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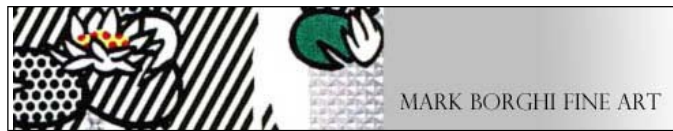
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Roar for a Cure for Katy Stewart

By Kate Maier

(Aug. 18, 2010) A fund-raiser at East Hampton Indoor Tennis on Saturday is to honor Katy Stewart, an 11-year-old cancer patient from North Haven, who will be celebrating at the second Roar for a Cure Family Day Carnival, with games, prizes, face painting, balloon artists, a climbing wall, celebrity guests, and a musical performance by Burnham, a teen pop band.



Kate Maier

This is the second year that a 15-percent portion of the event's proceeds are to benefit the Katy's Courage Fund, to help defray the costs of her treatment, but the first year that she will be

feeling well enough to participate in the fun. In the midst of a round of chemotherapy last summer, she attended the carnival in a wheelchair.

Like most kids with cancer, Katy is wise beyond her years. The talkative little girl is sporting a pixie haircut these days, and when questioned about her surgery, she shows off her scar, which is beginning to fade.

"I've been feeling a lot better, but I'm not quite all better yet," she said, before offering a few words of advice to other kids who find themselves in ordeals similar to hers.

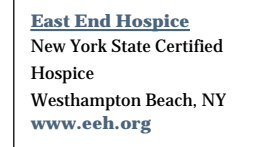
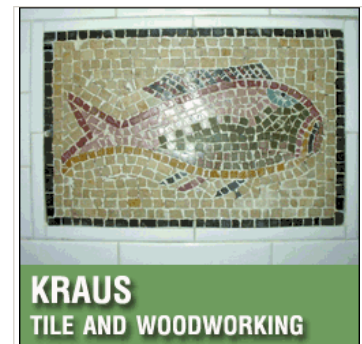
"I know it seems scary, but you'll get through it. It's not the best thing you can go through, but there's a lot of good things that can come out of it."

On Saturday, Katy is looking forward to meeting up with an old friend, a former roommate at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. "Hailey Tyrell -- she's coming and I'm very excited," said Katy after returning from an afternoon of horseback riding on Tuesday. "I haven't seen her for a while. She got her leg amputated, and I saw some picture on her blog. I'm going to see her new leg, which is really cool," she said of her friend's prosthesis.

Katy has been having a banner summer, and horseback riding seems to be the focal point. She led a tour of her room, where a three new ribbons won in a horse show on Sunday are hung proudly beside a few she picked up in kindergarten.

Back then, she was thrown from a horse and was scared away from the sport for a time. But her bravery has grown by leaps and bounds and during the last round of treatments. In June, she told her parents she'd like to give riding another go. She has plans to ride in the Hampton Classic and has been traveling regularly to Manorville, where she's been riding a pony named Footloose.

Katy is the daughter of Jim Stewart, a coach and health teacher at East Hampton High School, and Brigid Collins, an assistant principal at the Montauk School.



Between that and her connections to Sag Harbor's Pierson Middle School, where she is looking forward to attending sixth grade in September, she is probably one of the most well-known kids on the South Fork. Dozens of benefits and fundraisers have been held in her honor, and family and friends have visited her Web page, a journal kept by her mom at caringbridge.org, more than 67,000 times.

Journal entries have been few lately, as Katy's treatments have been less frequent, and the family continues to enjoy the summer. Last month, they took a long trip to Colorado and Wyoming, where Katy and her brother Robert saw Rocky Mountain National Park and went to a rodeo. One of her doctors had suggested the trip, in the hope that the high altitude would be good for her.

Katy was diagnosed with hepatoblastoma, a rare form of liver cancer that typically affects infants, in April 2009. "The numbers are something like one out of a million," said Mr. Stewart. "It's rare, so it's not like there's a plethora of information on what will work. It's not like leukemia or other things, certainly not like breast cancer."

Katy's team of doctors is searching for a research study that she might be eligible for, but so far hasn't found one, so she is taking a break from treatments this summer. Her family has been focusing on healing prayers and holistic health foods - Mr. Stewart has become good friends with his Jack LaLanne juicer, which Robert described in detail as he zoomed around the living room on Tuesday.

Twice, they have traveled to Lithuania, where Katy received a round of energizing treatments to boost her immune system. "I think when you have a child with cancer you search the Internet for every possible angle," said Mr. Stewart. "There is always the possibility that something may come up."

"What we're trying to do is have her do whatever makes her happy and have fun," said Katy's father. Last year at the carnival, "she was in a wheelchair and it was tough on her physically. This year, she's going to be up and running around. It will be a good day for her."

One of Mr. Stewart's closest friends in the past year has been David Plotkin, a part-time Amagansett resident whose 7-year-old son, Max, is a survivor of brain cancer. The Plotkin family have bonded with the Stewarts, offering them a place to stay when they travel to the city for treatments and whatever advice they can offer.

"I e-mail him and text him as often as anyone," said Mr. Stewart of Mr. Plotkin.

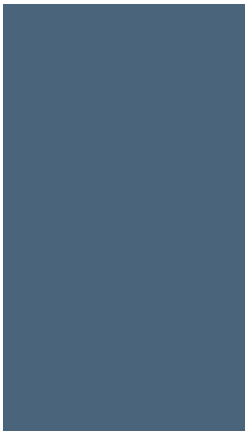
A Wall Street executive with the financial means to make things happen, Mr. Plotkin has immersed himself in fundraising for cancer research through the Max Cure Foundation, a charity he set up in his son's honor. Of the carnival proceeds, 70 percent will be designated to research programs at Memorial Sloan-Kettering, and another 15 percent is to fund Dr. Oren Becher's Pediatric Brain Tumor Research Fund there.

Research studies like the ones Mr. Plotkin is helping to fund are what the Stewarts are banking on. "We're always hopeful there will be another possibility, that's what the trials are for. We're waiting, but we're doing things, trying everything we can," said Mr. Stewart.

Both Katy and Max will be at the carnival on Saturday, between 2 and 6 p.m., with a rain date of Sunday. Tickets cost \$100 for adults, \$25 for kids under 18, or \$200 for a family four-pack. They can be purchased on the Web at maxcurefoundation.org, where donations in any amount are also accepted via credit card.



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