window and after a while, and unbeknownst to Rilla, her Mom put up a picture on Facebook to let a couple of friends know about Rilla's efforts. She was hoping they may stop by and support her in this noble cause. Unbeknownst to Holly, one of her friends forwarded her request further on Facebook and before she knew it people from far away were responding with donations. Rilla's efforts were quickly and generously supported, culminating with her being able to personally present the Winnipeg's Children's Hospital with a sizable cheque for \$486.

Every summer Rilla and her family visit her grandparents in Bridgewater. So this year, Rilla informed her Mother that while she was in Nova Scotia she would sell lemonade and cookies For the Children's Hospital during the Bridgewater parade from her Grandparents driveway on Empire Street. Her Mom had then to explain to her that if she did that, she didn't think it would be right to bring the money back to the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg since the money would be coming from people in Nova Scotia. She indicated to Rilla that the money collected should probably go to the IWK Children's Hospital in Halifax. Rilla was okay with that as the money would be helping children no matter where they were. Hearing of Rilla's fundraising efforts the local South Shore Shrine club, an annual participant in the parade, took up a cash pocket collection from all the Shriners who attended the parade for Rilla's cause. As the parade progressed past Rilla's Lemonade and Cookie stand, The president of the club made a presentation to Rilla of an envelope full of cash. By the time the presentation was made Rilla and her cousin Julia Elsworth had practically sold out their wares and the parade wasn't half over yet!

Thanks to the generosity of the people of the South Shore and the Shriners, Rilla was able to present a check to the IWK for \$198 before she and her family returned to Manitoba. The innocence of youth cause us all to reflect on the good nature of the human soul.