

# Spotlight

MARCH 17, 2010

MAIN LINE SUBURBAN LIFE

## A mess of fun



Student Finn Monahan (far left) of Wayne hurls a paper plate of whipped cream smack into the face of Marty Schweiter (left), a school coach during Saturday's charity Dance-A-Thon. Above right, Erica Martin gets a joyful face full of ice cream during the Ice Cream-Eating Contest.



### 5th Annual Miriam Quigley Dance-A-Thon raises funds for pediatric-cancer research

Volunteers at St. Katharine of Siena Parish and School in Wayne are probably out shopping for more napkins.

On Saturday supplies dwindled as children stuck their faces into bowls of vanilla ice cream and threw paper plates of whipped cream at their teachers, coaches and even the principal.

And the kids didn't even get yelled at.

In fact it was all in messy but good fun to raise money for pediatric brain-cancer research at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

The 5th Annual Miriam Quigley Dance-A-Thon was started by Miriam's parents, Bill and Helena Quigley of Wayne.

Miriam died in October 2005 at age 5 after having brain cancer for three years.

During Miriam's treatments for cancer, St. Katharine's rallied around the couple and their cherubic-cheeked child, who loved animals and wearing jewelry. She was treated at CHOP.

After her passing, the family started the Miriam's Kids Research Foundation to raise funds for research in her memory.

The foundation's annual Dance-A-Thon and other fund-raisers such as an annual social event at St. Davids Golf Club have raised nearly \$500,000 over the past four years. Helena said during an interview this

week that when tallied more than \$50,000 is expected to be raised from Saturday's event, which packed the gym with families.

"We are just so thrilled to have everybody come out this year because of the weather," she said.

She attributes the foundation's success to the community's warm response to Miriam's story.

"Who doesn't want to help sick children?" she said, explaining that the foundation puts a face on the need to raise funds for brain-tumor research and motivates youngsters to reach out to children with cancer.

Saturday's Dance-A-Thon included the efforts of more than 50 volunteers who decorated the gym with images of Miriam. The party atmosphere included Chio from Wired 96.5's "Morning Show" spinning dance hits, the Eagles mascot, Swoop, the Eagles cheerleaders, fingerprinting by Upper Merion police officers, a silent auction, raffles and plenty of refreshments donated by local vendors. Activities included children writing get-well cards to sick children staying at CHOP.

For more information on how to contribute to Miriam's Kids Research Foundation visit [www.miriamskids.com](http://www.miriamskids.com).



Miriam Quigley (2000-2005)



Dancing to Lady GaGa's "Poker Face" during the 5th Annual Miriam Quigley Dance-A-Thon are, from left, Lexi Shreiner of Wayne, Grace Maguire of Wayne and Maggy Wichser of Berwyn.



Above: Meg Devine and Erica Martin, both of Wayne, get chin-deep in ice cream during the Ice Cream-Eating Contest. Below: Helena S. Quigley, mother of the late Miriam Quigley, holds buckets of names to be drawn for those who get to throw whipped-cream pies at the school staff.



Story and photos by Ryan Richards



At left: "Miriam's Kids" chocolate bars are among the items for sale to raise funds. Upper left: Children roll out a carpet-sized roll of bubble wrap for an ear-popping dance. Upper right: Brian Long, 10, of Wayne wraps his friend, Willem McGee, 11, of Villanova with toilet paper during the Mummy Wrap Contest. At right: Ali Fleming of Radnor gets help from her mom, Suzanne, with writing her get-well card to a child staying at CHOP.

