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Scholarship helps Canadian family in need

December 01, 2008 | Eric Brown

James 5:16 encourages us to pray for those in need: “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

Terry and Marlene MacInnis of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, are testaments to this verse, having felt the effects of fervent prayers from fellow believers. Diagnosed with pancreatic liver cancer in November 2007, Terry’s doctors gave him less than a year to live.

Just prior to his diagnosis, Terry’s oldest daughter, Josie, began attending Liberty University and singing on the Sounds of Liberty ministry team.

Blessed with a talent for singing, Josie learned of the team while still in high school; she inquired about auditions for the 2007-08 school year, only to discover the tryouts were closed.

Normally, Liberty’s ministry teams are named in March for the upcoming school year. Through God’s grace, a unique situation developed. A soprano position opened up and Liberty’s Director of Ministry Teams Scott Bullman found himself unable to fill the spot.

After earnestly praying, Bullman received word of Josie’s singing ability. With no time to hold an official audition, Josie sent in a YouTube video of a past performance. By August of her freshman year, she was singing soprano for the Sounds of Liberty on a full scholarship.

Just before Thanksgiving that year, Josie learned of her father’s illness. As she traveled to venues with her team, she shared his situation with the crowds and asked for continued prayer. Back in Lynchburg, people at Liberty and Thomas Road Baptist Church prayed for Terry’s healing.

“My faith tank was really running on low, especially after treatments,” Terry said. “I was just receiving these great phone calls from Josie telling me that people on campus are praying, the church is praying and the team is praying.”

Thanks to generous contributions from Liberty staff and members of Thomas Road Baptist Church, Josie's parents recently visited the university for the first time. Before they returned home, the MacInnis family enjoyed lunch together and received a pleasant surprise.

Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr. joined them that afternoon, awarding Josie's sister Lindsay, a freshman, a full scholarship for the 2008-09 school year and financial consideration for their younger brother, Jordan, upon choosing to attend Liberty.

"If there is a family that's really in need, we look for ways to help with scholarships and this seemed to be a fitting situation," Falwell Jr. said.

Hearing the heart's cry of his people, God abundantly provided for Terry and his family. Nearly one year after his diagnosis, the spots on Terry's liver are shrinking and his children are able to further their education.

"It's overwhelming how God took care of every single detail," Josie said. "He keeps blowing me away with everything He has done for our family. I just feel really blessed."