

Sequoyah students raise \$750 for Ryan's Case for Smiles



Sequoyah Elementary School students Lorenzo Ruma, Luke Nelson, Camryn Ash, Isaac Vermeulen, Emily Puchalski and JT Carr drew posters to promote a fundraiser for Ryan's Case for Smiles, formerly known as ConKerr Cancer. Students held the fundraiser Feb. 8 to Feb. 12. Photo courtesy of HELENA SCHARF

By Nicole Tuttle, For The Macomb Daily
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Student council representatives at Sequoyah Elementary School sold paper "smiles" for the volunteer organization Ryan's Case for Smiles in February. Photo courtesy of HELENA SCHARF

Instead of a penny for your thoughts, Sequoyah Elementary School's student council charged \$1 for smiles in the name of a good cause recently.

Sequoyah teacher and student council advisor Helena Scharf said the student council sold two paper "smiles" for \$1 from Feb. 8-12. Money raised through the sales went towards the cause of Ryan's Case for Smiles, formerly known as ConKerr Cancer. Ryan's Case for Smiles is a volunteer organization founded in 2007 and dedicated to helping children with cancer and other

illnesses feel comforted by creating and distributing whimsical pillowcases for hospitals around the world.

One of the paper “smiles” could be decorated and attached to the school’s Wall of Smiles in the cafeteria. Some teachers allowed students class time in which to decorate the “smiles,” and students were encouraged to decorate the “smiles” at home as well. The second paper “smile” was donated to Ryan’s Case for Smiles to be enclosed in a pillowcase, according to Scharf.

This school year marks the first that the Sequoyah student council has done a fundraiser for Ryan’s Case for Smiles.

“It was something I came across at the end of last school year. I had taken over the student council position at our school and I kind of put it aside. At every student council meeting we discuss fundraisers we are looking to do to help others. This particular fundraiser came up and there were several kids that have been touched by someone in their family that had cancer...I thought, ‘What a better way to kind of show kids it is important not to always get something tangible in return,’” Scharf said.

She contacted Ryan’s Case for Smiles for fundraising ideas, and discussed the idea of selling the “smiles” with Sequoyah Principal Ted Zotos before having students begin work on the fundraiser. Student council members worked in pairs to create promotional posters for the fundraiser as well as selling “smiles.”

The student council at the Macomb Township school raised \$750 with the fundraiser. A representative from Ryan’s Case for Smiles will attend a March 3 student council meeting, at which time students will give the representative a check and the paper “smiles.”

“We are always looking for different organizations to help out with. It exceeded what I had in mind,” Scharf said. “I thought it was the first time and I was not sure how students were going to respond. And the response was just overwhelming.”

Ryan’s Case for Smiles website at caseforsmiles.org lists some general directions for sewing pillowcases for donation to the organization and information about making other donations. The student goal at Sequoyah, however, was not to make pillowcases but simply to raise money for Ryan’s Case for Smiles to assist the organization in its mission.