



MARY JO BROWN FOUNDATION

- Spreading Smiles Through Acts of Kindness -

Newsletter - Luau 2016

MaryJoBrown.org

Kindness Campaign Finalists

Aloha!!! October 16th we held our 5th Annual Indoor Luau—our most successful since 2012. I don't have DJ Deja here for a drum-roll but, are you ready???

We raised over \$12,000!!!

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

To the volunteers and donors without whose help we would never have been so successful:

Denise DJ Deja LaCarubba Wendt—best emcee and deejay evah!!

Tom Brown—the delicious buffet was enjoyed by all (and we NEVER run out of food).

Terri DiOrio for the coffee station set up.

Vicky Kluse of Bova's Bakery and Zina Pantalone—your desserts were the perfect ending.

John Lynch, Karen Marshall, and Kelly Pagliuca—thank you for serving our guests.

Dottie Bagley and Chris Bingham of Saugus Elks Lodge—your help with everything from the minute we landed to the minute the lights went out is greatly appreciated.

Danielle Gregoire—thank you for making sure we got some GREAT photos, especially of our Kindness Campaign finalists.

Ken Bosse—thank you for serving food, setting up and adding the touches that only a chef and former restaurateur would think of.

Thalia Holmes and Bob DiOrio—thanks for filling in at the Reception desk!!

Cheri Watson—for greeting people at the Reception desk, setting up, taking pictures for us and for providing the personalized books for our Kindness Campaign winners: thank you for your generosity.

Fundraising Committee members—Alia Fadili and Karen Marshall—thanks for assisting the Board in gathering some fantastic items for the Silent Auction.

THANK YOU to the following New Vendors and Personal Contributors to our Silent Auction and Raffle:

AM Cleaning Services, Blue Man Group, Caryn's Sports Bar & Restaurant, Custom Cornhole Boards by Mark Bonica, Dave & Busters Braintree, Dave Hoyt, Donny Young, Essex River Cruises, Feng's Asian Cuisine, Gaslight Lynnfield, Karen Marshall, Kathy Macchiarola, King's Bowl, Kowloon Restaurant, Muse Paintbar, New England Patriots Charitable Foundation, RN Esthetics & Laser Co., Shea's Riverside Restaurant and Bar, Strega Prime, Turner's Seafood, Walt Disney World.

This year's Silent Auction was one of our best—and a lot of awesome items were purchased. Thanks to all of you who bid generously and helped make this portion of our fundraiser so very successful.

Links to businesses may be found at <http://www.maryjobrown.org/sponsors>

HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY-OUR 2016 KINDNESS CAMPAIGN FINALISTS



Back row: Jack Jagers of Melrose, Liliana Ravins of Melrose, Joshua Martinez of Georgetown

Front row: Shiloh Ellis of Groveland, Kylie Plowman of Wilmington, Isabella Fay of Melrose

Read on for their stories...

Kylie Plowman is a 4th grade student at the West Intermediate School in Wilmington. Last December she wrote to Santa asking for \$600 to purchase toys for children who were ill or who for some reason might not get toys for Christmas. A crowdfunding page started by Kylie and mom, Melissa, quickly grew to almost \$5000. Kylie's Gift of Giving donated \$2300 to Boston Children's Hospital and \$2300 to the Wilmington Fire Department Toy Drive. Tara Tonello at Children's Hospital recalled the day she spent with the Plowman Family as one of her favorite days last year. Jay Kennedy of Wilmington Fire told us how much her donation helped to update the older toys that they had for distribution. This was not Kylie's first fundraising effort. In 2014 she had a Kool-Aid stand to raise money for the Wilmington Food Bank. Her younger sister, Natalie, has a great role model. We hear that Kylie is already planning something for the upcoming holiday season. Thank you Kylie for all you do to make the world a better place.

Shiloh Ellis, a resident of Groveland, is a 5th grade student at the Sacred Heart School in Bradford. Don't be fooled by his size—Shiloh is a CrossFit gym enthusiast, Olympic weight lifter, and a king-size fundraiser nominated by Amie Owens. Amie is the founder of Kettlebells4Kids (K4K), a non-profit organization. Shiloh became involved with K4K in spring 2015 after attending a CrossFit event where he learned that the average age of a homeless person in the U.S. is 9—his exact age at the time. K4K raises awareness of this issue and provides much needed activities and support to children living in shelters. He raised \$6500 in 2015 and has traveled throughout the northeast and south spreading awareness and support. He established Team Dream Big with other youth at Cross Fit gyms across the country with a goal of \$10,000 for 2016. To quote Amie, "we are truly blessed to have met the Ellis family". The Mary Jo Brown Foundation is as well. Shiloh has the determination, poise and demeanor to succeed in this endeavor and we are sure that would translate to anything else he looks to accomplish. Thank you, Shiloh, for your dedication to making life better for other children.

Isabella Fay is a 6th grade student at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. Last year as a 5th grader at Hoover Elementary School, Bella had a current events story assignment. She chose to write about Malala Yousafzai, Nobel peace prize winner, who was shot by ISIS when she was 15 for the crime of being a female wanting an education. Inspired after watching a documentary about Malala, Bella not only wrote about her, but established a crowdfunding page to raise money to support Malala's mission of ensuring an education to all young women around the world. This was not Bella's first foray into fundraising. In 2012 she raised money for her mom's trip to Haiti with Habitat for Humanity; and in 2015-in lieu of birthday presents-raised \$500 for her uncle's trip to Paraguay with Habitat. Her younger brother Noah has helped her and contributed from his own savings bank to her fundraising efforts. Also, while at the Hoover School, Bella chose to forego recess so that she could spend time helping a young kindergarten student who had trouble with concentration skills and adjusting to school life. Her parents found out about this when they received a thank you from the young boy's mom. Bella made a positive difference in this boy's life as well as that of his family. Thank you Bella for truly spreading smiles through acts of kindness.

Jack Jagers is also a student at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. Jack is a true example of paying it forward. As an infant, Jack had multiple surgeries at The Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center in Boston. Although he had no memory of this, throughout his life Jack's parents, Amanda and Jack, told him numerous stories of his hospitalizations, the great care he got from the physicians and staff at Floating and how grateful they were for his positive outcome. Then in 2015, Jack had to be admitted to Floating for a brief time as a follow up to his earlier surgeries. Now a teenager, he witnessed first-hand what his parents had been telling him. Once discharged, he and his mom brainstormed what they could do to make a difference in the lives of other pediatric patients. They started a community-wide blanket and quilt drive, engaging multiple groups throughout Melrose to make quilts and blankets to be given to children in need when admitted to Floating Hospital. Although the children receiving these beautiful home-made gifts might never meet Jack, they will be comforted because of his kindness. Thank you Jack for this—no one knows better the fears and anxiety of being a sick child than one who has experienced it.

Liliana Ravins is a student at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School as well. In 2015, as a 5th grader at the Hoover Elementary School, Lili spearheaded a drive throughout the city of Melrose to collect socks. She became an ambassador for the Sock-it-to-Em campaign: the first in Massachusetts and 2nd youngest in the country. Flyers went in the backpacks of every student at the Hoover seeking donations, a collection box was set up on the porch of the Ravins' home and at Ernie's Lunch, a popular local diner. Lili and her mom, Alison, expected to collect a couple of hundred pairs of socks—within a month they had surpassed the 600 mark. 400 plus pair were donated to Hallmark Health who will distribute them in toiletry bags in their emergency departments, Community Outreach and Social work departments. The remaining pairs were donated to the Lifebridge Shelter in Salem. Both Hallmark and Lifebridge made sure they reached the feet of people in need. This year, Lili has plans of expanding her horizons, hoping to involve all of the elementary schools in Melrose in the collection process to gather 1,500 pairs. We have no doubt that she will succeed in this and anything else she chooses to do. Thank you Lili for your determination to help others.

Joshua Martinez is a student at Georgetown High School. While he has lived throughout the East Coast in his young life, the one thing that has been constant in his life is his compassion for others. As a young Boy Scout in New York, Joshua made it a point to help the elderly and was a fixture at Sunday mass helping others. While living in Florida, Joshua received a Kindness award from St Jude's Catholic School for collecting Christmas presents for poor and underprivileged children. He has a history of volunteering, joining the Beyond Sunday mission to help people in need in Mexico, Maine. He has also participated in the ROTC Junior Program and has expressed the desire to serve his country in the near future. The young man we met on Sunday is a well-spoken, mild-mannered, compassionate person who, we know, will succeed in his goals. Thank you Joshua for all you have done so far and will continue to do to improve the lives of others.

All of the finalists received a framed certificate from the Mary Jo Brown Foundation, a personalized book from I See Me book publishers, and a Visa gift card.

THEN it was time to announce the winner of the 2016 Spreading Smiles Award and a trip for 4 to Disney World...



ISABELLA FAY!!

Each and every one of these children is our hero—a shining example of what is right in the world—a perfect representative of what our Kindness Campaign is about—and a true ambassador of our tagline “Spreading Smiles Through Acts of Kindness”. We are grateful to them, to their parents, their families and to the people who submitted their nominations.

If you know of a worthy candidate for the 2017 Kindness Campaign please do not hesitate to fill out a nomination form on our website—or just email Christina@maryjobrown.org or Sharon@maryjobrown.org with the particulars.

Now it is time for me to wrap things up and get ready for our annual board meeting on 10/30, followed by our Veterans Day shipment of care packages in support of our troops, our holiday shopping for the families we are adopting this Christmas season, and our wrap-a-palooza where we will get everything ready for our alter-ego “elves” to deliver!!

Stay happy—stay healthy—and, as always,

May all your dreams come true!!