



Tyler Chobanian and his friend Sean Gauvin. Submitted photos by Gregg Lavoie



## Tyler Chobanian shows what it means to be selfless

By GREGG LAVOIE

"How far that little candle throws its beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world."

Nine-year-old Tyler Chobanian has most likely never read *The Merchant of Venice*, and there's a good chance he's never even heard of William Shakespeare. Despite this, the youngster from Cumberland still managed to create one of the more heartwarming stories in recent memory.

For the past 10 years, as part of the Kids Klub program, Dr. Mary

Ann Shallcross Smith and her husband, Ron, hold an essay contest and graciously donate a free, one-week stay at their Cold Spring Resort condominium in Ashland, New Hampshire.

"We want families to have an opportunity to enjoy spending time together in a relaxing atmosphere, just like we've been able to do over the years," explained Dr. Shallcross Smith.

Kids Klub, which was founded by Drs. Shallcross Smith and Karen Annotti back in 1987, is a non-profit

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child care organization that provides before- and after-school care for children ranging from 5-12 years of age. This year's essay prompt asked the children to explain why they felt their family should win the free vacation to New Hampshire.

"Typically, most children answer the prompt from their own perspective, not their peers'," Dr. Shallcross Smith said. "It's not negative by any means; it's simply their understanding of the world at this time in their life."

In a beautiful act of pure selflessness, however, Chobanian took the road less traveled and nominated classmate Sean Gauvin's family instead of his own. Gauvin's mother, Kimberly, is in the midst of a difficult battle with cancer, and Chobanian wanted to do something special for his friend's family.

"I chose to nominate Sean's family because his mom has cancer and I felt bad for his sister," said Chobanian, who took part in Kids Klub at the Cumberland Hill Elementary School site. "I wanted them to have some time to relax as a family."

Dr. Shallcross Smith, who is president of the Dr. Day Care Family, was floored by the third grader's generous act.

"When I first read Tyler's short essay, I couldn't help but think that it came from a truly compassionate child," Dr. Shallcross Smith said. "Having a child like Tyler in Kids Klub is a true gift. Other children can learn a lot from him."

Thanks to Chobanian's altruism, the Gauvin family will be spending the upcoming Fourth of July week in Ashland.

Tyler, on the other hand, will spend this summer enjoying a reunion with his father, who recently returned from military service.

"I felt happy and surprised and glad that Sean's family won the vacation," Chobanian said. "My dad just got back from Afghanistan, so I will be spending as much time with him as I can."

Saint Basil once famously wrote, "A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love." Needless to say, both Shakespeare and Saint Basil would be proud of the young Chobanian.

It doesn't matter whether you're nine or 49; no good deed goes unnoticed.