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January 14, 2001

Mother to waive custody

Wants son to end hunger strike

By [NADIA MOHARIB](#) -- Calgary Sun

The mother of a teen in the midst of a hunger strike just wants her boy to be happy and healthy, but she says Clayton is the master of his own fate.

"I want my son to eat. I love him very much," Marnie Harrison said yesterday. "He made a choice to go live with his father and to go on a hunger strike. It's his choice."

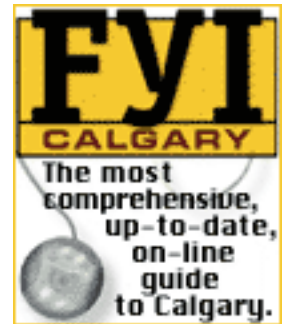
Her estranged son, Clayton Giles, 14, is continuing his diet of water and juice -- a fast begun 15 days ago to protest a court system he feels leaves children without a voice.

Giles was wrestling with his sister and playing board games yesterday while waiting anxiously for the green light to end his hunger strike.

He said his mother's agreement to sign over custody to his father Eric Giles will end his protest.

Harrison's heart breaks at making the decision but she will agree to his wishes.

The courts granted her full custody in 1993 with visitation rights to



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his father.

She was in court last week to legalize the custody exchange but the hearing was rescheduled to a February date when Clayton and his father failed to appear.

Now both she and her son are at the mercy of the court process.

"Legal issues cannot be resolved on the streets or through blackmail," Harrison said. "I am very concerned about his health and emotional well-being but it's his choice."

She hopes he'll choose to eat.

Eric Giles said his son isn't prepared to end the protest which has cost him about 12 lb. but gained dozens of supporters and the following of children who have logged onto his website.

"He's worried that if he doesn't come out of this in a favourable light kids everywhere will say there's no hope," he added.

"I'm fighting this fight because I am happy where I am and want kids to know they can be too," Clayton said.

Alberta Children's Services spokesman Mark Kastner is concerned Clayton's extreme tactics will serve as a model for other children coping with divorce.

Children's Services is urging Clayton to give up his fast and is prepared to step in.

"It's not only disturbing from the perspective parents are allowing this to occur but that it sets the example for other teens to harm themselves to make a point," Kastner said.

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