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## More blessed to give than receive

By David Alvey  
Mar 16, 2008

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Mackenzie Luce, Lee Nagel and Leslie Luce prepare goodie bags

"This was an easy way to remember that it isn't all about me," explained Mackenzie Luce of Plano, when asked why she chose to have her 14th birthday party at Richardson Regional Medical Center's Bush/Renner campus. "You don't have to be a certain age or have a lot of money to make a difference in other people's lives."

Rather than asking for birthday presents, Mackenzie asked her friends to donate books and movies for a Kids' Corner to be located in the new Richardson Regional Cancer Center, an affiliate of UT Southwestern Medical Center, currently under construction adjacent to the physician pavilion on the 20.5-acre site on the corner of the Bush Turnpike and Renner Road in Richardson.

Scheduled to open October 2008, the 50,000 square-foot cancer center will provide cancer patients with a complete array of

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diagnostic equipment, new drug therapies as part of clinical research programs and numerous treatment options. The Kids' Corner will be a refuge for children waiting while their adult family member is receiving cancer treatment. Mackenzie and her friends donated more than 100 books and movies for the Kids' Corner.

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"I lost my grandfather, Poppa Joe Luce, last year to cancer," Mackenzie continued. "Mrs. Nagel had been sick, and a first grader at our school (Conner Cruse) has been fighting this disease for a couple of years now...some friends' grandmothers have been battling the disease, and the list just kept growing. When Mrs. Nagel was talking about the Kids' Corner, I knew it was the perfect fit."

Instead of a big, lavish party, Mackenzie invited her friends to join her at the cancer center to stuff 12 dozen goodie bags with stickers and activity books for the Kids' Corner.

"The Kids' Corner will be a fun place where kids can wait while their parent, grandparent, or whoever is receiving treatment," explained Mackenzie's neighbor Lee Nagel, a three-year cancer survivor. Lee and her husband Steve are sponsoring the Kids' Corner in honor of Lee's parents Janet and Leland Fisher, who both died of cancer. "It's a way for us to honor their fights against this horrible disease. When I was battling my cancer, there were times our kids simply had to come with me when I went for radiation treatment. Unfortunately, there was nothing for them to do, and it was so hard to keep them occupied. The Kids' Corner will have a television and toys and the activity bags that Mackenzie and her friends put together."

Special guest Linda Armstrong Kelly, mother of seven-time Tour de France champion and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong, stopped by during the party to express her appreciation to Mackenzie and friends. The highlight of the day was when the kids wrote inspirational messages on the walls of a new radiation vault that's under construction at the cancer center.

Messages ranged from encouraging quotes and Bible verses to personal memorials of loved ones who have been lost to cancer. This is not the first selfless act for Mackenzie, an eighth grader at Prestonwood Christian Academy. For last year's birthday celebration, Mackenzie invited her friends to build teddy bears for U.S. troops. Then, they gave the stuffed bears to incoming troops at DFW International Airport. I'm quite sure this is not the last we will hear from Mackenzie Luce and friends.

Last fall, the Richardson Regional Medical Center Foundation launched the capital campaign, "Cancer Should Not Have the Last Word," with a goal to raise at least \$5 million in order to receive a \$4 million economic challenge grant from the City of Richardson. To date, the Foundation has raised nearly \$4 million of the campaign goal through donations from individuals and other foundations.

Richardson Regional Medical Center, a community-owned hospital, has offered compassionate medical, surgical and behavioral health services to the community for more than 25

years. The hospital was the first health care facility in the state to receive the Texas Award for Performance Excellence.

More information at [www.RichardsonRegional.com/Foundation](http://www.RichardsonRegional.com/Foundation) or 972-498-7678.



Writing notes of encouragement





**Assembling goodie bags**





**Mackenzie and friends**

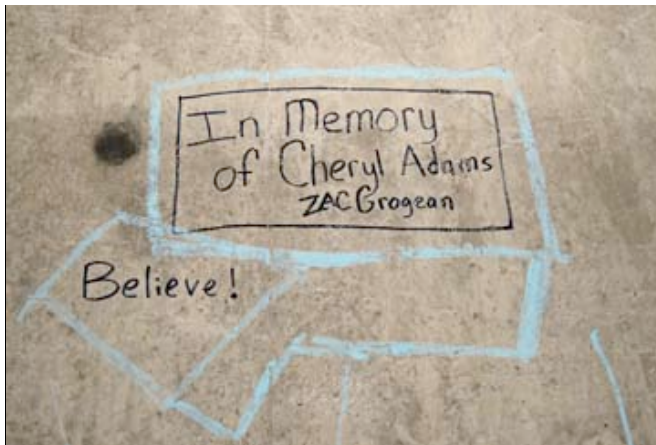


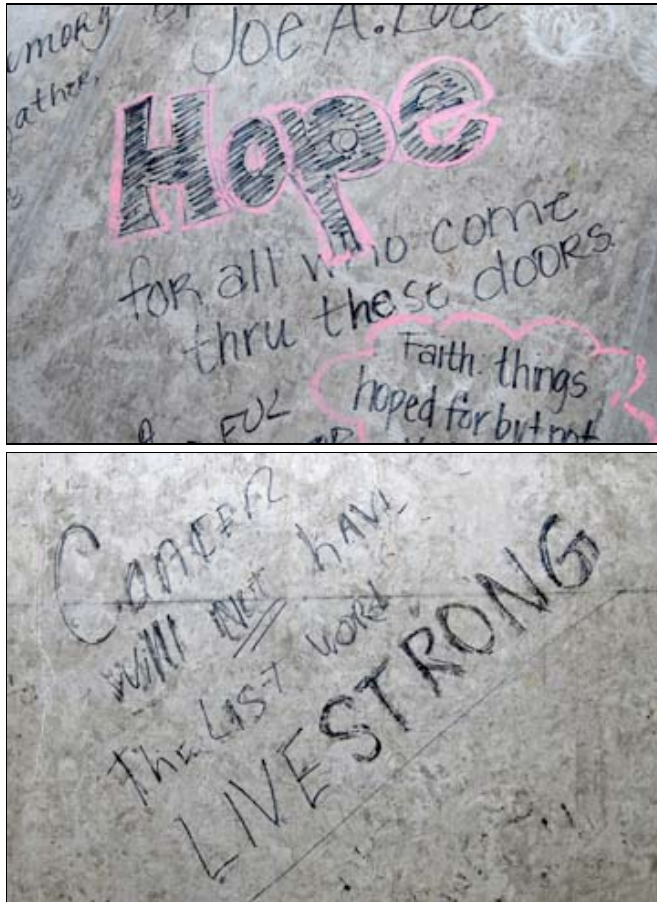
**Mackenzie (center) with Lee Nagel (L) and Linda Armstrong Kelly**











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