

Press Release, July 28, 2020

## Lions Expanding Help for UP Kids With Cancer

Upper Peninsula Lions are reaching out to help families with children who are battling cancer. Two fundraisers have raised more than \$15,500—all of which will go directly to assist families.

Graymont Community and Economic Development Fund announced on Tuesday, July 28, that it is awarding a grant of \$7500 to the District 10 Lions Pediatric Cancer Program. And in a separate initiative, three Lions clubs raised \$8,172 through the efforts of the Marquette, Gwinn, and Engadine-Newberry Lions clubs that collected, counted, and sorted over 80,000 returnable cans.

Christine A. Smith of Engadine, the District 10 Lions Pediatric Cancer Chairman, says she is delighted with these results. Smith says the Lions have identified 10 families across the UP who have children with cancer. She explains that treatment is particularly challenging since there are no pediatric cancer treatment facilities in the UP. Instead, families must plan for sometimes lengthy stays where care is available. She encourages anyone who is a UP resident and has a child with cancer to contact her. With these additional funds, Lions are able to expand their efforts.

Rylan, an Upper Peninsula 4-year-old who is being treated for high-risk neuroblastoma, is one of the children the Lions have helped. His father is very grateful for assistance as

Rylan receives treatment at University of Michigan hospitals in Ann Arbor, including surgery, chemotherapy, bone marrow transplants, and more. This treatment requires lengthy hospitalizations, keeping Rylan and his mom away from his father and siblings for months.

Smith explained four ways the newly raised funds will be used. First, donations help meet some of the many costs that insurance does not cover. Second, through a partnership with Bay Cliff Health Facility, Lions will cover expenses for families to participate in a fun family weekend at Camp Quality, May 7 – 9, 2021. Planning for the camp is flexible and will adjust to the changing demands presented by COVID 19. Lions funds will also help provide free wigs for children who have lost hair through chemotherapy. Through a partnership with Maggie's Wigs4Kids, Lions from across the Upper Peninsula will be reaching out in September, during Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month, to encourage donations of hair to make these wigs.

And Lions have partnered with Kids Kicking Cancer, a global organization dedicated to lowering the pain of children by teaching them martial arts as a therapy. Children learn breath work, meditation, and traditional karate. Lions are helping to stock backpacks for participants with books for children ages 2-18, and \$5 gift certificates from Target, Meijer and Walmart.

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