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Archive for Friday, June 22, 2012

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Youth-driven group inspired by 1-year-old's cancer battle



Photo by Rob Roberts. [Enlarge photo.](#)

Surrounded by members of Lucy's Kids for Peace during a recent City Council meeting, Shawnee Mayor Jeff Meyers reads a proclamation declaring Aug. 11 as Lucy's Kids for Peace Day in the city.

By [Melissa Treolo](#)

June 22, 2012, 3:14 p.m.

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Shawnee residents rallied to support [Lucy Weber](#) during the 1-year-old's battle with cancer.

A rare, highly malignant tumor, known as atypical teratoid rhabdoid tumor, took Lucy's life in November 2010. But a local group wants to keep alive the kindness she inspired.

Jill Chalfie, a neighbor and friend of Lucy's parents, had been looking for something to do to "keep Lucy's legacy going" when a friend told her about Kids for Peace, a youth-driven organization with chapters throughout the globe.

"I thought it was just perfect," Chalfie said. "There was not a chapter anywhere in Kansas or Missouri."

So Chalfie decided to start one in Shawnee. She asked organizers if she could name it after Lucy — they thought it was a great idea, she said — and Lucy's Kids for Peace had its first meeting in February.

Largely through word-of-mouth, Chalfie said, the group has since grown to include about 40 youth members between the ages of 3 and 12, about half of them from Shawnee. With parental help, the youths take part in arts, crafts and community service activities inspired by the organization's Peace Pledge. The pledge includes lines about

speaking in a kind way, helping and respecting others, and caring for the Earth. Toward that end, one project the chapter is working on is putting together “peace packs” filled with hand-me-down toys, books and school supplies to send to children in foreign countries such as Guatemala.

As the group continues to develop, Chalfie said her hope was that future projects would include park cleanups, planting flowers and organizing a book drive for a local homeless shelter.

“We really hope to have the kids drive what we do,” Chalfie said.

She said she had been inspired by the [community’s efforts](#) to help Lucy and her family during Lucy’s illness through fundraisers and raffles, and even simple acts like cooking meals or mowing the lawn for the family. She wants Lucy’s Kids for Peace to take a more proactive approach, however.

“Do the right thing before there’s a tragedy,” she said of the chapter’s purpose. “We feel that everything we do will foster that and lay that groundwork for them as adults.”

To learn more or to get your child involved in Lucy’s Kids for Peace, send an email to lucyskidsforpeace@yahoo.com or visit the chapter’s Facebook page, facebook.com/lucyskidsforpeace.

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