

Carly's Courage

by Sandra Wilson

Carly is a symbol of Courage. At the age of 12 she was diagnosed with Ewing-Sarcoma Cancer. This is a form of cancer that attacks children, usually during their puberty stage. Carly fought her battle surrounded by her friends and family. She sang; she encouraged others; she became an inspiration to those who knew her, and even those who didn't. Unfortunately Carly lost her battle on May 12, 2012 at the age of 14.

Jackie, who didn't personally know the family at the time but who had a son (Owen) who attended the same school as Carly and her sister Emilee, was also inspired by Carly's courage. Jackie connected with the family in the hopes of doing something for them, for Carly. From this inspiration the benefit Courage for Carly was formed. Each year a benefit concert featuring Owen and Emilee's band One Day on Earth, and other local youth bands is run. Jackie puts her heart into the project and works tirelessly with the family to lead it to success.

About a year ago I met Jackie and started working with her. I learned a little bit about the benefit back then but it wasn't something we spoke much about. This year, when Jackie brought up the benefit again we spoke about it in more detail. I learned her story about how Carly inspired her to do something, to plan the benefit. I heard the love, I saw the tears and I felt the need of Jackie to bring success to the benefit, to bring knowledge about the disease and to bring hope to others. Jackie's telling of Carly's courage and revealing her own courage to stand up and help in turn brought inspiration to me.

Although I never had the privilege of meeting Carly, I was inspired by her story and compelled to help her tell it so she could continue to help others. When I thought on what I could do it occurred to me that I could help spread the courage and inspiration that Carly represents through a story. Whether battling a life-threatening disease or starting school for the first time, we all face fears in our lives. The book *Courage for Carly* acknowledges that and encourages the reader to move past the fear so they can find the courage to move forward. I want this book to inspire, to encourage and to bring hope to others – just like Carly has to her friends and family.

Even though the process of creating the book has been time-consuming I felt the drive to do it. I have felt the support of others and the appreciation of the family. I have never considered the process to not be worth it, and I am not only proud of myself but of all the others who have helped with its production. I thank Carly, my symbol of courage for her story and the inspiration it gives to me and will give to so many others when they read the book.