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Let It Be Foundation provides hope for families

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Sometime this year, a local child or teenager's life will be shaken by a major medical crisis. But his or her family won't go hungry, and teary-eyed, worn out faces won't be ignored. Through it all, mom and dad will be able to taste a little bit of what life used to be like before their child became terminally ill.

All because of a Chino Hills High School student named Karla Asch-Rosen's.

A year has passed since Karla died from brainstem glioma, a cancerous brain tumor. Karla's family supported her until the 15-year-old took her last breath in her own bedroom.

But hope and faith are shining through, said Karla's mom, Ruthe Rosen.

Since last summer, the Rosen family, their friends and the community have channeled their grief and transformed their sorrow into creating The **Let It Be Foundation**, a nonprofit organization that helps Chino Hills families cope when a son or daughter comes down with a life-threatening disease.

The foundation connects families in need to medical, food, recreation, entertainment and several other resources donated by local businesses.

"It's not about Karla - it's because of Karla," said Rosen, president of the foundation. "Our family has received so many blessings. It's our turn to give back."

While Monday marks the date of Karla's death, the anniversary is a turning point for Rosen and so many others affected by the blond-haired, blue-eyed student. The foundation, which started on June 29, what would have been Karla's 16th birthday, is now evaluating its sixth applicant - another family pleading for emotional and financial help, just like what the Rosens went through.

"We're trying to give everyone in the community an opportunity to help," Rosen said. "Maybe they can't write a check, but they can donate a haircut or some restaurant certificates."

The Mazur family is experiencing this outpouring of community love and care.

When Michael Mazur, 14, was diagnosed in September with acute promyelocytic leukemia, the family's world turned upside down, according to Michael's father, Joseph. The Canyon Hills Junior High student went through six weeks of heavy chemotherapy treatment.

These days Michael makes daily visits to Children's Hospital of Orange County, where he will be receiving chemo treatment for another two years.

Soon after the diagnosis, a neighbor helped connect the Mazurs with the organization. The family has been blessed with certificates for gas, restaurant, grocery and retail services.

"It feels extremely good that there's support in the community," Mazur said. "We don't feel like we're in this alone."

Mazur's story hopefully reflects what Karla had always wanted: a normal life for her and her family.

"She never complained, never felt sorry for herself," Rosen said. "All Karla would say is, 'I just want to be normal.'"

The daily trips Rosen and her daughter made to Children's Hospital Los Angeles gave the weary mother some powerful insight into the legacy Karla wanted to leave. It's one of joy, not sadness, and the foundation is using this inspiration to support families when they're at their lowest.

"Doctors take care of the medical side of things," Rosen said. "But when they're at home, in their community, they need love. They need a community that embraces them and cares for them."

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