

South Charlotte News

Get up and go Don't miss these upcoming events close to home.

1 Back-to-school event

Find the latest fall fashions, electronics and other needs for starting the school year off right. \$5.

When: Noon, Aug. 17.

Where: SouthPark Mall, 4400 Sharon Road.

Info: www.simon.com/mall/southpark.

2 Hearing seminar

Get your questions answered about hearing health and advances in technology at a free workshop. Registration requested.

When: 2 and 6 p.m. Aug. 20.

Where: The Ivey, 6030 Park South Drive.

Info: 704-909-2070.

Football 4W



Charlotte Catholic's Elijah Hood

TEAMS GEARING FOR NEW SEASON

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER CARMEL ROAD • COTSWOLD • DILWORTH • MYERS PARK • PARK ROAD • PINEVILLE • PROVIDENCE ROAD • QUAIL HOLLOW • SOUTHPARK

South Charlotte

Fundraiser honors Isabella's memory

Cancer victim's '3 wishes' propel ongoing effort

The #ISF3Wishes social media campaign was started in May 2013 to celebrate the legacy and memory of Isabella Santos, who was only 7 when cancer took her life. The campaign strives to collect three wishes of people worldwide in her memory.

Isabella had three wishes following her 2007 cancer diagnosis: "Beat Cancer. Grow Hair. Live My Dreams." Her parents, Erin and Stuart, brother Grant and sister Sophia continue Isabella's goal of "no more cancer" from their home in Waxhaw.



Elisabeth Podair

The Isabella Santos Foundation was created in 2009, two years after Isabella's diagnosis in 2007 and has doubled its funds raised each year. Last year the foundation raised a record \$200,000 in Isabella's memory to support cancer research.

"Isabella would wear her wishes on her shirt all of the time. ISF then incorporated them into the entire mission of the foundation and everything we do. It is what we fight for in Isabella's honor," said Foundation Development Director and Waxhaw resident Mait-

See **Cancer**, 9W



COURTESY OF THE SANTOS FAMILY

Isabella Santos died of cancer when she was 7.

Cancer victim's '3 wishes' propel effort

[from 1W]

land Danner.

"It has been such a wonderful way to see people getting involved, and in a crazy way, feels like each time we get a photo in from a supporter we see a little bit of Isabella," Danner said. "It has been extremely rewarding and the creativity has been incredible."

The Isabella Santos Foundation celebrated a successful Three Wishes Day on the one-year anniversary of Isabella's death. The #ISF3Wishes campaign has included wishes submitted by well-known names. Samantha Busch, wife of NASCAR driver Kyle Busch, shared her three wishes and started to get visibility for the campaign.

"Some of the wishes I love the most are the three wishes sent in from the team at Camp Care because they are so personal to Isabella," said Erin Santos, foundation president and Isabella's mother. "She loved being in talent shows and going to camp, things that some kids might take for granted. Also, the one done by Meredith Morgan at the Community Blood Center about growing up

Learn more:

Information: www.facebook.com/IsabellaSantosFoundation or www.isabellasantosfoundation.com. Register for the September 5k or become a corporate sponsor at www.5kforkidscancer.com or info@isabellasantosfoundation.com.

and having your own cupcake shop, or Molly Grantham's of WBTV wish of wigs that don't itch. My personal wish was for Isabella to become a mommy. So many people wished for a cure, too, which is maybe the most important wish, and that is what we are hoping the campaign helps accomplish."

Almost all of the 40 volunteers that support the Isabella Santos Foundation have a full-time job and children of their own.

"I have always been drawn to Isabella's story since I first saw her swimming at our neighborhood pool, laughing and bald. Her smile was bigger than most people that were lounging poolside....," Danner said. "I could sense early on that she was a special little spirit. From that moment on I watched from the sidelines cheering, supporting, donating and then

ultimately heartbroken.

"I remember meeting Erin for the first time and coming to the realization that this is something I truly wanted to be a part of. I have learned that each person involved brings his or her very own strength and talent to this organization, and that is what makes it so successful."

While the #ISF3Wishes campaign is ongoing, the Inaugural Pay It Forward Day was held June 28.

The Santos family decided to have some privacy out of town in remembrance of Isabella while Danner and the board put together the Pay It Forward Day.

"Pay It Forward Day embodied everything that Isabella was as a person," said Santos. "She was always doing things for others and tried to get people to do the same thing. What a great legacy to leave to think that even after your time here is

done, that people continue to do things in your honor." "I wanted to make the anniversary of Isabella's passing shine in a positive light," said Danner. "Additionally, I wanted Isabella's loved ones to witness people doing good deeds all over the world with their sweet little girl on their mind."

Danner hopes that other organizations will see the value in harnessing social media for their campaigns. They saw their program spread quickly with the Twitter handle launch.

"My advice to those who are interested in spreading awareness is to commit year round," said Santos. "September is childhood cancer awareness month, and while it's easier to bend someone's ear or get a donation, children are fighting 12 months a year. Our daughter passed away in June because in May there were no more treatment options available. This is a year-round issue."

>> Elisabeth Podair is a freelance writer for South Charlotte News. Have a story idea for Elisabeth? Email her at epodair@gmail.com.