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Asher can do anything

By Jessica Dempsey

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#RedSocksForAsher is a campaign to help show support for Asher who is about to undergo his third hip surgery, as well as raising funds for the Stollery Children's Hospital. Asher and his sister Cooper have both spent time at the Stollery and their parents are extremely thankful for all they have done. Jessica Dempsey Meridian Booster

Asher Leckie is ready, strong, and can do anything.

He is heading back to the Stollery Children's Hospital, for what will be his third, and hopefully final hip surgery.

To help get him through the long days ahead, people are encouraged to send photos of themselves wearing red socks.

"Auntie Penny came up with the idea of this, and she thought it would be a good distraction for Asher to show him how much love and support he is getting for his surgery," explained Jenelle Leckie, Asher's mother.

The book *Red Socks Go With Absolutely Anything* by Darla Woodley was given to Asher by his Auntie Penny. The book had a tremendous impact on Asher.

The book showcases a young boy as he faces challenges, but he overcomes them by saying "I am ready. I am strong. I can do anything." His mom would wear red socks when the young boy needed reminding of this.

Because the book has helped Asher through his own life challenges, they have started the fundraising campaign #RedSocksForAsher.

Along with the photos, which help Asher forget what's going on, a donor was found and said they will donate \$5 per person who wears red socks and sends the photos to Asher. They said they will support Asher up to \$5,000, so he has been challenged to get 1,000 pictures of people wearing red socks.

"It's just amazing," Jenelle said of all the support she has seen.

As of Sunday, the total number of people sending photos was 673, and people are donating money separately to the Stollery on Asher's campaign page, which was \$3,620.

Asher has also seen support from the author of the book Woodley, who sent him a care package with red sock themed things such as a blanket.



"It's pretty neat the response that we have had for this," said Jenelle. With all of the photos and greetings people have sent, Jenelle said she didn't think it would get so big.

"I hoped for the best, anything that we would have received would have been a success in my eyes because it would have been for Asher, the pictures, and any money we raised for the Stollery, would be great," she said.

Jenelle has received photos from people not only in the area but throughout the world including Dominican Republic, Switzerland, Germany, Turkey and more.

With this being his third surgery on his hips, he will have to be in a full Spica cast for six to eight weeks and then months of physiotherapy to gain his strength and mobility back.

His first surgery was at three years old, and the second when he was four.

Now seven years old, the hope is this will be his last. Jenelle said she wanted to raise money for the Stollery because they have been exceptional with her family.

"I have a hard time putting into words what the Stollery has done," she explained, adding their daughter Cooper had also spent time there.

"I've had experiences with both of my children and the nurses and doctors are amazing. They do everything to make it as easy as they possibly can for these kids that are going through all kinds of illnesses and injuries, and they do everything they can for the parents too."

Asher said he liked seeing all the photos that have come in, and it has helped him a lot, but his family has also loved seeing the support for their son.

"We are so grateful, and truly overwhelmed with the response. Lloydminster has always been a community that comes together when they need to, and this is just another example of that," said Jenelle.

You can send photos of yourself wearing red socks to redsocksforasher@gmail.com, or donate directly to the Stollery through Asher's campaign page at <http://bit.do/redsocks>.

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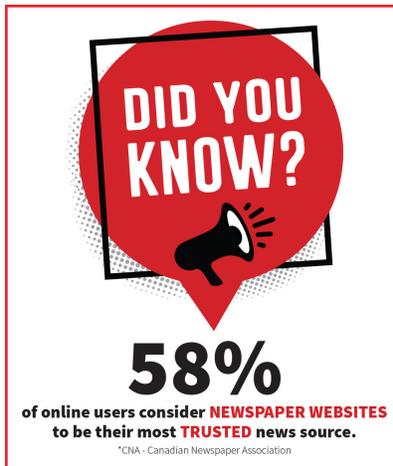
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