

## Quispamsis family gets gift of kayaks to aid autistic boy

Workers4Wishes gives kayaks to teen brothers to enjoy as a family

By Kashmala Fida, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 12, 2016 3:40 PM AT Last Updated: Aug 12, 2016 3:40 PM AT

The family of a Quispamsis boy with autism just received two kayaks from Workers4Wishes even though they had wished for just one.

Karen Lawton was promised a kayak for her 17-year-old son, Cameron Evans-Cullinan, who has autism, epilepsy and was recently diagnosed with a degenerative brain disorder.

To Lawton's surprise, at the event held at the Kennebecasis Kayak Club on Friday, her younger son Christopher Evans-Cullinan, 15, was also given a kayak.

*'This has been really extraordinary for us.'* - *Karen Lawton, mother.*

"I didn't expect it," said Lawton, a registered nurse. "I really didn't expect anything like this. I'm just a mom right? Get up and do my job and go to work and another day right? So this has been really extraordinary for us."

She says the second kayak will help the younger brother join in on the fun as well.

"Cameron is a lot of work and he is 24/7 care. Christopher probably had me for about an hour a day. So this is something that for him, that he can enjoy with us as a family.

"It's pretty important. I know a lot of kids just take it for granted," she said.

"I know he looks shy right now but he bursting on the inside," Lawton's said about her younger son.

"His mom actually had to provide the wish, because Cameron is not able to," said Dorothy Millers, committee member for Workers 4 Wishes.

"She said when she takes him out on a kayak he calms right down. He just gets so complacent and he gets really calm. You wouldn't know it here, but he is calmer in a kayak," she said.

## Worker recommendation

Millers met with Lawton's family in May after a recommendation from Cameron's special-care worker.

"It was a wonderful experience when I met him," she said. "We don't like to go empty-handed when we go so I asked what could I take that Cameron would like and she said Dairy Queen.

"Well I wish you could have seen him when I gave him that gift card. I didn't know how it was going to be like today, he was so excited."

She said the foundation was glad they chose Cameron for a wish.

"It was great, I couldn't stop smiling, " said Ryan Witt, president of Workers4Wishes, about watching Cameron get his wish. "It was great to see, he is certainly a great kid and he deserves it."

## Workers4Wishes

The foundation was started in 2009 by members of local unions in Saint John area. In 2013 they became a registered charity.

"We grant up to five wishes per year. It's essentially what we are budgeted for more so than what we would like to do," Witt said.

"It has grown from unions, to our friends and family and neighbours and anyone who would like to get involved.

The group raises funds through collections at their work places as well as organize other fundraising events.

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