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Week of December 23, 2018

cont. from 5

CJHS student council adopts cancer research for service project

met and approved cancer research as one of their service projects for this school year.

"We started thinking of plans to make this a school-wide effort," Tracy said. The CJHS student council has committees for various projects, and one is now specifically tasked with spearheading fund-raising for cancer research throughout the entire school year.

"When we lost Alana [August 2018], I contacted her family to ask permission to use Alana as the face of the project," Frazier said. Weston's family granted permission, provided the funds raised for breast cancer research go directly to MetaVivor.org, a nonprofit organization of volunteers that gives 99 percent of funds raised to cancer research and to grants to meet the needs of cancer victims, such as helping pay for medical treatments, hotels and travel – whatever is needed to help.

The first part of the year, they raised funds for breast cancer research for MetaVivor.org, starting the project in October, which is breast cancer awareness month. Tracy plans to begin work on raising funds for the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, PanCan.org, in January. PanCan.org funds research, provides patient/caregiver support, conducts community outreach and advocates for increased federal research funding for those affected by pancreatic cancer.

The student council members sold pink paper light bulbs, using a quote on the bulbs from Weston's Facebook page, "Be the difference. Be the light." Weston had raised funds for MetaVivor.org with a t-shirt she designed, using that quote as inspiration.

"The kids put names on the light bulbs; some in memory of those who died from cancer," explained Frazier. As of the first of December, 2018, they had raised over \$450 from paper light bulb sales, "which is remarkable," Frazier said. "They [junior high school students] don't necessarily have their own money. They have to ask their parents and bring it. There's effort involved." There are only 800 students at CJHS.

"Katie [Tracy] has taken this [project] and run with it," Frazier said. "She has been amazing; she just handles

things," adding that Tracy organizes the group and keeps the project going.

Tracy is earnest and modest about her role in the project. "I really care about the student council and the cancer fund-raiser, so I try to do it the best that I can."

She took a leadership training course this summer at the University of Southern Mississippi and came home prepared to tackle the project.

When asked how she handles the task, she said: "It's my responsibility. I was elected to help this group achieve our goals, so we just do what we need to do to get it done."

Following the first paper light bulb fund-raiser at the school, student council members continued the theme of light with old-fashioned Christmas light bulbs in the Clinton Christmas parade. Students made large light bulbs out of foam board and wore them, sandwich-board style, for the parade.

"The front light bulb had kids' favorite quotes, and on the back was Alana's quote ['Be the difference. Be the light.'] with her initials on the bottom. Kids decorated them themselves," Frazier said. The message was displayed on the parade banner and carried in the parade: "It's a Wonderful Life. Help Save One."

The students attached peppermint candies to cards with MetaVivor.org's website on them and instructions on how to donate and passed out the candy at the parade.

In this spring semester, the student council will sell paper light bulbs to raise funds for pancreatic cancer research. "That was the one [cancer] she [Katie Tracy] wanted to focus on," Frazier said.

Frazier also downplays her role in the project, saying: "Without the kids, we couldn't have done anything." When asked about the extra effort and hours put in by sponsors and student council members, Frazier said: "I want to teach them [students] about service."

Tracy is also quick to give credit to others, asking *The Clinton Courier* to add "a big thank you to Mr. Wallace, teachers, the student council and everybody who has donated and helped with this whole project."



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