

Haverford lights up green for cancer

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A home on Roosevelt Avenue in Manoa is lit up in support of students battling cancer.

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HVERFORD — If you're driving around Havertown and wonder what's up with all those green lights? The lights are to show support to some Haverford High School students and others who are fighting cancer.

Lori Rufo, whose daughter is friends with Lily Walker, a freshman at Haverford High School who was diagnosed with a brain tumor last March, said girls who are friends with Lily and another group of kids who are friends with Hannah Hermansen, a junior, who is being treated for lymphoma, teamed up to ask people to display green lights to show their support, said Rufo.

“It started with a bunch of girls who chipped in to show their friends they support them and love them while they are struggling with cancer,” said Rufo.



Homes on Robinson Avenue are lit up in support of students battling cancer.

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Rufo also started a Facebook page, Light Up Green for Hannah, Lily, Jack and Anyone Else Fighting Cancer. She put the page up at 10:30 p.m. on Jan. 19 and by 10:45 there were a few hundred followers. As of this writing there were more than 2,000 people who had liked the page. “I was quite surprised to say the least,” said Rufo.

Lily’s mother, Megan Walker, posted that she drove Lily around town to show her all the lights. “Listen up for our car horn and thank you for showing Lily and Hannah love,” she wrote. She also posted this comment, “Thank you for supporting my Lily, Hannah, Jack, and all Havertown warriors! Our hearts are lifted when we drive around our town and see so much green! Lily is battling - over 10 months into her fight. It takes a toll. She really appreciates seeing so much L♥VE! As her mom, I wish I could hug each of you!”

The girls thought green was a happy color, Rufo said. "It stood for bravery and positivity," said Rufo. "It took off from there."

"Hannah's friends and Lily's friends reached out to light up Haverford," said Rufo. It's on their behalf but also to let others with cancer know that they are not forgotten.

One of Hannah's friends, who is involved, Ana Pivovarnik, 16, said they thought about using yellow lights but decided that green would show up better.

Along with the Facebook page a couple television news programs also featured the green lights story, giving even more impetus to the displays, which are cropping up all over town.

"Lily diagnosed in March (2019)," said Ana. "When she was diagnosed, green T-shirts were made. In May Lily's dad did a 24-hour run to raise awareness for brain cancer, with somebody constantly running within a 24-hour period." It was supposed to be him and his workout buddies but it ended up with 700 people taking part.

At that point "everyone on the Walker's street had green light bulbs out," said Ana. "That's where the idea came from." Now homes, businesses and schools all around Havertown are displaying green lights.

"I'm not surprised by the amount of love and support," said Ana, who noted that Haverford, both the school district and the town, are that kind of place. "People are willing to jump in and help and want to be there for them."

"If you see somewhere with green lights and you need something you can go there," said Rufo. "It's really to show support. People are putting up lights even if they don't know the girls."

Ana added, "I think our goal is to have people realize (cancer is) more prominent than people expect. I know it can be a lonely time for them. Hannah expressed that before. I hope this will let them know we care."