

## Cheryl Leblanc sets an example for everyone



Cheryl volunteered at the Relay for Life in June. Her team was called the Pink Angels.

Since she was twenty, Cheryl Leblanc has volunteered for all kinds of charitable organizations. From the Relay for Life to the Children's Wish Foundation, Cheryl's spirit of giving is something many people envy.

Working as a business management assistant by day and bartender on weekends, Cheryl also has a third job as a single mother of eleven-year-old twin boys — one of whom is autistic. For Cheryl, the challenges of raising an autistic child as a single mother are innumerable.

“People don't realize how hard it is,” she says. “I am just lucky to have such great support at work and a great boss. I try to find a balance between raising the children, working and volunteering as much as possible.”

Cheryl's longest volunteer endeavour is volunteering with the United Way and GCWCC, which she's been a part of for the last eighteen years. She explains that her passion for volunteering comes from her experience as a child.

“When I was young, my mother was a single mom. I saw how hard it can be for a child, and wanted to help out in any way I could once I started working. I wish I could have had more opportunities as a child, and the work I do helps make that possible for the children in my community.”



Cheryl and her sons volunteer at their local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. (From left to right, Ryan, Brandon, Cheryl, and their dog, Molly.) Cheryl's love for volunteering runs in the family. As members of the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, she and her boys walk the dogs and play with the cats when there's time.

"I try to involve my boys as much as I can," she explains. "If we don't teach our kids the importance of giving back to the community, what will happen to our future generations?"

In the future, Cheryl hopes to open a non-profit organization for parents with sick children, something she hopes could also involve her kids.

As far as advice, Cheryl says the best way to get started in volunteering is to find a personal connection to a cause.

"Find something that touches your heart and go from there. The most important thing is to believe in what you're doing and be passionate about it."