

Millions raised at zero cost Two charities spend it all on good works

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Dave Dryden and Nigel Raincock have raised millions of dollars for charity. Each man does it in a completely different way but their fundraising has one key thing in common.

Every cent you donate to their cause goes to good works.

Dryden heads up Sleeping Children Around the World, a charity based in the Etobicoke home where Dave and brother Ken learned to skate and stop pucks on a backyard rink. The charity raises money to help individual children in developing countries with "bedkits" – simple collections of bedding, school supplies, sometimes mosquito nets or school uniforms. They just delivered their one millionth kit in the Philippines and are setting their sights on the next million.

"We want this charity to go on forever," said Dryden.

Last year, Sleeping Children raised \$2.8 million. Since it began in 1970, founded by Dave and Ken's late father, Murray Dryden, they have raised \$20 million.

The charity could not be more grassroots. A \$35 donation purchases a bedkit, using supplies from the home country. Volunteers assemble and distribute them at their own expense. That means the volunteer pays for airfare and accommodations in far-flung places like India, Honduras and Uganda.

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There is no fundraising expense. Amazingly, word of mouth has built this charity. Donors get a photo of their bedkit being delivered. Those letters and photos are assembled on the top floor of the two-storey Dryden home by women who have volunteered for decades.

Any administrative expenses, like postage and the pay of the lone salaried employee is covered by an investment fund Murray Dryden left the charity. Every cent of each donation goes to the cause.

This is a charity that could not be more low key. A plate of brownies or some breakfast treats arrives occasionally for the volunteers. The people who go on the delivery trips overseas are often retired teachers or principals. Charity rules stop them from claiming a tax receipt for expenses that are typically \$5,000.



SUPPLIED PICTURE (LEFT), MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORONTO STAR
Nigel Raincock addresses guests at the Set Sail for Hope's recent gala. At right, Dave Dryden poses with a Sleeping Children Around the World "bedkit."

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At the other end of the spectrum is Set Sail for Hope, an annual fundraiser that mixes Toronto's business, culinary and yachting elite. Set Sail exists to support one charity, Camp Trillium – overnight and day camps that bring children with cancer and their families together.

"Cancer doesn't take a holiday, it doesn't care about the economy," said Raincock, Set Sail's chair, in a rousing speech to those assembled at its annual gala on the Toronto Islands recently.

On that Friday afternoon, 20 tables were set with white linen under spreading canopies. Chefs from some of Toronto's top restaurants, and their staff, donated time, food and considerable culinary expertise. Acqua Ristorante, Buca, Jacobs & Co. Steakhouse and Epic at the Fairmont Royal York were among them.

There was beer and wine, oyster bars and, moored near the tables, 20 sleek yachts with names like Short Circuit, Kaisei and Sea Runner. Captains and crews donated time for a cruise after lunch.

The price of admission per table/yacht is a \$7,500 donation. It's mostly corporations like CIBC, Citibank Canada and Scotia Capital that donate, typically sending valued employees as a reward. They were short a table this year, and Raincock's daughter got a group of friends to kick in for the last table.

Set Sail raises between \$150,000 and \$160,000 annually. This year was tough, but it met its target.

"You have to kiss a lot of toads to get a princess," said Raincock, lauding the corporations who stuck by in a tough year.

Since the fundraising effort started 23 years ago, albeit as a brown bag lunch with smaller boats, Set Sail has raised \$1.9 million.

Raincock's own boat, much smaller than the 44-foot yachts now used, just gets him over to the island. "This event has grown so big, she just doesn't fit in," he laughs.

With all the food, equipment, staff and boats donated for the day, the only cost Set Sail has is a \$25 event permit for selling alcohol. Somebody covered that.

"Thank you for making a difference in so many kids' lives," said city Councillor Sandra Bussin, on hand to give the city's good wishes.

"It's remarkable," said Fiona Fisher, Camp Trillium's development director, as she welcomed people to the event that has been a mainstay for the unique camps.