

## On the Scene

# A journey of hope: Amanda Blake's fight against cancer

On August 6, The Wasie Foundation (TWF) and the Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation (JJCCF) held a fundraiser for Amanda Blake, a 15-year-old South Florida girl who suffers from osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. The goal of the event was to help the family pay for their household bills, since single dad David Blake left his job in order to care for his daughter. The community, including Broward Sheriff Al Lamberti,

rallied behind the Blake's to raise funds in excess of \$13,500.

"When we decided to hold the event, our original fundraising goal was \$5,000," said Gregg Sjoquist, CEO of The Wasie Foundation, an organization that provides grants to South Florida nonprofits focused on healthcare and education. "We were truly amazed how the community came together to help out one of their own."

Thus far, a portion of the money raised has been used to

cover the Blake's rent and all their utilities for the month of August and September. Without the fundraiser, the Blakes would have faced having their electricity and phone shut off and eviction. Although the fundraiser brought some much needed relief to the family, that same week, Amanda received some additional bad news: the cancer had spread and now she was also faced with eight tumors on her right lung and four tumors on her left. Originally, the doctors at Miami Children's

Hospital had told David Blake that because the cancer had spread, Amanda was terminal.

Once again, TWF and JJCCF sprang into action and found the most recognized doctor in osteosarcoma research, Dr. Pete Anderson of M.D. Anderson Children's Hospital in Houston, Texas. So with the Blake's basic household necessities paid for, the additional funds took Amanda and her dad to Houston for a second opinion. Jen Klaassens of TWF accompanied

them on their trip to lend support. The journey to Houston proved to give Amanda a glimmer of encouraging news. The doctors developed a new treatment plan where she will receive weekly outpatient chemotherapy. Later this fall, her lungs will be scanned to determine a date for surgery to remove the additional tumors. After surgery, Amanda will continue to take chemotherapy orally for one year and receive chest scans every two months for

the next two years.

Amanda has a long battle ahead, but her future looks promising and she is filled with optimism. When told by her father that the reason they were in Houston was because she was labeled terminal, Amanda said, "Dad, I am not going anywhere. We need to go back to school shopping!" On August 24, after stocking up on school supplies, Amanda joined her classmates at Coral Springs High School for her sophomore year. ■



Amanda Blake



The Blakes with Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation Sandra Mudvi (second from the left)



Jen Klaassens, The Wasie Foundation, left; with Amanda Blake

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