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Going all in for Addison

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Photo Provided

From left, Bekah Fullenwider, Addison Brown and her mother, Angie, and Kristan Peart celebrate Addison at CdLS Awareness Day at Hose Elementary.

There will be a lot of purple inside Nicholson Elementary today. The proof is in the amount of purple that filled the halls of Hose Elementary today.

For the past few years, students have been encouraged to wear purple to spread awareness about Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, or CdLS, which is a genetic syndrome that occurs in one in every 10,000 births.

But why do students throw their support behind this cause that is rarely heard of? Because Addison Brown, a student at Hose Elementary, is one of the one in every 10,000.



Addison was diagnosed at birth CdLS in 2007. Children with CdLS have difficulty with vision, hearing, speaking, walking and eating, along with cognitive delays that make it difficult to learn. Addison sees a variety of doctors at Riley Children's Hospital in order to address all of her needs.

Saturday is National CdLS Awareness Day, but because schools are not in session on Saturdays, they rally around their classmate throughout the week.

Students learn about facts and information about CdLS from announcements throughout the week. Then Angela Brown, Addison's mother and a teacher at Nicholson Elementary, caps off the week with a presentation to the schools.

"We partake in this event every year to bring to life the moral values we stress to students every year," Nicholson Principal Matt Ridenour said. "We constantly preach and model to students how making good character choices will take you far in life. Having a student like Addie that we can rally around brings to life that there are students and families in our community that long to have the same experiences as everyone. It is a great tradition that just highlights the outstanding philanthropic nature of this community as a whole."

While Angela and the schools use CdLS awareness to help students understand what Addison has been diagnosed with and what she goes through, the week is also used to highlight and celebrate the differences that everyone has.

"Through the schools," Angela said, "I am able to reach the students and inform them that we all have challenges, and being different should be looked at as a positive. These students will grow to be kind and caring adults. So I use this time of year to not just to spread awareness about Cornelia de Lange Syndrome but to remind our students that we all have feelings and need to be kind."

It might be hard to miss the colorful support that takes place in the schools throughout this week. But, Angela said, the support her family has been shown behind the scenes means just as much.

"Our family wouldn't be where we are today without the love and support from our families and the staff at the schools," Angela said. "Each of the staff members in our corporation have at one time or another cooked us a meal, sent us notes with words of encouragement, visited us while in the hospital or prayed for us. They are not just my co-workers but my friends. They celebrate the smallest of milestones with me or hug me when times get rough and I just need a good cry."

The community can show their support for Addison and her family by wearing purple on Saturday.

For more information on CdLS or the CdLS Foundation, visit www.CDLSusa.org.

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