

EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AFTER 12:00PM - DECEMBER 2, 2015

Sacha's Park Wins \$100,000 Aviva Community Fund Grant

L'ORIGINAL, ON - Sacha's Park has been chosen as a \$100,000 winner in the 2015 Aviva Community Fund. The universally accessible playground project, slated to be built in L'Original, was chosen as a grand prize winner over several hundred other submissions from across Canada in the annual Aviva Insurance sponsored contest. The winning entry, submitted by Jason and Jacquelyn Chenier, was selected by a panel of Aviva judges, who went over the detailed submissions of each of the 30 projects selected as a finalist to determine their merit and worthiness. Sacha's Park was well placed going into the final judging round after finishing with the most votes of all entries submitted from across Canada during the 18-day voting round which took place from October 6th to 23rd.

Sacha's Park organizer, Jason Chenier, is thrilled with the results: *"This is a huge win for our project, and it means that Sacha's Park will be a reality very soon. We are so thankful to the wonderful people at Aviva for believing in our dream of creating a place where everyone can play"*. Chenier explains that the \$100,000 grant from the Aviva Community Fund will pretty much ensure that the inclusive playground project will be able to begin construction of a first phase in 2016. *"We still need to raise approximately another \$50,000 to start the initial phase, but we are very confident that with the community's support and our on-going fundraising efforts, we will be able to break ground next summer."*

Since its announcement in March of 2015, the community's support for the Sacha's Park has greatly exceeded the Chenier family's expectations: *"This Aviva Community Fund win has truly been a community effort. We greatly benefited from the support of local businesses such as Théorêt & Martel Insurance Brokers, Willow Creek Company, and Golden Hill Films, who helped with our submission. We must also mention the local media who did stories about our entry to the contest as well as the schools and businesses who put up posters and distributed voter information cards. They were crucial in spreading the word to help us win the voting round. Of course, most of all, we really want to thank all of our supporters who voted each day for our entry. It's amazing what a small community can do when we all come together for a common cause"*.

Chenier says he was confident in the project's chances of success from the start. *"We really felt that if we made it past the voting round, we would likely take home the grand prize. Our project is a really good one and thankfully, the people from Aviva agreed"*.

Gary J. Barton, Mayor of Champlain Township, is just as thrilled about this turn of events. *“Sacha’s Park’s upcoming construction is good news for our residents who, I am convinced, will be using this new equipment. We are very pleased to help in the creation of this park for people of all abilities. We will be very happy to welcome users, whether they are from our region or from elsewhere. Finally, I think Sacha’s Park has reminded us how a community can accomplish great things when it rallies behind a project such as this one. Thank you Aviva and to everyone who contributed to this success, I would like to say ‘Well done!’”,* said Mr. Barton.

Sacha's Park's fundraising efforts will continue on December 6th at Knox Presbyterian Church in Vankleek Hill where proceeds from "The Heart of Christmas" concert will go to benefit the park. Information about Sacha's Park and other upcoming fundraisers can be found on the park's facebook page: facebook.com/SACHAsPARK.

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About the Aviva Community Fund

Since 2009, Aviva Canada has provided \$5.5 million to 192 winning projects from coast to coast. With over 10,000 ideas submitted so far, the Aviva Community Fund has more than one million registered participants, who cast approximately nine million votes.

About Aviva Canada

Aviva Canada is one of the leading property and casualty insurance groups in Canada providing home, auto and business insurance to more than three million customers. The company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of UK-based Aviva plc and has more than 3,000 employees, 25 locations and 1,700 independent broker partners. For more information visit avivacanada.com

About Sacha's Park:

A playground, to be known as Sacha's Park, is being proposed for the new Place La Seigneurie development in L'Original. The playground, once built, will be different than a typical playground in that it will be universally accessible allowing children of all abilities to fully enjoy the park and its equipment. The goal for Sacha's Park is to create a playground that is inclusive and where the equipment works for everyone, including children with disabilities. A playground where EVERYONE can play. The Chenier family have purchased property for the park to be built on and are working with the Township of Champlain, who are supportive of the project, to secure funding for the equipment, which will cost several hundred thousand dollars.

About Sacha Chenier:

Sacha Chenier was an 11 year old boy who lived in L'Orignal, Ontario. He was severely affected by cerebral palsy and required the use of a wheelchair for most of his life. He was also born blind, epileptic, and with severe cognitive delays. Sacha required assistance for his daily care, as he was unable to do the most basic of tasks without help. He was lovingly cared for at home where he lived with his parents Jason and Jacquelyn and his older brother Sebastien. Despite his many challenges, Sacha was a happy little boy who loved to be around other children. He attended school in Hawkesbury at École Paul VI where he was loved by his many friends. Sacha always had a smile on his face and his infectious laughter could brighten up a room. Sacha passed away suddenly on June 9th 2014 due to epilepsy related complications.

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More information about Sacha's Park:

[GoFundMe.com/EveryoneCanPlay](https://www.gofundme.com/EveryoneCanPlay)

[Facebook.com/SachasPark](https://www.facebook.com/SachasPark)

Tumblr: sachaspark.tumblr.com

Twitter: @SachasPark