

A Family Fights to "Strike Out" Pediatric Cancer

What started two years ago as a bar mitzvah project has raised nearly \$80,000 for pediatric cancer and evolved into one family's way of doing good together.

By Kaitlin Ahern



The Greenberg Goldy family at the 2nd Annual Strike Out Pediatric Cancer PCF Bowl-A-Thon. Left to right: Rob, Eric, Roberta, and Taylor.

When Eric Greenberg Goldy celebrated his bar mitzvah in the fall of 2008, he knew he wanted to mark the occasion in a meaningful way. At 13, Eric had already sized the importance of giving back. But initially, he found a lack of options in his area involving with charitable causes. So he took the obvious, if not easy route: He created a bar mitzvah project. With the help of his family, Eric created a fundraising event called the Strike Out Pediatric Cancer Bowl-A-Thon to benefit the Pediatric Cancer Foundation (PCF). That first year, the event attracted more than 40 participants. Two years later, the event is growing, and still going

On Sunday, November 14, more than 100 children and their families gathered at Lucky Strike to bowl and enjoy a day of family fun, all while raising money to eradicate pediatric cancer. In this crazy city where life is so hectic, everyone comes together for two hours on a Sunday to have time for an amazing cause," says Eric's mother, Roberta Greenberg. "A long time ago,

Sunday was family day, and that's exactly what it felt like."

Though he's only 15—a freshman at Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School on the Upper West Side—it's not hard to see where Eric gets his drive. Eric's parents, Rob and Roberta, and older sister Taylor have been actively involved with PCF for several years. Eric was actually inspired to establish the Bowl-A-Thon after Taylor, a 16-year-old junior at Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School, got involved with the PCF Walkathon for her bat mitzvah project.

"My whole family was very involved with [PCF] already, and I saw how much great work the charity did," Eric explains.

Taylor was, in turn, inspired by Eric's project, and decided to put her own spin on it for the 2nd Annual Bowl-A-Thon in 2009. It was great to raise money for the cause, Taylor thought, but she wanted to do something that would help local children directly. After taking design classes at Parsons The New School for Design, Taylor got the idea to design and give away tote bags to sick

children, which she dubbed "TLC Bags." "We thought it would be a cool way to give people holiday presents and put a smile on their faces," Taylor says. Last year, Taylor and Bowl-A-Thon attendees assembled about 120 TLC Bags and distributed them to the Stephen D. Hassenfeld Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at NYU Langone Medical Center. She and Eric also had the opportunity to tour the center and learn how the funds they raised were used there. This year, Taylor and a group of 40 teen volunteers from the 92nd Street Y assembled and decorated 200 TLC Bags, along with inspirational get-well cards, which the Greenberg family personally delivered to the Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of New York Presbyterian on 165th Street. Since the hospital holds about 25 patients at a time, they will be able to distribute the bags throughout the holiday season, Taylor says.

Now in its third year, with a fourth event in the planning stages for 2011, Eric's bowl-a-thon has already expanded to Brooklyn, where a group held a similar event during the third weekend of November. The Greenberg Goldy family's goal is to extend the event even farther. "Ultimately I want it to be a national event," Eric says. "It would be pretty cool if the second week in November was National Pediatric Cancer Bowl-A-Thon Weekend."

Not too shabby for a bar mitzvah project.

And while Eric can't say for sure what he wants to "be" when he grows up, he knows that his values won't budge. "I will definitely stay involved with the Pediatric Cancer Foundation," he says. "It will follow me throughout my life."

For more information or to make a donation, visit www.pcfbowlathon.org.

About the Pediatric Cancer Foundation

- Founded in 1970, PCF's mission is to find a cure for childhood cancer.
- PCF receives no funding from the government or pharmaceutical companies, and \$.90 of every dollar donated supports its mission.
- For more information, visit www.pcfusa.org.