

Teens Start Dollar Campaign

Seri Roth and Arielle Joselson launched an organization to help raise money that funds pediatric cancer research. They started one dollar at a time, and it all adds up.



Arielle Joselson and Seri Roth work on the website for A Dollar Campaign, an organization they started as freshmen in high school.

Photo by Gabi Schiller

by *Lisa Iannucci*
Contributor

Each year, more than 12,000 infants and children are diagnosed with cancer. Teenagers Seri Roth and Arielle Joselson are on a mission to change that statistic. When Roth and Joselson were 14 years old, they should have been, according to teen stereotypes, talking on the phone about boys and dating, hanging out on Facebook and worrying about homework and what movie they would see that weekend. Not these girls. Both new to the school, they bonded instantly and became best friends, but instead of talking about shopping and makeup, they were talking about what they could do to help raise money to find a cure for pediatric cancer.

“Arielle and I instantly became the best of friends,” 16-year-old Seri says. “We started talking and soon realized that we both shared the common interest of helping people with cancer. We decided that we wanted to create a charity that would make it easy for kids to donate to. We also want to send the message of how far one dollar can go, and that every dollar

counts. If every person in the world donated just one dollar, imagine how much money we would raise to fund pediatric cancer research.”

The philanthropists co-founded A Dollar Campaign, an organization that encourages kids to give “one dollar at a time.” “We participated in different fairs around New York and got the word out.

Now we’re also on Instagram and Facebook,” Arielle says. “We are working on our nonprofit status, but in the meantime we are being supervised by the Pediatric Cancer Foundation.”

Founded in 1970, the Pediatric Cancer Foundation is a nonprofit charity that raises money for research, state-of-the-art equipment and instruments, and parent/patient care for world-renowned doctors at the hospitals they support. These are the same hospitals that now benefit from A Dollar Campaign: New York-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital; Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; Stephen D. Hassenfeld Children’s Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at NYU Langone Medical Center; North Shore LIJ - Steven and Alexandra Cohen Children’s Medical Center of NY; and the Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital at Westchester Medical Center.

Arielle’s first exposure to pediatric cancer was when she attended the Foun-

dition's annual walkathon in New York City. At that time, Arielle was not quite nine months old. Since then, she has had many years of involvement in the tragic world of pediatric cancer.

"I grew up around kids with cancer, and I got to know them and wanted to do something to help," says Arielle, now 16. "What better way to take initiative and create this charity?"

It seems that starting the organization was the easy part. "We had to learn how to juggle school, our personal lives and homework every day before we can work on charity business, but it is all worth it," says Seri, who has ventured into philanthropy before.

"My whole life, I have always been big on giving back to my community," she says. "Besides A Dollar Campaign, we also created a club at school called Step Up. Every month, the club chooses a different cause and raises money for that cause. For example, when the tragedy at Sandy Hook happened, we had our club write cards to the school. Four days later, we hand-delivered the cards."

This year, they created a flea market and hosted a booth at the Hoboken Fair, selling handcrafted jewelry, antiques and designer jewelry. In June, they hosted a fundraiser at Imagine Candy, in Scarsdale, that included taste testings, face painting, raffles and more. To date, the organization has raised \$10,000 and now coordinates a team of 30 volunteers.

"We would love to create a chain reaction of giving. No matter what age, no matter what the circumstances, everyone can make a difference," says Arielle.

For more information on A Dollar Campaign, visit adollarcampaign.org or email info@adollarcampaign.org.



Every dollar adds up, and Arielle and Seri hope that those who are interested in donating realize the same thing. The money they raise goes toward eliminating pediatric cancer.

Photo by Gabi Schiller

1970

The Pediatric Cancer Foundation was founded in 1970 by grateful parents whose son underwent surgery at Babies Hospital, New York Presbyterian.

The Pediatric Cancer Foundation, "holds the hands of children and their families with the hope that our efforts will help eradicate the number one non-accidental killer of children. We started as a grassroots, down-home organization that started by doing its own licking and stamping on the dining room tables of its members. Today we have grown into our own and now support five major hospitals in the tri-state area."

THE STATISTICS TEENS & VOLUNTEERING

DoSomething.org polled more than 4,300 young people across the country to see what caused them to take action. According to the survey, having friends that volunteer regularly is the primary factor influencing a teen's volunteering habits. Some 40 percent of young people who volunteered in 2011 did it with clubs, friends, family, or on their own. They didn't go through a traditional "organization." Teens want volunteering to feel like a party – activities should be social; more than 70 percent of young people with friends who regularly volunteer also volunteer. Lack of time is the number-one reason teens give for not volunteering. —*Lisa Iannucci*

Tell us what you

THINK @ hibumagazine.com/survey



Arielle Joselson and Seri Roth are two teenagers who work hard at making a difference.

Photo by Gabi Schiller