

## Taylor remembered as 'incredible friend'?

By Darren Lum

The community of Wilberforce is showing immeasurable resolve and heart following the death of Highlands East 12-year-old Taylor Donaldson.

The Grade 6 Wilberforce Elementary School student died in a car crash when he was travelling with his father Ken Donaldson and younger brother Isaiah on Sunday, April 19 on Loop Road in Highlands East. His father and brother were admitted to hospital but released with non-life-threatening injuries.

The subsequent three days following the accident the school had Trillium Lakeland District School Board social workers in to provide grief counselling.

WES vice-principal Peter Ferri said he heard from students that Taylor was a wonderful boy, who had friends in all grades, including at Cardiff Elementary School.

'He was just an incredible friend. A wonderful friend. He certainly had perseverance as a student. It didn't matter what he took on. He followed through,' he said.

In everything he participated in 'he was a presence.'

Both he and his brother, Ferri said, were the leads of the school's curling.

He points out despite geographic differences WES and CES are one school from kindergarten to Grade 8. There has also been support offered from Point in Time Centre for Children, Youth and Parents to allow home counselling.

A memorial wall was started by the students where a bulletin board was filled with notes, artwork and cards. The school has also framed some of his artwork, which will be delivered by faculty to his mother and brother.

Although only one-third of the student population came Monday, those that did demonstrated solidarity.

The Grade 7s and 8s went and stayed with Taylor's class for most of the day.

This is something that has affected everyone, Ferri said.

'Everybody's connected. A lot of cousins and then friends within the community where he lived,' he said.

A crowd funding campaign through gofundme was started by Taylor's uncle Cory Warburton.

There has been \$14,031 of a \$15,000 goal raised by 190 people as of Monday, April 27.

The money raised will help with funeral service costs

A recent update from the website thanked the community for its support.

'On behalf of the family I would like to thank everyone for their donations. The outpouring of generosity and condolences from friends, family and neighbours has been overwhelming. The family is so blessed to have such a loving family and community to support them. Even though no amount of money can bring Taylor back or pay for this loss this will assist the family greatly. Thank you again to all who have donated,' it said.

'Taylor was a smart young man who always had a smile on his face. He was very intelligent and an excellent student. He was adored by everyone who knew him,' it reads. 'His parents are both hard workers but as many families they barely make ends meet. They now have been left with the death of a child. This is a thing that no parent should ever have to go through. Anything would be appreciated. We thank all who contribute to this family.'