



Breathing life into the future®

HOW "THE ROBBIE" GOT ITS NAME

...AN OFTEN-TOLD TALE THAT BEARS REPEATING FOR ROBBIE'S NEWEST SOCCER FRIENDS

When the Scarborough Minor Soccer Association held meetings back in 1967, they were at Scarborough's Cedarbrae Community Centre.

One night, it was decided to try and put minor soccer on the map by holding an annual tournament to, in effect, match the terrific Timmy Tyke Hockey Tournament. A special committee was struck, and as president of the association, I invited committee members to my home the following week for our first meeting.

Sitting in the living room, we quickly decided that proceeds from the tournament would go to a charity. I suggested a hospital as a good cause and we were about to vote on the matters when someone asked, "What's that thumping noise coming from upstairs?"

I explained that it was my son Robbie having his treatment for cystic fibrosis and that his mother Rosalie was clapping his chest. We all trooped upstairs and the committee members were astonished to find that Robbie slept every night in a "mist" tent, had an inhalation three times a day and took as many as 118 pills a day until research greatly reduced that number.

Cystic Fibrosis was explained to the committee members and they were a little shocked to find that when Robbie was diagnosed at 14 months, his life expectancy was five years. At the time, he was three but, I hasten to add, we had great faith.

John Frow suggested the charity now be research into CF and that the tournament be called "The Robbie." There were no arguments.

With eight peewee teams competing that first year, raising about \$100 for CF, none of us realized that it would grow into a great international sporting event, bringing together boys and girls from around the world. We little dreamt that we were creating a legend in minor sports history, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for research into CF.

Many victims, like those with CF, have been most appreciative of the thoughtfulness of the Robbie committees over the years.

Robbie (he now prefers to be called Rob or Robert) knows that he is lucky, particularly when he remembers the number of CF children who have died in the intervening years, including some friends he got to know in the hospital and at the annual CF camp on Lake Couchiching in Ontario.

He also appreciates the efforts of all those volunteers who put so much time and effort into making the Robbie International Soccer Tournament one of the great sporting events in the world.

With so much misunderstanding in the world today, it is refreshing to see soccer bring together so many people of different colours, races, religions and creeds. All this in the spirit of sportsmanship that sees friendships last for lifetimes across continents. All because one little boy had CF and a group of people decided in their own way to raise money to fight it.

The Robbie is now a Canadian tradition, its logistics and statistics somewhat staggering. In this computer age, that does not faze the organizers who, as they come and go, gladly carry the torch of sportsmanship for a splendid game and a very worthy cause.

In loving memory of Robbie Wimbs, written by his late father, John