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Section: News

Lemonade to help struggling families

Diana Sholley, Staff Writer

It is not often that Inland Valley residents have the chance to help families in need while quenching their thirst. But this Saturday, locals can do just that.

The Let It Be Foundation's Junior Advisory Team will set up 16 lemonade stands to raise money for support and services for families and children with life-threatening medical conditions.

Ice-cold lemonade mixed from a secret recipe will be sold.

The cost: Donations only.

No amount too small or too large.

The Let It Be Foundation was established June 29, 2006 by Ruthe and Michael Rosen after their daughter Karla Asch-Rosen succumbed to brain cancer.

"Karla always wanted to help people, she always wanted to give back," said Justin Wright, Karla's cousin and a team member.

"She was a kind person. We're fulfilling what she started."

Justin continues to be inspired by Karla, so much so that he shares her story, which has inspired others.

While running track together, Justin talked to his friend Alex Keifer who soon joined the Junior Advisory team.

"We are not only caring for the one child, we're caring for the whole family," said Alex, an Ayala High School senior. "Because if we make things better for the one kid, we make things better for the whole family."

More than 18 high school students are on the Junior Advisory Team, which formed less than a month after the foundation. There is also a Junior Links Team for junior high school students.

"We chose teens who wanted to make a difference," Ruthe said.

This is the fourth year that Junior Advisory has hosted the lemonade fundraiser.

The idea came from Karla's brother Brandon, 11, a member of the foundation's Junior Links Team. Karla also left behind her brother Cole, 8.

Last year, the lemonade stands attracted about 150 volunteers and made more than \$6,400.

The funds enabled the team to redecorate an ill child's bedroom, contract out household services and send families out for some fun.

"Our goal is to restore a sense of normalcy," Ruthe said. "When you have a child diagnosed with a life-threatening illness your world becomes a roller-coaster. It's chaotic. It's like the whole world is moving in the fast lane and you're moving in slow motion."

Ruthe knows this feeling firsthand and all too well. She also knows what it means to have a strong community of support surrounding her.

That feeling, as well as her daughter Karla, were the inspiration for **The Let It Be Foundation** and its goal of providing individualized aide to meet the needs of the family, including medical accessories, sibling care, household maintenance and meals.

Since its inception, the foundation has helped families inside the boundaries of the Chino Valley Unified School District, which includes the areas of Chino, Chino Hills and south Ontario.

Between the foundation's success and the growing need, Ruthe said there are plans in the works to expand the service area.

"I think we're ready," she said. "It's my dream to see (Let It Be Foundations) across the country helping families in need."

To date, the foundation has helped 21 families, with six currently under its umbrella.

Families receive between \$400 and \$700 worth of support and services monthly.

Families eligible for support have a child between 2 and 17 years old who have been diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition and is in treatment at the time of the referral.

They are recommended to the foundation through various ways, such as licensed medical professionals, parent or legal guardian, members of clergy or school staff.

Though Karla had no way of knowing the effect her death would have on people, or the foundation, she had an innate sense that her life had special meaning.

This was made clear in a written quote her mother Ruthe found among Karla's things after her death.

It read, "God ... Thank you for letting me be the one to bring our community together and inspire them. Amen."

Although the girls never met, Karla's story touched Chino Hills High freshman Sara Montoya so much that she cried when she learned Karla had died.

"Karla was a girl fighting for her life and she didn't make it," said Sara, a member of the Junior Advisory Team.

"But she's living on through the foundation. I feel lucky to be part of something that has helped so many people."

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(909) 483-9381

Drink up, help out

Locations of lemonade stands on Saturday:

CHINO

Stater Bros., 4721 Riverside Drive, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Stater Bros., 6989 Schaefer Ave., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Prado Golf Course, 6555 Pine Ave., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Staples, 4016 Grand Ave., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Food 4 Less, 4024 Grand Ave., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Ralphs, 12835 Mountain Ave., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

CHINO HILLS

Stater Bros., 14250 Chino Hills Parkway, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Los Serranos Golf Course, 15656 Yorba Ave., 9 a.m. to 1p.m.

Vellano Golf Course, 3008 Soquel Canyon Road, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Western Hills Golf Course, 1800 Carbon Canyon Road, 9a.m. to 1 p.m.

Albertsons, 15970 Los Serranos Country Club Drive, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Albertsons, 3255 Grand Ave., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Vons, 4200 Chino Hills Parkway, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Wetzel's Pretzel, 13925 City Center Drive, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Henry's, 3630 Grand Ave., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Rite Aid, 15890 Soquel Canyon Parkway, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

ONTARIO

Stater Bros., 1105 W. Philadelphia St., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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