

# People & Places

## Teen sells jewelry to help sick child

By Julie Levin  
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

They are different ages, live in different cities and go to different schools, but two South Florida girls now have a link neither will soon forget.

The two met recently when **Melissa Cohen**, 17, made a donation to help **Rachel Rothman**, 11, in her fight against cancer.

"She was kind of shy, but it was really nice," said Cohen, a junior at Cooper City High School. "My family had a chance to meet her family, and we talked for a while."

The donation took place recently at Broward General Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, where Rachel is receiving treatment for Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Cohen donated a check for \$300 to help with her family's expenses.

All money came from selling earrings and other jewelry Cohen purchased in Colombia and then resold to family and friends here for a profit.

It was a project she launched three years ago following her bat mitzvah.

"People I know think it is really nice and they always donate," Cohen said.

The donations were arranged by the Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit organization created by **Sandra Muvdi** in 2004 in memory of her 7-year-old daughter **Jessica June**, who died of leukemia.

The group provides financial assistance for low-income families with a child suffering from cancer.

"As a nonprofit organi-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Melissa Cohen, left, recently made a donation to help Rachel Rothman in her fight against cancer.

zation committed to helping families during times of crisis, the foundation is deeply moved by the generosity of Melissa Cohen and courage of Rachel Rothman," said **Jade Bunke**, a volunteer with the group.

Rachel's battle began in late January when doctors diagnosed the Westchester Elementary fifth-grader with cancer. She had to leave the Coral Springs school and is being home-schooled while undergoing five different cycles of chemotherapy for 21 days each time.

**Jill Rothman** said her daughter loved having the chance to meet and talk with Cohen.

"Hopefully they will have a special bond," she said.

Rachel is making a donation of her own. She is donating extra blood so researchers can study it and learn how to best

fight the cancer she has.

"It is our way of helping other people, or even herself down the road," Rothman said.

For now, the news on Rachel's battle is encouraging. One of her latest PET scans showed she was cancer-free, and she will continue her course of treatment for as long as doctors feel necessary.

Cohen and Rachel exchanged e-mails and plan on staying in touch. Rothman said she hopes both Rachel and younger sister **Lindsey** learned a valuable lesson.

"I hope that out of something so horrible, something positive will come back, and my daughters will learn to always find a way to give back," she said.

For more information about the Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation, visit [www.jjccf.org](http://www.jjccf.org) or call 954-593-5603.