

# Rally Week Unites School on Behalf of Sick Children



Executive Board Members included: (front row left to right) Sara Skinner, 8th; Samantha Choukalas, 8th; Alex D'Oto, 12th (Chair); and Hannah Winston, 11th; (back row left to right) Sarah Currey, 12th; Taylor Jones, 12th; Austin Ehrat, 12th; Jordan Dowdy, 10th; Dalton Williford, 12th; Sam Billings, 11th; Stephen Wade, 12th; and Gabe LaBonia, 12th. (Not pictured, Azsha Treanor, 9th.)

FACS has long supported St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. For many years, our students have participated in the elementary Math-a-thon program to help St. Jude's find cures and save lives. So this fall, when our football team led the way for FACS to become one of the first schools to partner with St. Jude's in a new secondary school program, "Rally Against Childhood Cancer," our students jumped in with both feet.

Dean of Students Don Purvis selected a cross-section of students from various athletic teams and student groups, inviting them to serve on the Executive Board for Rally. That group initiated and coordinated several fundraising events, including T-shirt sales, face-painting, a dunk tank, a school-wide coin collection, a car smash, and a direct-mail campaign.

Countless hours of hard work culminated in a "rally game" against ECS on October 16, at which junior high football students and coaches collected donations and St. Jude's tested a new text-donation function. During the game, FACS players wore specially-designed jerseys that were later sold, with profits donated to St. Jude's.

In addition to Rally Week, several members of our high school football team volunteered time this past summer to assist St. Jude's marketing department with the St. Jude's Dream Home Giveaway. And all varsity players age 16 and older toured St. Jude's and visited with patients at Target House, the hospital's long-term residential center for families with children who are undergoing treatment.



Alicia Scarborough led the faculty charge against cancer during the car smash.



Students were exultant after demolishing a car that was painted with the names of childhood cancers. No one was more enthused than Alex D'Oto, front right, who took the lead in organizing the smash.

Since most of the materials used during Rally Week were donated, the fundraiser was conducted at about a 99% return rate. That is, 99% of funds donated went directly to St. Jude's with 1% covering supplies. The jerseys, which were manufactured by Nike, were the one exception; only a portion of the purchase price went to St. Jude's.

A total amount for the Rally programs is not yet available, as the direct mail campaign will not be closed out until the end of the year. However, the students are on track to exceed their goal of \$20,000.



Azsha Treanor mans T-shirt sales during the rally game against ECS. Students worked tables during lunch at school for two weeks and sold hundreds of shirts.



After being dunked, coaches Don Purvis, D. Wilkes and Greg Williford, shiver and grin.



Varsity Football Coach Don Purvis is dunked by fifth-grader Jonathan Wade, who has a wicked left-handed fast-ball.



Samantha Choukalas paints a face for Brittany Ward, a fourth-grader at Lucy Elementary, during the Cordova Fest in October.



The St. Jude logo looked beautiful stitched on custom-designed rally jerseys.



Austin Ehrat assisted during the summer with marketing the St. Jude's Dream Home. Here he is pictured in the home's back yard.



Mike Bryant, 11th, helps Target House patients with a craft project.



Jordan Dowdy collects coins in the morning drop-off line during Rally Week.



About 200 FACS students sent some 2,500 letters out during the direct mail campaign.



Gage Evans, 8th, concentrates on addressing letters to friends and relatives.

Fans dialed 90999 to text the word "HOPE" to make \$5 donations during the Rally game. Those donations were credited to St. Jude's and accounted as part of the FACS fundraising event.

