

Sam's R.E.A.L Success Story

City of St. John's program has helped dreams come true for many children since 2002.

Samantha was a child like many others: she completed all her swimming levels, was enrolled in gymnastics for a few years, and in the summer when school was out went to day camps. Samantha did all this with the help of the R.E.A.L (Recreation Experiences and Leisure) Program.

Sam, as her friends call her, is from a local low income neighbourhood and having money for extra-curricular activities had become impossible. Sam loved to sing and her friends encouraged her to try out for Shallaway.

"When I got my letter of acceptance to Shallaway I jumped around the house. I was so excited, but then you turn the page and there it is, the amount of tuition required to join," recalls Samantha. "I looked at my dad and he said 'Samantha this is simply not going to happen. I can't do it, I'm sorry'."

"So that's when I told Kelly and Kathryn, with Shallaway, that I wasn't taking the position. Lucky for me they weren't taking no for an answer."

Sam and her father met with Kelly Walsh and Kathryn Atkin of Shallaway and they discussed how both Shallaway and R.E.A.L. could help her. This is when Shallaway became a partner organization of the R.E.A.L. Program.

"R.E.A.L. helped with my Shallaway tuition, registration fees and transportation costs. We travelled to perform on world renowned stages, including in Austria and Hungary," says Sam.

Thanks to R.E.A.L Sam not only had these great experiences with Shallaway, but she also learned to play guitar and sing opera.

"I was the first person who said I need help, here I am, and I think that has helped me a lot with getting the things in life that I needed," says Sam, adding "I could have simply said 'wow that tuition's a lot' and threw it in the garbage but I decided that there might be a chance out there that somebody wanted to help me."

