

# Bethalto 5K to benefit young woman with a rare disease

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
April 24 2017 10:50 AM



**BETHALTO** - When a diagnosis of mono turned into something much worse, the family of 20-year-old Haley Michel wanted to do everything they could to overcome the "tragic little bump in the road."

Michel was diagnosed with both stage four non-Hodgkins lymphoma as well as hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis (HLH), a rare immune condition causing Michel's immune-boosting cells to not behave as they should. These two diseases together complicate the progress of each other, making Michel's struggle for survival all the more challenging. Ethan Harshbarger, who is dating Michel's sister, Lindsey Michel, described Haley Michel's condition as a bit of a roller coaster ride.

"She was admitted to Barnes on March 4," Harshbarger said. "She was in St. Anthony's three days before that. Three days before that, she was just fine. She was outside and was walking around. hit us like a ton of bricks."

Harshbarger said Haley Michel's condition improved soon after, and doctors were able to remove her breathing tube as the family took her outside. Sadly, HLH still remained in her blood, and her condition soon worsened ago as recently as two weeks before today. Earlier today, however, Harshbarger said Haley Michel's breathing tube was again removed - meaning things are looking a bit brighter again.

"She was told she had mono a few weeks before this all happened, and then she started feeling worse and getting a little more sick," he said. "She went to get it checked, and they gave her fluid at St. Anthony's. Then, she was told she was in liver and kidney failure, so they took her to Barnes.

"A couple of weeks ago, she was feeling way better, but then less than two weeks ago, she took a turn for the worse. The HLH came back, and we were told to prepare for the worst. She just got her breathing tube taken out again today, and things are looking way better again."

The Michel family, who own and operate Winner's Circle Automotive in Bethalto, are venturing to Haley Michel's bedside during the week, and despite having insurance, bills are beginning to grow. To help alleviate some of that excessive stress during the family's trying times, friends and family of Haley Michel created the "Rally for Halle," to celebrate Haley Michel and raise money for her family through one of her passions - running.

The 5K run/walk will be held on May 13, 2017, at 10 a.m. at the Sports Complex in Bethalto, located at 4200 Culp Lane. Harshbarger said people should come early so they

can register previous to the run's start time. Entry to the event is \$20 and comes with a free shirt. The money raised will go to the Michel family to assist with expenses incurred by Haley Michel's most unexpected illness.

Runners and walkers will be divided into groups based on age. Medals will be given to the winners, Harshbarger said.

More information can be found through emailing RallyForHalle513@gmail.com. That email address is operated by Haley Michel's closest friends and running partners, Julie Bruns and Summer Standefer. Money and forms may also be delivered to the Bethalto Police Department or mailed to P.O. Box 43 in Bethalto. Mailed forms must be sent by May 1, 2017, to guarantee registration.