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## SWR Students - Thinking Global and Acting Local

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(Colette Grosso, [SWRWeekly.com](http://SWRWeekly.com)) There is so much going on in the world today. Turn on the news, and within five minutes one can easily become discouraged, disheartened and even outraged. Sometimes, we need only to look within ourselves to find the greater good and inspiration to keep us going. We can be inspired by looking no further than our students in the SWR community.

Our Middle School 8th Grade Girls Basketball Coach Allison Demarco wanted to stress the importance of being a leader not only on the court, but in the community as well. She encouraged the team to do something to benefit people outside of school, thinking perhaps a food or clothing drive. All she did was make the suggestion, and what snowballed from there was nothing short of amazing. Alexandria Morrell, one of the team's stars said "What about for Liam?" Truth is, she doesn't even know Liam McGuire personally, the Briarcliff Elementary student battling a form of Leukemia. Most of the 8th graders on the team do not know him personally either. But they know his plight, and wanted to do something to help a fellow student in need. "It was totally their idea, and they just picked it up and ran with it." said Coach Demarco

Within less than 2 weeks time, the team members of the 8th Grade Girls Middle School Basketball Team, along with the support of their parents put on the "Fight 4 Liam" fundraiser on Friday 3/18 at their game versus William Floyd at Albert Prodel. Coach DeMarco solicited the help of the team's parents, and everything took off from there. Alexandria Morrell's mother, Toni Jo helped to organize the fundraising efforts, assigning each parent a task: to help with flyers, balloons, donations for concessions and more. The girls themselves decided to each bring a toy to make gift baskets for Liam to bring to the hospital. They gathered enough items for 3 gift baskets, including a team autographed basketball and an orange SWR jersey that has McGuire with the number 1 on the back created by Toni Jo Morrell. "Our parent support was incredible. I could not have helped to facilitate this without all their efforts." said Coach Demarco.

To prepare for the event, the team came in before school and dedicated practice time to make posters & decorations for the Fight 4 Liam fundraiser. They encouraged everyone to wear orange, the dedicated ribbon color for Leukemia on the day of the event. All of the concessions that were to be sold at the event, were all donations from the team's families which included water bottles, juice boxes, and all kinds of candy & chips. Toni Jo Morrell said "People were coming out of the woodwork to help. The Cortez family donated t-shirts to sell, and they don't even have a girl on our team. It's amazing to experience how our community can pull together." The Fight 4 Liam basketball game event was publicized through notices from school, Facebook posts initiated by Alexandria Morrell and then relayed through the "Friends 4 Liam" and [SWRWeekly.com](http://SWRWeekly.com) Facebook pages, as well as word of mouth. Stacey Naso is one of the facilitators of "Friends 4 Liam," the organization leading the charge for fundraising for the McGuire family. The Morrell family are her neighbors, so they quickly got their efforts together to help with the Fight 4 Liam fundraiser.

The day of the event, there was a sea of orange at every turn. Faculty and students wore orange to school that day. Orange balloons were everywhere, from the middle school sign on Randall Road all the way into the gym. The entrance to the school and the gym were decorated with posters and banners created by the team. And according to Coach Demarco, the turnout was inspiring. This event raised \$2,719 with \$1,219 coming from donations, and \$1,500 from the sale of t-shirts, bracelets and snacks. A tremendous success and commendable effort by our 8th grade Girls Basketball Team.

Leading by example, their influence has trickled down to Miller Avenue Elementary School where several 4th graders took it upon themselves to make handcrafted string bracelets to raise money for Liam McGuire. Danielle Ohtman, Molly Seridock and Leah Udbahia independently started this venture. They asked their teacher, Mr. Frank Uchman to help. He, along with Mrs. Allison Gilmore are providing faculty advisement & supervision for the cause. "Danielle, Molly & Leah asked some of the 5th graders to help, which were kids in my class." said Mrs. Gilmore of how her involvement in the project began. "Now we have almost all of the 4th & 5th graders voluntarily helping sometimes



Miller Ave 4th and 5th graders



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before school and on their lunch period."

All of the materials to make the bracelets have been brought in by the 4th and 5th grade students entirely on their own. The various bracelet styles and varieties are all made with the creativity and care of the girls and boys who make craft them. At the lunch period held just yesterday, there were nearly 60 children who volunteered their recess to help raise money for Liam McGuire. Their sales, which just began at the Miller Avenue Science Fair on Wednesday 3/23, has raised \$195 thus far. They aspire to raise much more than that. Next week, they plan to provide the opportunity for all Miller Avenue students to purchase a bracelet if they wish.

*As parents, you hope to raise children who are smart, ambitious, giving and compassionate. You hope the values that are instilled at home, can grow even more while in school. These are just two stories that exemplify how this is happening; in our kids, in our community. We are hopeful that there are more stories like this one, going on now and happening in the future..to continue to inspire us all.*

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Matthew mcguire wrote on Mar 28, 2011 9:30 PM:

" Thank you. I cannot express in words how appreciative my family is for everything this team and the community has done for us. All the best . Matt "

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