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For Immediate Release

## Action Jackson and family champions for KidsAbility, raising thousands

Annual Superhero Run for KidsAbility takes place Sunday, June 16

Guelph, ON, June, 11, 2019 – Action Jackson and his parents Alice and Chuck have raised thousands of dollars for KidsAbility over the past four years. KidsAbility provides services and supports to children and youth with special needs in our community.

For Alice, Chuck and their families, Jackson was a miracle child, born after many infertility cycles and treatments. At five months of age, while Alice was visiting her parents, Jackson became ill and was admitted to hospital. It was there that he suffered a stroke affecting the right side of his body.

For the months leading up to his first birthday, there were many support people visiting the family home in Erin as Jackson had to be taught how to feed and drink as the stroke had affected his tongue and mouth. Around the one year mark, the family was introduced to KidsAbility. For three years, almost weekly, Alice would take Jackson to KidsAbility and the organization became an invaluable resource to her family. The biggest transformation for Jackson was going from not walking and being told that he may never walk, to Jackson walking and even running.

The KidsAbility Superhero Run takes place Sunday, June 16, at Exhibition Park, and Jackson's team – called Action Jackson -- will be participating for the fifth year. "Action Jackson" is a nickname given to Jackson by his maternal uncle at age three since he was getting too old to be called Baby Jackson, which was the previous nickname given to Jackson by his cousin. The Action Jackson team is so grateful for the support of their family and friends. The family's neighbours have held garage sales and raffles to help raise funds for the Superhero Run.

"Family and friends have always asked us how they can help with Jackson. I think the Superhero Run has become an avenue for them to support Jackson and other kids that need assistance. They've been very generous over the years as they've watched Jackson thrive with KidsAbility's help," says Alice. "I wouldn't have known what to do to help Jackson. I would have been lost without the support of KidsAbility. You see hope with KidsAbility."

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Over the years, Jackson has benefited from physical therapy, occupational therapy, recreational therapy, and more through the organization.

The ACS (Augmentative Communication Services) team has helped him to communicate with others using technology. As well, Alice has received emotional support from the therapists and staff at KidsAbility. KidsAbility has provided tools that Alice can take and build on progress with Jackson.

Action Jackson and his team have a friendly competition with KidsAbility's Senior Development Officer, Charmaine Brown. Each year they compete to see which family raises the most funds for KidsAbility.

This year the fundraising goal for the event is \$80,000. Charmaine believes the generous community will come together and meet the target. Over \$50,000 has been raised to date.

The event starts with onsite registration at 8am. A five-kilometre run and wheelchair event takes place at 9am, and a one-kilometre run/walk starts at 10am.

But, it's not just about the running or walking: The Superhero Run is a superhero-themed event, so people can expect to see Batman and his Batmobile, Spider-Man, Wonder Woman and many other superheroes. Other activities will also be offered, such as a costume contest, face painting, bouncy castle, vendor booths and a superhero photo booth.

Action Jackson will be walking side-by-side with his family and one very special person, his grandfather. Jackson's grandfather has MDS but despite his illness, he is a superhero who walks the one-kilometre walk every year.

"KidsAbility has helped so much," Alice says. "We don't know what we'd do without KidsAbility."

So grab your cape! Every child needs a superhero. You can register or sponsor a participant online at <https://raceroster.com/events/2019/22422/guelph-superhero-run-for-kidsability>

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# Media Release

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## Background Information:

Across Guelph-Wellington, over 800 children and youth with special needs receive the help that they need to realize goals important to them. It could be strengthening muscles to take that first step, developing the social skills to make a friend or learning how to become independent— together, we make these firsts possible. With over 60 years of experience, KidsAbility helps children and youth with special needs and their families to achieve goals important to them at home, at school and in the community. Our goal is to get the right support to the right child at the right time and donations help to make that possible.

KidsAbility Foundation inspires and engages community partners, individuals and groups to help make a difference in children's lives. Demand for KidsAbility's services continues to exceed the resources provided by the provincial government. Through the annual Kids Can't Wait campaign, donations raised through our generous community fund new programs, innovation and equipment, and allow KidsAbility to serve an additional 1,000 children and youth with special needs across Guelph-Wellington and Waterloo Region each year. Without this generous support, more children would be waiting even longer to receive the care that they deserve and so desperately need. Presently, there are over 1,300 children waiting for services at KidsAbility—over 100 alone in Guelph-Wellington.

KidsAbility served 7,975 children and youth across Guelph-Wellington and Waterloo Region last year from sites in Guelph, Fergus, Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo. With your help, we can help more children to live richer and fuller lives. Together, we can ensure that every child and youth has access to the services that they need where they live, learn and play to realize their full potential.

