



9-Year-Old Asks for Donations to Help Other Kids Have a Happy Birthday

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE - A local 9-year-old is asking for donations so she can provide birthday parties for 150 kids in the community.

Leah Frey is collecting birthday items to create “gift bags” so families who might not otherwise be able to celebrate birthdays can throw home parties for their kids. Each bag will include a disposable cake pan, cake mix, canned icing, birthday candles and other fun party items like streamers and balloons. Leah hopes community members will donate so she can create 150 bags by November.

“I just wanted to think about the kids who can’t celebrate their birthdays as much as some other people, and I just wanted to make sure every kid could feel special on their own birthday,” Leah said.

There are 31 donation boxes set up across Madison County. People can drop off items at these locations, or you can also send money over Venmo, which will be used to purchase items for the gift bags.

As the current Miss Illinois Volunteer Princess, Leah is always looking for ways to help. She previously served as Little Miss Madison County and delivered “cupcakes and sweet treats” to firemen, police officers and hospital workers throughout the community.

The Miss Volunteer Pageant was a weeklong national competition. Leah’s mother Edie Frey said it was a lot of fun for Leah, who competes in pageants and takes dance classes in her free time. Leah and Edie worked together to organize the birthday fundraiser.

“She had a blast,” Edie said. “She has a huge heart. I just try to make sure that stays with her and promote that as much as I can.”

Edie is extremely proud of Leah’s project and her devotion to helping other kids. The two of them manage [the Facebook group “Leah’s Loving Hands.”](#) where they share updates on Leah’s work and how people can get involved. Edie encourages anyone who is interested in helping to join the group.

While 150 gift bags is a big goal, Leah has faith that the community will rally to help other families. Being a good friend is important to her, and she is excited that more kids will be able to have a happy birthday.

“I just wanted to help out my community,” Leah said. “I hope people can donate and make sure every kid has a great birthday.”

To donate, send funds to @LeahsLovingHands on Venmo or bring items to one of the following locations.

Collinsville:

- State Farm - Bobby Simpson
- Faith in Action
- Uptown Scoops

Edwardsville:

- Edwardsville Public Library
- Coldwell Banker Brown Realtors
- The Axe Company
- The UPS Store
- AMC Theater
- YMCA
- Joe's Market Basket

Glen Carbon:

- Glen Carbon Centennial Library
- Exactime Watch & Clock

Highland:

- Starlight Dance Studio
- Bradford National Bank
- Broadway Battery & Tire Services
- Railshake
- Diversified Tinting Services
- Peacock Bakery and Cafe
- Evangelical United Church of Christ
- Highland Health Care Center

- Bronze Salon, Spa and Boutique
- Salon De Guerra & Day Spa
- Imo's Pizza

Marine:

- Marine Mower & Saw, Inc.
- Bradford National Bank

Trenton:

- Kaskaskia College
- Deien Chevrolet

Troy:

- Fire-N-Smoke Wood Fired Kitchen
- Time Out Sports Bar & Grill
- Tri-County Public Library