

Helping families handle cancer



**LINDA
OLSEN**
WOMAN OF VISION

Carie Stock doesn't have to look too far to be inspired. It's tattooed right on her forearm.

Tracing the letters of the delicately written word, Inspire, the 27-year-old Stock explains its significance.

"This is also to remind myself to be inspirational," she says. "You have to light the fire for people to want to get involved."

Stock has lit that fire within herself and in the 20 or so volunteers who help her fulfil the vision she has been creating for years.

"When I was younger, I felt like I had a story and I wanted to share it," she says.

Stock is founder and executive director of the not-for-profit organization Helping Families Handle Cancer.

Started in 2008, its mandate is to assist families financially while they are caring for a child who is facing cancer.

"We go and pay any type of household bill that they're struggling to pay. They're referred by social workers at the (Alberta) Children's Hospital. If it's rent or a utility bill, we will go right to the landlord or we go right to the bank."

Stock understands the stress that a family endures when a child has cancer. Her own mother lived it.

Doctors found a cancerous tumour near Stock's bladder when she was 13 months old. In treatment until the age of six, her young life revolved around hospital visits, but the support from her mother was constant.

As Stock grew older, she learned more about the struggles her single mother faced covering living expenses, caring for a child with a life-threatening illness and another healthy child at home.

"She didn't have a lot of money. She'd have \$10 and she'd have to figure out how to feed our family for the week," Stock says.

"That isn't what a family should have to go through. . . . It should be more about spending time together and being there for your child. That's what my mom was for me."

Today, as a young married woman, Stock puts as much devotion into her charity work as her mother did into supporting her.

Stock's lunch hours and coffee breaks, from her full-time job, are often spent dashing out to help families and pay their bills.

"I can't afford to just wait a few days until I have a minute. It has to be like right then . . . so I'm telling my boss 'one more minute, one more minute.'"

Stock shaved her head at the age of 18 and has been involved with a number of other cancer and support organizations before starting



Lorraine Hjalte, Calgary Herald

Carie Stock is the founder and executive director of Helping Families Handle Cancer, a foundation that assists families financially while they are caring for a child who is facing cancer.

Helping Families. She is taking online courses in non-profit studies, but says it's not to further her own career, only to give her the knowledge to help grow her charity and to be able to expand its reach.

She hopes to soon make her work with the organization her full-time passion and may also give public speaking a try.

"It's another way to fundraise for families," Stock says. "I'd like to do that someday. . . . I have a lot to say."

LINDA OLSEN ANCHORS THE EARLY NEWS AND THE NEWS HOUR ON GLOBAL CALGARY.

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