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Young girl organizes slipper drive to honor best friend who died of cancer

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Posted on April 23, 2014 at 1:04 PM

PHOENIX -- Since losing her best friend to cancer three years ago, seven-year-old Chandler resident Lilly Zienkewicz, has made it her mission to honor the memory of her friend, Hannah Huckfeldt. The effort also is helping make life in the hospital more comfortable for sick kids.

Lilly's program is called "Lilly's Slippers for Hannah." On Wednesday's Good Morning Arizona, 3TV's Gina Maravilla brought us the story from Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Since 2012, the fundraiser has collected more than 5,800 pairs of slippers for patients at [Phoenix Children's Hospital](#) and helped raise funds for the Hannah Huckfeldt Foundation.

"Thank you for helping us at Phoenix Children's Hospital," says Lilly.

Together, with her parents and Hannah's parents, Lilly delivered some 2,000 individually packaged slippers to the hospital. All the packages have a **sticker of an illustration** of Lilly and Hannah. In the image, both girls are wearing slippers and one girl has her angel wings.

"It's kind of almost indescribable," says Hannah's mom, Shelly Huckfeldt. "It's really like we didn't get the miracle we'd hoped for. But in many ways, this is a miracle. To have so much support, community support, family and friend support."

Lilly and Hannah had been neighbors since birth and were best friends at the age of two. Lilly's mother said the girls loved to play dress up and watch movies together.

In 2006, Hannah was diagnosed with Clear Cell Sarcoma of the Kidney (CCSK), a rare childhood cancer that relapsed to the brain in 2007. After a long and courageous battle with the disease, Hannah passed away at the age of five and a half on April 23, 2011.

In 2012, Lilly found herself at Phoenix Children's Hospital as a hematology patient –the same hospital and floor where Hannah had received treatments and surgeries.

During her stay at the ospital, Lilly noticed that the other children needed slippers. Many of the children would walk up and down the halls pushing their IV poles wearing pajamas and socks. Lilly thought that donating slippers to other children on the cancer floor would be a great way to honor Hannah.

This year, the third year of the slipper drive, slippers arrived from all over the United States, including nearly 600 pairs of slippers from Huckfeldt's colleagues at **Union Pacific Railroad**. Lilly's father's colleagues at **ViaSat, Inc.** raised more than \$800 and the satellite and wireless communications company doubled the effort through their employee matching program

In total, the Hannah Huckfeldt Foundation received more than \$2,500 in cash donations this year, which will provide seed funding for the Foundation to formulate a wholesale purchasing agreement with a slipper manufacturer.

To learn more about The Hannah Huckfeldt Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of families affected by childhood cancer, visit **www.hannahuckfeldt.com**.

