

Leaf thanks community, hospital



Staff photo by Rob Beintema

Julian Rosati, 4, checks his idol's signature as Toronto Maple Leaf Matt Stajan returned to the hospital he was born in, to take part in Trillium Health Centre's Annual Staff Appreciation Barbecue.

By: Chris Clay

June 9, 2009 04:13 PM - Community has always been important to Matt Stajan.

Before he became a professional hockey player with the Toronto Maple Leafs, Stajan was simply a young man growing up in Mississauga. The bonds he forged with the city aren't easily broken.

"I'm lucky to be playing in Toronto and so close to my home," said Stajan, a guest today at Trillium Health Centre Mississauga's annual staff appreciation barbecue. "Obviously I grew up here and I think it's great to be giving back to the community. It's something I enjoy doing. Hopefully it will make a difference."

Stajan, whose aunt works at Trillium, was born at the hospital 25 years ago. He has visited it many times over the years, suffering from the usual bumps, cuts and bruises young athletes experience.

Many members of his extended family have received life-saving and ongoing care at Trillium for a range of illnesses including cardiac disease and cancer.

"I thought it would be a good idea to come out and show my support," said Stajan, who happily signed dozens of autographs and posed for pictures while live music also entertained hundreds of Trillium staff members. "As a professional athlete, I think it's something I should do. Sometimes it can get overlooked by players, but I try and do my best with it. I think it's important for everybody to get involved."