

# Blindness in comics' sights

## Comedy fundraiser to help loss

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Sun Media

Blindness is no laughing matter, but an upcoming night of comedy featuring some of Canada's top comics will raise funds for those suffering sight loss.

The annual fundraiser, called Comic Vision, has played for several years in cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, and makes its Calgary debut May 7 at The Laugh Shop in the Blackfoot Inn, 5940 Blackfoot Tr. S.E.

For event chair Natasha McDougald, the evening is about having some laughs for a good cause — as well as helping someone close to her. Her daughter Rosie, 5, has overcome deafness through cochlear implants and is waging a battle against blindness.

At 2½ years old, the youngster was diagnosed with a rare genetic disease called Usher Syndrome, which causes deafness, loss of balance and vision loss.

"We've got to fight for her and people like her who are fighting vision loss," said McDougald.

Rosie's eyesight has been reduced to central vision after the disease robbed her of peripheral and night vision. She got her first white cane six months ago and will likely need a guide dog as her remaining eyesight recedes.

"She's only five but she reads above a Grade 4 level, and this skill has been compromised."

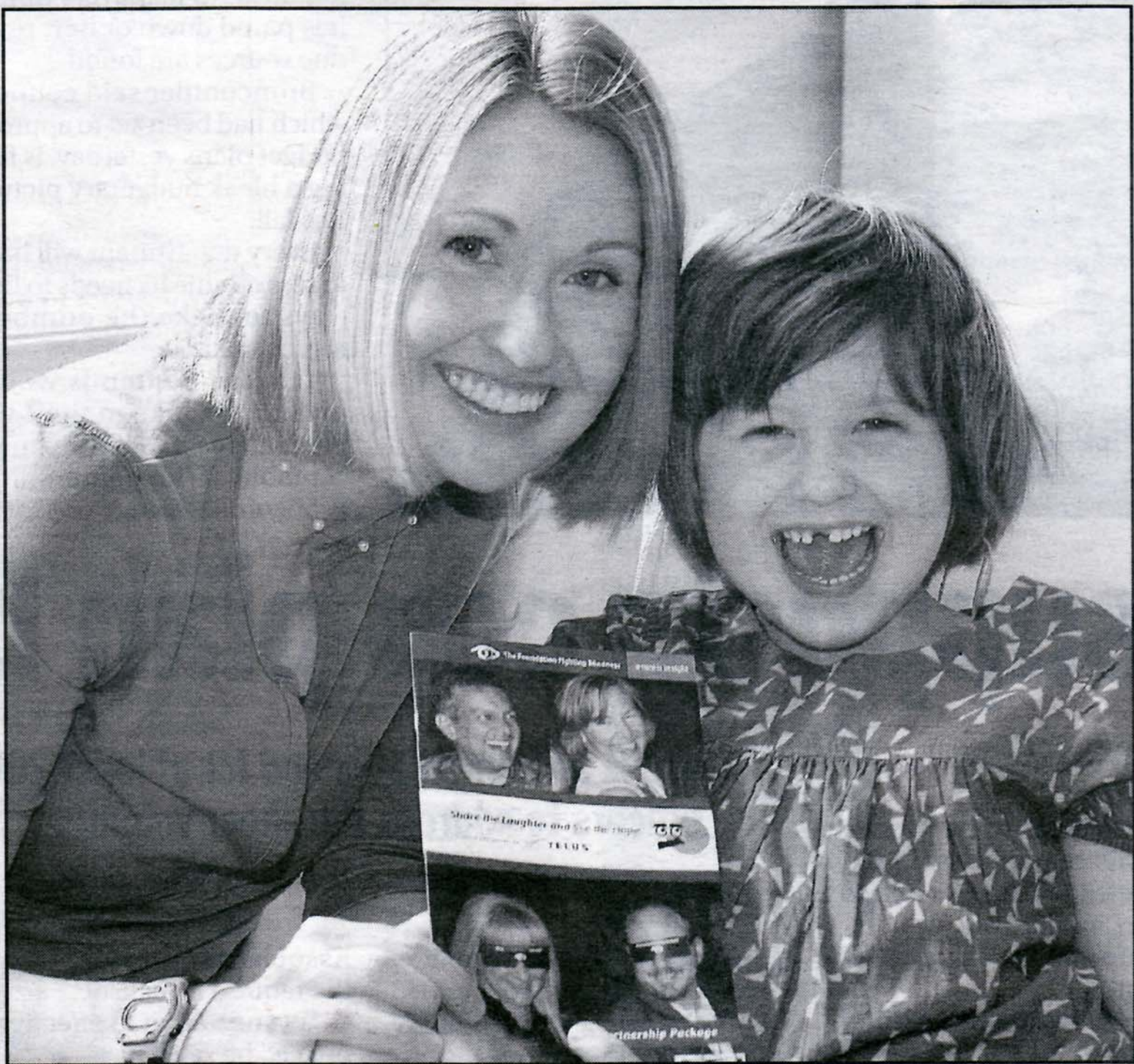
Research funded by groups such as the Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB) have given the McDougalds hope that, one day, eye implants will be available, just as Rosie's cochlear implants became available.

In its seven-year history, the Comic Vision event has raised close to \$1 million for the FFB.

The Calgary event features four comedians — including local fave Jebb Fink — as well as a number of draw prizes, including a trip to the Mayan Riviera and Flames jerseys autographed by Jarome Iginla and Cory Sarich. More info on the show, which starts at 6:30 p.m., is available at [www.comicvision.ca](http://www.comicvision.ca).

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Organizer Natasha McDougald, discusses daughter Rosie



JACK CUSANO/SUN MEDIA

## A fight for sore eyes

Five-year-old Rosie McDougald, right, who suffers from a disease that is threatening her eyesight, and her mom, Natasha, hope you'll come out and support the Comic Vision Tour. The comedy fundraiser May 7 at The Laugh Shop in the Blackfoot Inn, 5940 Blackfoot Tr. S.E. will support the Foundation Fighting Blindness. See story on Page 25.