

Fighting MS

The one thing that connects these boys is their efforts to raise money to help battle multiple sclerosis.



DOMINIQUE RILEY/FOR THE SUN POST NEWS

LOCAL STUDENTS (from left to right), Alex Maxwell, Kory Kiraly, Evan Realmuto, Kristian Kiraly and Brandon Realmuto created a Web site to help raise money for MS.

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By RACHEL OLSEN

Abbey Jensen and five boys at N-GENioUS Academy are not connected, except for the fact that their individual efforts raised money for multiple sclerosis.

Jensen, who lives part-time in San Clemente, wanted to help with awareness of the cause after discovering a friend's wife died from multiple sclerosis. The boys at N-GENioUS Academy, all from San Clemente, started with their fundraising as part of the academy's curriculum.

Kristian Kiraly, 14, one of the boys from N-GENioUS Academy, said although the charity started as a class project, he was amazed to see how big it got.

"I don't think I realized the magnitude at first . . . (now) it's just the feeling of being able to help in some way – you almost have a ton of power, in a way," Kiraly said.

The five students at N-GENioUS designed a Web page and ran the fundraising efforts of a bike rider who went across the United States raising money for multiple sclerosis. With the rider retuning next week, the boys' efforts are coming to a close. David Ware, co-owner of N-GENioUS, said he still wasn't sure on the amount of money raised by the kids so far.

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KRISTIAN KIRALY

Jensen, who turns 9 today, sold Hope wristbands to her schoolmates at Hankey Elementary School in Mission Viejo. Although the final tally of Jensen's sales hadn't been calculated, Jensen said she sold more than 60 on her very first day.

Kristy Jensen, Abbey's step-mom, said the kid-sized wristbands sold quickly because kids, much like her step-daughter, love the bracelets that come in their size.

Doing the project without any class credit or outside influence was a good experience for Abbey Jensen. "She's a pretty thoughtful (girl)," Kristy Jensen said.

Abbey Jensen expressed her amazement at the number of teachers and friends who had multiple sclerosis affect their lives in some way.

"It was easy to do because (I) like helping other people," Abbey Jensen said. "Other people and parents all over the country can do the same thing."

Brandon Realmuto, 13, felt the same way about the N-GENioUS project - that the money raised was something good for the community and an inspiration to other teenagers' efforts.

At the end of April, Kiraly, Realmuto, Alex Maxwell, 13, Evan Realmuto, 12, and Kory Kiraly, 13, started to put together the Web site as a way to learn academics and get involved in the community, Ware said.

"It was really incredible (to get) e-mails from people all over the country. And this is a good thing you're doing, so it make all of us feel really good," Maxwell said.

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Check out N-GENioUS' fundraising at www.n-genious.com/stopms