

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Herb's Customer Appreciation BBQ Raises over \$6,500 for Sacha's Park

August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Vankleek Hill, ON - A customer appreciation barbecue, hosted by Herb's Travel Plaza this past Wednesday at their location near Vankleek Hill, had hundreds of people lining up for free food and fun family activities, all for a good cause. Over sixty-five hundred dollars in donations were raised through the course of the event for Sacha's Park, a universally accessible playground project to be built in L'Original in memory of Sacha Chenier. The park, once built, will be one of the most inclusive playgrounds in Canada and feature items that will allow children of all abilities to play together.

The annual barbecue, which took place on August 12th, has been held by Herb's for over ten years as a way of saying thanks to their loyal customers. Herb's representative, Jennifer Vink, explains that each year, they select a worthy cause to support during the event. *"We try to focus on smaller local causes that often times don't get as much attention as the big charities. The Sacha's Park project was brought to us by an employee, Mitch Jones, who had read about it in a local paper. It immediately seemed like a perfect fit, as it is something that will benefit the community as a whole. A playground where all children will be able to play together is such a wonderful idea".*

The Chenier family, who are spearheading the project, were on hand throughout the day to meet with those in attendance and speak about their project. Sebastien Chenier, Sacha's brother, was amazed at the number of people who came out: *"it was such a great experience to see so many people supporting this project in memory of my little brother. It will be really cool to see kids like him enjoying the playground with everyone else someday".*

Also on hand were representatives from RBC, who helped out with the event and contributed \$1,000 to the cause. Cynthia Desjardins, who is the RBC commercial manager for Hawkesbury and the surrounding area says *"it was great to learn about the wonderful endeavor that the Chenier family have embarked on in order to fulfill their*

*dream of someday having a play space for children of all abilities. We are happy to help in make their someday a reality".*

The money raised at the event will go towards the on-going fundraising efforts for the purchase of accessible playground equipment that is being led Sacha's family, who have donated land for the project. The project has received enthusiastic support from members of Champlain Township council, and has seen broad community support since it was announced this past March.

The park's fundraising efforts will continue at an upcoming Zumba Mega-Party hosted by Lou Stephenson on August 29th at The Vankleek Hill Arena, with proceeds from the event going to the cause. Info and tickets can be obtained online at: [louises.zumba.com/we-got-the-power](http://louises.zumba.com/we-got-the-power)

**More information about Sacha's Park:**

[GoFundMe.com/EveryoneCanPlay](http://GoFundMe.com/EveryoneCanPlay)

[Facebook.com/SachasPark](http://Facebook.com/SachasPark)

Tumblr: [sachaspark.tumblr.com](http://sachaspark.tumblr.com)

Twitter: @SachasPark

**Attached Photo:**

(photo credit Jacques Des Becquets): Donation cheque presented to Sacha's Park. Left to Right: Marc Varin (RBC), Jason Chenier (Sacha's Park), Jacquelyn Chenier (Sacha's Park), Herb Vink Jr. (Herb's Travel Plaza), Gary Barton (Mayor of Champlain Township), and Cynthia Desjardins (RBC).

**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 Ecole 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.

### **Media Contact information:**

Jason Chenier and Jacquelyn Chenier

e-mail:SACHAsPARK@gmail.com

phone:613-676-0517 (Jacquelyn)