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Teens reach out to their community through The **Let It Be Foundation**

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The grief of losing a child to cancer is so piercing that adults have difficulty expressing their emotions to a family dealing with such tragedy. If the response of the teens who knew and loved Karla Asch-Rosen is any indication, reaching out to these families comes easier to the young.

"I couldn't believe the outpouring from so many kids," said Ruthe Rosen, whose daughter, Karla, 16, died in February 2006 after being diagnosed with cancer, an inoperable brain tumor called brainstem glioma. "We were flooded with cards, letters and sympathy by so many young people, many of whom didn't know Karla at all. It just seemed to touch them."

This outpouring of care led to the creation of The **Let It Be Foundation**, which Rosen began last year. The group is in the process of moving into a new office at 13905 Ramona Ave., Unit J, Chino. They are planning to open at the location next week.

"But long before we decided (to start the foundation), we found the kids wanted to do something active to support Karla on her journey," she said.

That youthful interest evolved into the foundation's Jr. Advisory Team - 14 students in seventh through 11th grade from several Chino Valley junior high and high schools.

This year's team was made up of Brandon Gealy, Chloe Reed, Ryan Sweeney, Ryan King, Justin Wright, Chloe Billetter, Allie Stout, Irma Wickman, Karleigh Franchino, Adrianna Aguilar, Heather Wright, Jake Muth and Nicole Schmidt. Rosen's son Brandon, a third grader, is an honorary team member until he reaches seventh grade and can fully join the team.

Following Karla's own wish to have her bedroom redecorated, the many teenagers and friends decided to offer similar upgrades to those children in the area who are being served by the foundation.

"We started in August last year with a lemonade stand," Rosen said. "Then this effort spread to 19 different schools, and we produced a talent show. Then garage sales followed with all the proceeds going to the foundation."

The Kids 4 Kids Community Talent Show was a three-day event in April at Wickman Elementary School in Chino Hills. The fundraiser drew participation from 19 schools, both public and private. Tricia Huckabey of Patrick Interiors is one of the designers involved in the bedroom upgrades.

"I knew Karla quite well," she said. "I just wanted to get involved."

Melanie Patrick, CEO of the company, added: "I have a son the same age as Karla. It really brings it home."

As for coping with her own grief, Rosen said the only thing to do is get involved and help others. The teen group has collected \$10,000 for the foundation, which is supported by a team of 12 members with an additional 200 additional volunteers.

Currently there are seven young people whose rooms are being upgraded.

In the words of The **Let It Be Foundation's** Mission Statement, this will help "restore the sense of normalcy in their homes," so these young people and their families can "avoid centering their existence on a disease, and focus instead on the positives that can come out of it."

Information: (909) 613-9161, www.theletitbefoundation.com

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