

D211 POST: FREMD FRESHMAN COLLECTING TOYS FOR PEDIATRIC CANCER PATIENTS



Rosie (left) and her mother JoAnne greet patrons at Wildberry in Schaumburg September 11.

At the entrance of Wildberry Pancakes and Café (1383 N. Meacham Rd. Schaumburg) a colorful box sits to collect new toys for Rosie's Toy Box, which collects toys for pediatric cancer patients. The toy drive will continue through September 15. So, who is Rosie?



Rosie Colucci sits for a television interview.

Rosie Colucci is a freshman at William Fremd High School. On her third birthday she was diagnosed with Neurofibromatosis, a genetic disorder which causes tumors to form anywhere in the nervous system. In Rosie's case this caused, an inoperable tumor to form in her brain among other complications.

Rosie said while she was in the hospital for her first of many surgeries, she received a lot of gifts including toys. She said Rosie noticed some children in neighboring rooms had nothing.

"My mom said, 'what are we going to do with all of this?'" she said. "I said wanted to give it back to the kids who didn't have anything."

That decision led to the creation of Rosie's Toy Box. Over the past 10 years, Rosie and her mother JoAnne have collected more than 60,000 toys for children. JoAnne said doing all this brings a sense of joy to both her and Rosie. Their efforts to bring comfort for the young patients has not gone unnoticed. For her work, Rosie was selected as one of ten children nationwide to receive the 2018 Prudential Spirit of the Community Award. She has also received multiple recognitions and awards from The American Red Cross, Laurie Children's Hospital, and others.

Rosie and her mother have continued the work of Rosie's Toy Box in spite of additional medical diagnoses. JoAnne said getting out in the community helps her and Rosie deal with everything.

"I think the only reason we've stayed so positive is because we get out into the community. We do things, we try to give back," she said. "Even though we're struggling, we want to help other people."



Awards Rosie has received from a variety of organizations.

In August Rosie started her freshman year at Fremd. She also underwent her 15th brain surgery which was also her 31st overall surgery in the past 11 years. Because of this, she was forced to miss a several weeks of school. She said her teachers have been very accommodating.

“The teachers have been very good with [missed classes],” she said. “They tell me I can make up the tests and quizzes when I can. At this point I am all caught up.”

For more information about Rosie’s Toy Box visit www.rockstarrosie.com/toybox. Rosie will be at Wildberry to meet people from 9:00 a.m. until noon on Sept. 15.

FREMD HIGH SCHOOL CHEMISTRY OF FOODS STUDENTS WORK HARD FOR CHARITY, PEDIATRIC CANCER RESEARCH



Students involved in the Chemistry of Foods course at Fremd High School have worked hard to raise money and donations for two charitable causes.

Students baked and raised more than \$800 for Cookies for Kid's Cancer in October, and recently collected more than 300 canned and boxed food items to donate to the Palatine Food Pantry during their restaurant week.

"What's great is seeing our kids get excited about doing something for the community, to take ownership of what they are working on, and contribute to the community," said Jen Carlson, Chemistry of Foods teacher at Fremd High School. "They were very excited and have wanted to make everything perfect during the events this year."

The class, which combines a traditional cooking class with chemistry, provides students with a well-rounded learning experience about the food preparation, the industry, and cooking. As a dual-credit course with William Rainey Harper College, students have the opportunity to study and test for their food safety and sanitation certification at the high school.

During the Halloween event, students baked hundreds of cookies to sell for \$1. The students completed all aspects of the fundraiser, including preparing the cookies, to marketing and selling. The donations were then sent to Cookies for Kid's Cancer, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds for pediatric cancer research. Erin Fasse, Family and Consumer Science teacher at Fremd High School, said this is a cause that many people can connect with.

"It's amazing how many people have a connection with pediatric cancer through family or friends, or have recovered themselves as children," Fasse said. "Our students get to see the impact this has on the community and it really turns them into a team knowing their energy is helping someone else."



After the Cookies for Kid's Cancer fundraiser was completed, the Chemistry of Foods students decided to not collect proceeds during restaurant week, which is where students apply their knowledge and host a restaurant for faculty and staff, from cooking to marketing and business, and instead collected food. The students asked for canned and boxed food items as a donation for a meal.

"There was a lot of food for donation," Fasse said. "The students loaded all of it up and it was great that they could see what resulted from all of their hard work."