



Melanie Denis, Leeds and the Thousand Islands South East

Category: Caring with Courage

Submitted by Care Coordinator Jordan Vergette, from our South East geography

When submitting this caregiver for recognition, Jordan shared, “I can think of no one more deserving of receiving the Above & Beyond Caregiver Recognition than Melanie. Through my time working to support her family, it is my opinion that she exemplifies ‘Caring with Courage.’ Raising a child is a great blessing, but most can agree that it comes with certain challenges and stressors. Those difficulties are immensely amplified when raising a child with medical complexity. Melanie is an incredible mother of two children with medical complexities.”

Jordan met Melanie in the summer of 2021 while the world was struggling through a global pandemic. Despite the additional challenges brought on by the pandemic, the wellbeing of Melanie’s children always came first to her. She continued to bear the heavy brunt of near-total hands-on care to both children many times per day, all by herself. While providing such a high level of care led to chronic physical, emotional and mental exhaustion, she never wavered.

Melanie encourages, empowers, and advocates for her children to get the most out of their lives despite the challenging circumstances. She transformed her home into a supportive environment that allowed her children to almost seamlessly transition from their home to virtual school in order to meet their educational needs. While many children of similar circumstances experienced developmental setbacks, or stopped attending school entirely, her oldest son was excelling, and proudly shared his presentation board displaying his favourite musical composers. Her children were not only progressing, they were thriving.

On top of keeping life at home functioning like a well-oiled machine, Melanie goes above and beyond for her children. Through the Family Managed Home Care Program, she is able to help

meet her children's personal care needs. She communicates with many medical specialists from different teams and hospitals, including some outside of Canada.

There is no doubt that without Melanie's ongoing effort as a strong, resilient, and compassionate caregiver, the lives of her children would be vastly different. She brings about positive change in her two sons' quality of life daily. In 2021, Melanie's youngest son was non-verbal, but by March 2023, to her care coordinator's great amazement, he was speaking. This does not happen by accident, but with the support of an intentional, courageous parent. Melanie's efforts are incredible.

In connecting with her care coordinator, he shared – we refer to Melanie as “Super Mom.”

We're all amazed by her and are thankful we could share her story today.