

Kidz in Lids eases the financial burden of pediatric cancer treatment

Paige Melick hasn't let her age hold her back in making a difference for families in need.

Paige, age 12, is in sixth grade at Campobello-Gramling School in Campobello. She founded a fundraising program, Kidz in Lids, that directly benefits families of children who have cancer, and she is advocating to expand it as much as possible.

Chris Worthy
Kids Doing Good

Kim Melick, Paige's mother, is the Operations Manager for Children's Cancer Partners of the Carolinas, a nonprofit organization that serves families who have a child with cancer. The organization helps ease the financial burdens that can accompany travel to the limited number of places that offer pediatric cancer care. Currently, the organization is helping 600 children.

"Children's Cancer Partners helps families that have a child with cancer in North Carolina and South Carolina," Kim Melick said. "We help with food, lodging and transportation around the child's treatment. We started in Spartanburg County and have grown to all of South Carolina and North Carolina in three years. Paige was in fourth grade when I started and she's been around in the summer and at events."

Her mother's work hit home when Paige lost a friend to cancer. Paige said the loss inspired her to try to find a way to help. She spoke with CCP's Executive Director Laura Allen – without her mother's help – and then approached her school principal, Jeremy Darby. Out of those meetings, Kidz in Lids was born. The fundraiser gives participants a little break from the school dress code and raises money for CCP so more families can be served.

"A kid has to bring in \$1 to wear a hat and a teacher has to bring in \$5 to wear jeans," Paige said.

The first day the program was held at Paige's school, it raised \$1,300 for CCP.



Paige Melick, 12, founded a fundraising program, Kidz in Lids, that directly benefits families of children who have cancer. NATHAN GRAY/UPSTATE PARENT

Paige then met with the district superintendent, who brought all district schools on board. Next, she spoke at a meeting of all Spartanburg County school superintendents.

"All of Spartanburg schools are doing it now," Paige said. "I want all schools in North Carolina and South Carolina to do it."

Kim Melick said no family thinks they will be touched by pediatric cancer until it happens. Costs for gas, air travel to distant cancer centers, food, hotels and more can take a heavy toll on families.

"Everything can change overnight," she

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Bring Kidz in Lids to your child's school

Learn more at www.childrenscancerpartners.org/kidz-in-lids.

said.

For Paige, each dollar raised is a tribute. "This is a heartfelt thing," Kim Melick said. "She was inspired by a friend."