

A Small Town's Beautiful Gift to a Child by Huffington Post

ST. GEORGE, Ont. — It may only be October, but a terminally ill seven-year-old boy in southern Ontario had a white Christmas Saturday evening.

Doctors have said they didn't know if Evan Leversage, of St. George, Ont., would live to see this holiday season, so his town rallied around him to give him a final Christmas parade.

By Saturday afternoon, the ground outside his home was blanketed in artificial snow. There were ornaments in the trees and a sign that read "Santa, stop here" in the window. A snow machine brought a level of authenticity that is hard to come by even on December 25.

Evan has had an inoperable brain tumour since he was just two-years-old, and doctors told his family last month that the tumour had spread.

So Evan made a bucket list, which included a visit to Niagara Falls, a movie, and his favourite restaurant.

And of course, Christmas.

After Evan made his list in mid-September, his mother Nicole Wellwood asked her family and friends to have Christmas in October. Everyone said yes, and Evan's story spread around the world.

"It's been an experience that I don't think anyone's ever going to forget," Wellwood said. "It truly has been amazing having the love and support from this community as well as world-wide. It truly has been lifting up a lot of spirits and bringing in a lot of sunshine during a dark time."

Many people sent well-wishes on Twitter using the hashtag #LightsOnForEvan.

Mississauga Fire Fighters wish Evan a very Merry Christmas! We are thinking of you today! #lightsonforevan

"Being a single parent, when things are tight, there's been organizations ... that made sure Christmas has always been very special for this family," Wellwood said.

But the outpouring of support this year goes above and beyond all expectations, she said.

A GoFundMe campaign had raised nearly \$30,000 for the family by the time the parade started. The money will go toward living expenses for the family and RESPs for Evan's two brothers.

"This is definitely magical, but also overwhelming on the same note," Wellwood said.

To cap off the evening, Evan received a special visit from Santa Claus and got to take a ride in his sleigh-like parade float as onlookers clapped and cheered.