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Air Canada Foundation partners with Starlight Children's Foundation Canada and Rocky Mountaineer to provide trip of a lifetime to 15 families with seriously ill children



Nov 02, 2023

No one wants to imagine the hardship that comes with caring for a sick child. Facing medical challenges, hospital visits and treatment plans, it can be difficult to take time as a family to connect, travel and experience new things. That's why the Air Canada Foundation, Starlight Children's Foundation® Canada and Rocky Mountaineer came together for the third year in a row to provide the trip of a lifetime to deserving families across the country.

Earlier this month, children facing mental, physical and social adversities travelled with their families from across the country onboard Air Canada flights to Calgary, AB, where they embarked on a 2-day train trip from Banff, AB, to Vancouver, BC. The train journey, donated by Aeroplan partner Rocky Mountaineer, provided the Starlight families not only with the opportunity to make unforgettable memories together during a time when they needed it most, but also the chance to connect with other families facing similar hardships.

Among the kids onboard was 12-year-old Sophie from Doaktown, NB, who lives with hydrocephalus and mild cerebral palsy. Although Sophie now has a shunt to help manage her diagnosis and keep fluid from her brain flowing in the right direction, there is sadly still an 80% failure rate for this treatment. A lover of singing and animals, Sophie and her family had the chance to let go of their worries on the Rocky Mountaineer and instead create precious memories to look back on.

"Honestly for us, this was a once in a lifetime opportunity to come out West and be together on this trip," said Sophie's mom, Jenny. "Travel is so expensive, so for organizations like Air Canada to partner with Starlight, they're making dreams come true for families, allowing them to travel and experience new things together that they couldn't otherwise experience."



Joined by Starlight Canada's resident superhero, Captain Starlight, the families enjoyed endless onboard entertainment, including sing-a-longs, trivia games, caricature portraits and more, in addition to scenic views of some of Canada's most iconic landscapes.

"Time together as a family is so precious," says Valerie Durand, spokesperson for the Air Canada Foundation. "When your year is filled with medical challenges, hospital visits and treatment, experiences like this can provide a day off for kids and their families, allowing them to reconnect and make magical memories that will last a lifetime. We're so proud to partner with the Starlight Children's Foundation Canada to make heart-warming and unique adventures like this one possible."

"I believe in the power of memories. A moment to look back on with appreciation. To me, fond memories are the backbone of happiness. For a family with a seriously ill child, a positive memory is worth more than words can even describe," shares Brian Bringolf, CEO of Starlight Canada. "Thanks to the generosity of Aeroplan and the Air Canada Foundation, countless precious memories were created on board the Rocky Mountaineer to help these families cope through the difficult moments and provide hope for brighter days."

The Air Canada Foundation is a Canadian registered charity focused on improving children's health and well-being. Through its main pillars, the Foundation helps kids spread their wings. More information about the Air Canada Foundation and its mission

can be found at www.aircanada.ca/foundation.

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