

# Grahamtastic Connection 2015 Annual Report



FIRST DONATION 1998



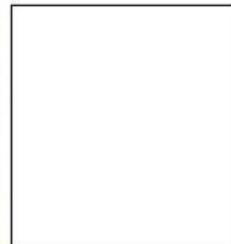
2000



2010



TODAY 2015



TOMORROW 2016

## Annual Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As the Executive Director of Grahamtastic Connection and on behalf of our Board of Directors, I want to thank all of our donors and volunteers for their help in making 2015 another successful year. Your efforts have enabled us to provide laptops, tablets, robotic technology and Internet access to over 1,240 children and supporting facilities since 1998, a number I never could have imagined when we started out.



In 2015 alone, we provided technology to 187 recipients, 170 to individual children and another 17 that were placed in medical facilities for use by hundreds of children. We added robotic technology to our offering back in 2012, and this year saw a huge increase in interest in this area. I attribute this to the time I have spent over the past few years educating the public, teachers and



health care providers on the positive results of robotics and remote student learning, the ease of use and the fact that they are not as disruptive as many assume – in fact, they fit right in!

In 2015, we started the year with five robots but received more requests than we could fill. With special thanks to two donors, Town Square Realty Group and Caron Engineering, we added two more robots to our inventory later in the year and continued filling requests. Our lineup currently includes both VGo and Double Robotics robots, and we will strive to expand the fleet in line with demand.

In addition to robotics, we have seen a steady rise in requests for Internet access support from families. Connectivity costs continue to increase (current average is \$720 a year) and I expect our Internet requests to do the same. We also added Verizon Jetpacks (mobile Wi-Fi) to our services this year. Mobile Wi-Fi has been wonderful, helping to supplement some hospitals where there are poor wireless signals and helping children stay connected to their schools on long car rides back and forth for treatment.

After 17 years, I can attest to the fact that it's hard to project where technology will be by the end of 2016 and beyond. However, as long as children are in need, Grahamtastic Connection will continue to adapt to change and continue to provide connectivity when the world would otherwise be out of reach.

With Sincere Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leslie Morissette". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leslie Morissette

## About Grahamtastic Connection

Grahamtastic Connection's mission is to provide free computers, laptops, tablets, robotic technology and Internet access to children with cancer and other serious illnesses for educational purposes, virtually bringing them to the places they want to be and connecting them when their world is out of reach.

The organization was founded in 1998 by Leslie Morissette in honor of her son, Graham, who sadly lost his battle to cancer in 1997 at the age of 8. Leslie learned first-hand what it was like to spend months at a time in the hospital while her son was in cancer treatment at Maine Children's Cancer Program and Boston Children's Hospital. One of the key needs during such times, and the inspiration behind Grahamtastic Connection, is to remain connected to school, to family and to friends during extended periods of isolation. Often this access is out of reach due to medical and financial limitations.



The program started by supporting 6 qualified children in 1998, providing them with computers and Internet access. This enabled them to continue their education while being treated and to communicate with the family members and friends. Today, we are proud to have supported over 1,000 individual children receiving treatment at children's hospitals across the country. Additionally, thousands of ill children have utilized our computers placed in shared areas in hospitals, clinics and Ronald McDonald Houses.

Abby Snyder, who works closely with us, succinctly captures the value of Grahamtastic Connection: "As the hospital-based teacher at Barbara Bush Children's Hospital, I see more and more what an important role technology plays in schools, and how it impacts student learning. Many of the patients I have worked with over the past several years have been the extremely lucky recipients of laptops or iPads gifted to them from Grahamtastic Connection. For these students, many of whom have repeated hospitalizations, the technology provides the absolute lifeline to keep up in school, and to stay connected to their peers and teachers."



Our current primary activities include:

- Placing computers in medical facilities where they are accessible to hundreds of children.
- Providing computers equipped with web-cams and Skype to individual patients, facilitating face-to-face contact and interactive learning with clinics and schools.
- Supplying robotic technology, which is placed in a patient's school, allowing them to move around their classroom, walk up and down the school hallways, attend assemblies and field trips and interact with their teachers and peers from their hospital bed or home. This news story, starring Kailee and her robot "K-bot," demonstrates the power of this technology:

<http://www.wcsh6.com/story/news/local/sanford-springvale/2014/06/18/vgo-in-school/10797157/>

*Our fleet of robots went to work in 2015.....*



*.....enabling 10 children to attend school alongside their classmates.*

- Offering free high-speed Internet access to families with seriously ill children who otherwise cannot afford the service.
- Sponsoring our "Kids Helping Kids" Program, where teenage students at Westbrook Regional Vocational Center in Westbrook, Maine and Sanford Regional Technical Center in Sanford, Maine provide technical support to Grahamtastic Connection while learning valuable skills and the importance of helping those who are less fortunate.

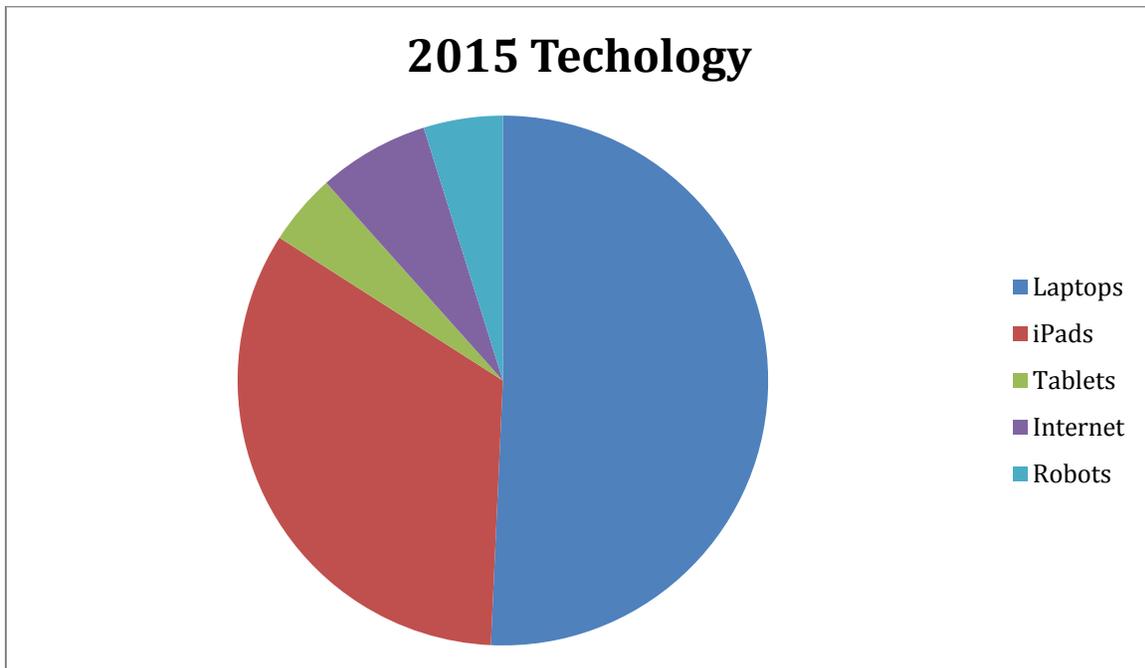
Grahamtastic Connection has received local and national recognition, confirming our belief that we are impacting the lives of children each day.

- 2014: Town and Country Federal Credit Union "Good Neighbor Award."
- 2012: Toyota 100 Cars for Good. Winner of a Toyota Highlander.
- 2011: Parent's Magazine, August issue "Power of Parents."
- 2009: John Baldacci, Maine Governor "Exemplary Service Award."
- 2008: Guest on CNBC's "The Big Idea" with Danny Deutsch
- 2006: WCSH, United Way and TD Bank's "Six Who Care Award."

## 2015 Accomplishments

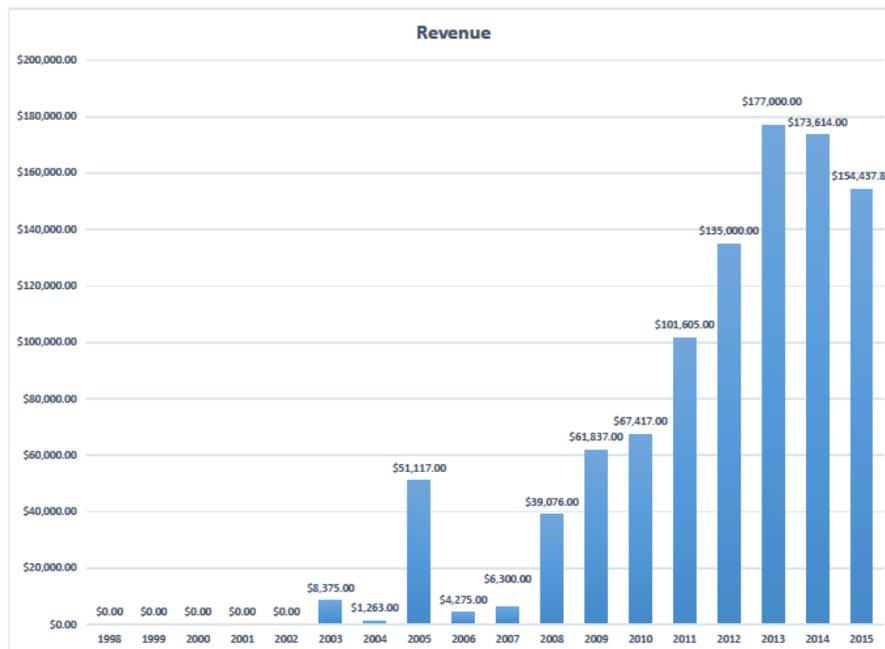
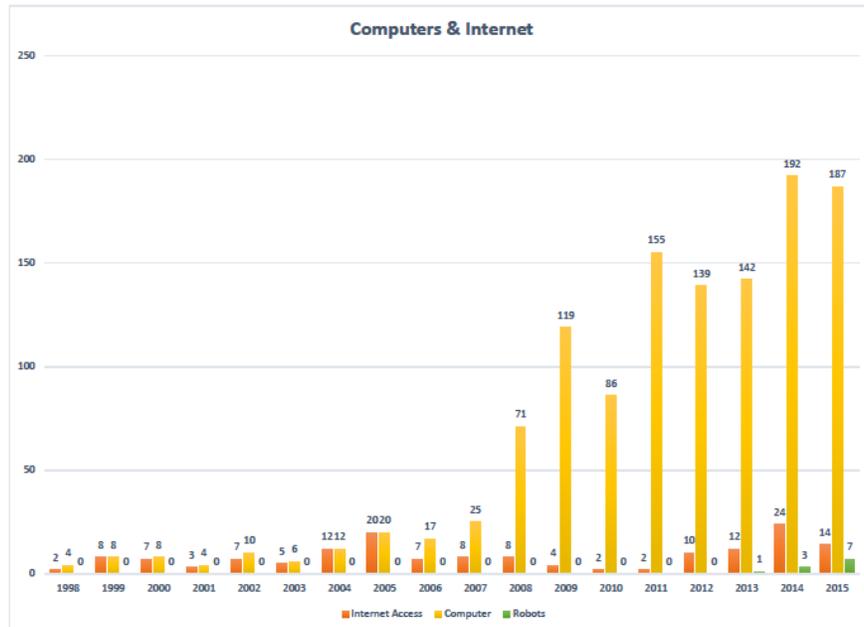
As of December 31, 2015, Grahamtastic Connection has supported over 1,240 children since the program began in 1998. This year was particularly busy. We helped 187 recipients by providing a variety of free technology (laptops, iPads, Android tablets and robots), 170 to individual children and another 17 to facilities where hundreds of children will be able to utilize them.

Many of our donations were in the Northeast (73), while the remainder was mailed to destinations across the United States. We also increased our robot fleet to a total of eight and put them to use for ten children during the school year.



Note: Individual children may receive more than one type of technology to enable use. For example, a Robot is regularly supplied with a tablet or iPad.

The following graphs provide a snapshot of our year-over-year results from 1998-2015.



## Fundraising Activities supporting Grahamtastic Connection in 2015

### Our Own Annual Events Included:

March 7            The Seventh Annual Dance & Silent Auction  
October 18        The Fifth Annual Run/Walk



*Laptop recipient Pearl is shown here with Executive Director Leslie Morissette. They are both proudly displaying Pearl's winning design for the 2015 5k t-shirt.*

### Events Held On Our Behalf Included:

January 23        Portland Pirates Game  
March 24         Music Jam at Wolves Club  
April 7            Cheerleading Competition  
April 16          IWCNE Guest Speaker  
April 30          Toe-to-Toe MMA Fights  
June 3            Moody's Collision Center Laptop Drive/Business After Hours  
June 22          Funtown Splashtown USA Grahamtastic Day  
June 25          Square Pond Jewelry Party  
June 27          Portland Seadogs Community Event  
July 3             Paddleboard Summer Raffle  
August 1          Shapleigh Community Fair Recipient  
August 23        Tom Brady Football Summer Raffle  
August 28        Pig Raffle at Lafayette Club  
October 4         Circle of Friends Quilt Show  
October 19        Sanford Key Club Guest Speaker  
November 7       IWCNE Holiday Fair  
November 13     TimeSmart Radio On-Air Guest  
November 21     Care For A Bear Workshop  
                      (organized by 10-year old Avery Morissette)

## Structure and Support

### Staff:

Leslie Morissette, Founder and Executive Director

### Board of Directors:

Donna Perkins, Ph.D – President, Director

Beth Brown - Vice President, Director

Terri Bronder – Secretary, Director

Roberta Macrum, CPA – Treasurer

#### *Directors:*

Kimberlee Caron

Lory Chase

Lisa Gray

Justin Mayrand

Danielle Moody

Nanci Nason

Vanessa Nason

Denise Pepin

Melody Martin-Robie

Taryn Southard



### Advisory Board:

Dan Cummings

Gracie Lavigne

### Volunteers (In addition to Board of Directors):

Abby and Madeline Beauchesne

Paul and Judy Clark

Aurora Frank

Simon Linquist (IT)

Avery Morissette

Larry O'Bryan (IT)

Heather Thomas

(Web-design)

James Walker (IT)

Treza White

Sanford High Key Club

Students

Sanford Regional Technical

Center Students &

Teacher

Westbrook Regional Technical School Students & Teacher

