

Everett Dunlap is a Riverside kid with a heart of gold. In the spirit of Alex's Lemonade Stand, Everett runs an occasional "Boost" stand from his front porch and donates the money to research for childhood cancers or directly to families dealing with the disease. He does this in between his own treatments for brain cancer and with the knowledge that his family's finances are extremely tight. But he wants to help others, and sales from his Oct. 3 sales went to the Do It For Danny cause.

Here is his story, as published in the Courier-Post on Aug. 13, 2009.

RIVERSIDE

When life gave him lemons, Everett Dunlap decided to sell Boost.

Between treatments for his second occurrence of cancerous brain tumors, the 16-year-old sets up shop in his Riverside front yard to sell the drink for donations.

Proceeds help other families hit by childhood cancer or go toward efforts to research causes and cures.

Everett's effort is patterned after Alex's Lemonade Stand, with a South Jersey twist. The success of that internationally known fund-raising effort convinced him that the field was ripe for a similar effort with a different product.

"Nobody ever tried it," Everett said of Boost, the multi-flavored, caffeine-laced drink developed in his hometown.

Sales have gone well; one week in July brought in more than \$150. Parents Aimee and Brian Dunlap bought Shop Rite gift cards and asked Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to pass them on to families in need.

The Dunlaps are no strangers to childhood cancer. Brain tumors killed Aimee's sister at age 8, and Everett's first diagnosis came in 1999. He endured chemotherapy, radiation and a stem cell transplant – options that weren't available to his aunt.

When the tumors returned in 2007, Everett started treatments once again. He held his first Boost sale about a year later and gave proceeds to his mom, who donated the money during the annual Parkway Run that benefits cancer research projects at Children's Hospital.

Now such research is helping Everett. When conventional chemotherapy failed to conquer a third stubborn tumor, he joined a study of a new drug.

That study covers all costs, and without it Everett's treatment would be huge financial burden for the family. It's one reason he has continued the Boost sale and passed the proceeds to others.

“As much as we struggle, we know what it means to these families,” Aimee said. “We need to help other people.” The Dunlaps were on the receiving end of such kindness during Everett’s first cancer battle. A spaghetti dinner and a donation from Brian’s former employer helped them financially during that tough time.

It’s not unusual for a family in their situation to need a helping hand, said Brett Kramer, a neuro-oncology social worker for Children’s Hospital.

“It’s rare that a you have a family that (includes a child) in treatment raising money to give to another family,” Kramer said.

Even with health insurance coverage, families face co-pays and deductibles, and often one has left his or her job to provide full-time care to the child.

“We have a lot of families that are struggling with utility bills or car payments, house payments or rent,” he said.

Kramer, who is the social worker assigned to the Dunlaps, quickly passed out the Shop Rite gift cards to the appreciative parents of kids going through treatments.

Brian Dunlap is currently unemployed, but Aimee works at Riverside’s Boost Café, which donates the syrup that makes the drinks, along with cups and ice. Philly Pretzel Factory in Burlington donates pretzels, too. Everett offers them, plus car magnets, lapel pins and bracelets made by his mother.

“A lot of times people will just throw a 20 (dollar bill) in,” Brian said. “They don’t want anything.”

Others pull their cars to the curb or interrupt their walk to stop by the home on South Fairview Street just south of St. Mihiel Drive.

Everett, who will start 10th grade at Burlington County Special Services School District, tends to the sale from his porch or front yard while his friends stop by to chat. His iPod or laptop provide diversions, too, although his energy level isn’t strong enough to keep him there all day.

The family plans a weeklong sale later this month to raise money for this year’s Parkway Run. It will be Aimee’s second year as a participant. She also wants to start a local support group for parents whose children have cancer.
