

# The Governor General's Caring Canadian Award



## Glenn Akeson

Burlington, Ontario

When Glenn Akeson met Laura Cole, the founder of the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada, he was so moved by the idea of helping sick children that he volunteered to raise funds himself.



With a view to raising money in the metals industry in which he worked, Mr. Akeson put together a team, the Magic of Metals Children's Foundation. He persuaded actor John Candy to host a golf tournament, and in June 1989, the first tournament in support of the foundation was launched as the John Candy Magic of Metals Celebrity Classic.

The tournament raised \$65,000 on its first day, with all proceeds going to children. John Candy continued to host it every year until he passed away, after which Mr. Akeson found other hosts to take his place. To date, \$2,500,000 has been raised for—and over 300 wishes granted by—the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada, making Magic of Metals the foundation's third largest donor.

This year, the 24<sup>th</sup> annual tournament will take place. Mr. Akeson, now retired, continues to participate fully. "Glenn has been the face and soul of the organization as it has grown," says Rick Greenspon, who nominated Mr. Akeson for the Caring Canadian Award. "His leadership and focus on the needs of the children have kept the organization focused and viable through many difficult years."

While the major event is the golf tournament, the team Mr. Akeson formed also runs a bowling tournament and takes part in a warehouse sale organized by Conair. Both events require a large number of volunteers, as well as advanced planning and organization. Mr. Akeson's success comes from his ability to mobilize a team that always

keeps its mission—helping to fulfill the wishes of sick kids—at the forefront.

*"I have yet to hear Glenn speak about the wonderful work that we do without being moved to tears."*

**Christopher Kotsopoulos, CEO of the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada**

For Mr. Akeson, it really is all about the kids. "He is as connected to the Children's Wish Foundation as any staff member or wish child who receives a wish," says Wish Foundation CEO Christopher Kotsopoulos. "He is truly committed to each and every wish child, and the commitment shows through his hard work and his emotion each and every year. I have yet to hear Glenn speak about the wonderful work that we do without being moved to tears."



The Caring Canadian Award was presented to Glenn Akeson on April 17, 2012, at Rideau Hall. Sgt Ronald Duchesne 2012 © Rideau Hall