

Stony Brook youngsters turn lemonade into cash

The Spencer Lane Kids conclude second annual refreshment stand to benefit children's hospital

BY BARBARA DONLON

Life gave them lemons, and these kids turned them into more than \$1,000.

A group of proactive kids from Stony Brook raised \$1,010 late last month and donated the check to Stony Brook Children's Hospital on Friday, Sept. 12. The Spencer Lane Kids, as they call themselves, raised the money for the hospital on Aug. 26 with their second annual lemonade stand.

The whole idea started last year when Laura Mastriano's kids said they wanted to have a lemonade stand. The Stony Brook mother said she agreed to the plan as long as the kids donated the money to a worthy cause. They chose the children's hospital.

"We did it with everyone," Mastriano said. "Everyone on the block came together donating cups and lemonade."

Last year, the Spencer Lane Kids' lemonade stand raised \$640 and their goal for this year was to raise even more. Mastriano said the kids made signs to hang up all over the neighborhood and

along Nicolls Road and even used Facebook to help spread the word.

"It's really the kids running it with the invisible parents supporting it," Mastriano said.

At Friday's celebration, the Spencer Lane Kids gathered in the lobby of Stony Brook University Hospital, eager to present the check to the children's hospital. Many of the kids said they felt good about themselves for helping kids in need.

"Everyone knows the saying — when life gives you lemons, make lemonade," Cassidy Oliver, 12 years old and a member of the group, said. "This time when we did, it helped make a difference."

Ellen Miller, associate director of operations for the children's hospital, joined Maureen Cole, deputy nursing assistant at Stony Brook University, to greet and thank the Spencer Lane Kids for their hard work.

"They did a great job," Cole said.

The money the kids raised will go toward supporting programs offered for

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Photo by Barbara Donlon

The Spencer Lane Kids show off the check with Ellen Miller, associate director of operations for the hospital, and Maureen Cole, deputy nursing assistant at Stony Brook University.

family and children in the children's hospital, Miller said.

Maddie Mastriano, 14, said she and her brother, Joseph, 10, came up with the idea because they noticed the children in the hospital are not granted a summer vacation in the same way they are. She said it was their way of giving back.

"We thought it would be nice to donate one day of our summer and help,"

she said.

With the check handed off and on its way to help the children in the hospital, the Spencer Lane Kids said they could not wait for next summer to keep the proud tradition alive. Next year, the kids said they plan to make a bigger and better lemonade stand with new features, including cotton candy and popcorn machines.