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Boston Pizza supports Shelburne athlete?s journey to France to compete in the Special Olympics Unified World Cup

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Boston Pizza staff and supporters gathered earlier this week to hand over proceeds from a June 2 celebrity server event to Shelburne-athlete Yazmine Wilson-Daponte, who's fundraising for her travels to compete in the Special Olympics Unified World Cup in Paris, France this summer.

The cheque for $762.25 marked the culmination of a community effort that brought families, friends, and strangers together in support of the women's unified soccer team representing Canada.

Karrie Daponte, Yazmine Wilson-Daponte's mother, said she was happy to see the fundraiser's success.

?Obviously, I'm a very proud mom,? Daponte said. ?Yazmine thrives in the community, so it's like so great for her and all of us. She spends most of her time playing sports, so it's just amazing to see an opportunity like this.?

The restaurant held a celebrity server event, which ran from 5 to 8 p.m., with 10 per cent of sales ? including dine-in, takeout, and online orders ? earmarked for Yazmine's travel costs. Additional funds were raised through a raffle for a donated soccer jersey and a $5 ?Balloon Pop? activity, boosting the final total.

Daponte said the money will primarily help cover Yazmine's flight, a required cost for families joining Team Ontario, while the rest of the trip, including accommodation in the Olympic Village, is funded by Special Olympics.

The fundraising night followed weeks of quiet support from local businesses and residents, including gift cards, flags, and other items to make the trip possible.

With practices located hours away and a demanding training schedule, the cheque handover served as both a financial boost and a show of community pride in Yazmine's achievement.