

Last Saturday was one of the hottest days so far this year with temperatures reaching the high 80's with high humidity. The higher temperature had some reaching for cold water to quench their thirst or trying to get outside chores finished before predicted storms hit the area.

A group of local high school students had a different way to combat the heat.

Hair went flying outside Silver Creek High School as several students chose to shave or cut their hair as a fundraiser for St. Baldrick's. The fundraiser was the brain storm of Silver Creek freshman Gwynn Jenkins.

Jenkins is the reigning Beauty of Hope Toys for Tots Jr. Miss 2016. Heading into the Miss America Pageant organization Jenkins needed a platform.

After wanting to shave her own head she thought St. Baldrick's would be a great platform.

"At my old school I was inspired because my science teacher did it. I wanted to shave my head for personal reasons and seen an ad for St. Baldrick's on social media and this bloomed from that," Jenkins explained as she sat outside Silver Creek High School waiting for the St. Baldrick's event to begin.

Once Jenkins knew she wanted St. Baldrick's as her platform she needed an organization to back her. She then turned to her friends on the Student Council at Silver Creek.

"The Student Council was all in and backed me for this," Jenkins stated.

Jenkins, a 15 year old freshman at Silver Creek, was all smiles as she explained the details of the St. Baldrick's event at the school.

"We have 15 people participating today. Most of them are students, some are friends and I think the theatre director is participating too," Jenkins added.

Students kept showing up one after another to help support Jenkins' St. Baldrick's event. As the clock was ticking down to the first participant to hit the stage, many students were seen brushing each other's long hair one last time.

The St. Baldrick's event at Silver Creek gave participants three options: a complete shave, donation of eight inches of hair for Hair We Share or a donation of 12 inches of hair for Wigs for Kids.

According to the St. Baldrick's website, Hair We Share "makes wigs for kids 18 and under who have lost their hair due to medical reasons." They "require at least eight inches of hair that is not highlighted." Wigs for Kids, according to the St. Baldrick's website, "makes wigs for kids under 18 that have lost their hair due to medical reasons. Wigs for Kids require at least 12 inches of hair that is not dyed, bleached or highlighted."

After ensuring all participants had arrived, been signed up and prepared for the fundraiser, Jenkins was ready to start the festivities.

Volunteer licensed hair stylists Mandi Robb of 3 Generations Hair Salon in Sellersburg and Annette Jackson were ready as they had set up the stage with all the necessary tools to ensure a successful St. Baldrick's event.

Jenkins then stepped on stage to the classroom chair that sat empty. Smiling a beautiful smile, Jenkins sat down. Robb placed the green St. Baldrick's hair stylist cape across her first volunteer, Jenkins. After asking the crowd where she should start, the front or the back, Robb began to shave Jenkins' head. Pass by pass, hair fell to the stage. The more hair that fell, the more cheers came from Jenkins' friends and family that gathered to show support. Encouraging

words came from friends, “you look beautiful, Gwynn,” one friend yelled from the audience.

Through the process, Jenkins’ smile grew bigger and bigger. She was the first of several classmates and friends who joined her fundraising efforts.

Coming off the stage Jenkins was greeted with big hugs from classmates, Sarah Long and Angelina Moerer. After hugs both girls rubbed the now shaved head of Jenkins before placing a kiss on her head.

The next stop for Jenkins was into a hug from boyfriend Aidan Post.

“I think it’s a very admirable thing,” Post stated when asked what he thought of his girlfriend shaving her head.

Silver Creek senior Kami Pennington was the only senior to join in the St. Baldrick’s event. She decided to donate to the cause and cut her hair just days before graduation.

The line continued as students from Silver Creek and Henryville High Schools waited for their turn to make a donation of hair or shave their head for the children battling cancer throughout the country.

One sophomore knew he wanted to donate his hair and jumped on board with the fundraiser when the opportunity came.

Kage O’Connell planned on growing his hair until his senior year and then cutting it for the great cause.

“I decided to go ahead and cut it now. I’ve been growing it out since eighth grade and really

began growing it as a freshman,” O’Connell explained. “I wanted to get it cut my senior year but then I heard about this fundraiser this year. I decided I could cut it now and then again as a senior. This way I can donate twice.”

Students, parents and community members all gathered to encourage and support the 15 participants who chose to help St. Baldrick’s during the first fundraiser held for the organization at Silver Creek High School.

“I am hoping to do this again next year and have more fundrasiers for St. Baldrick’s,” Jenkins stated.

This year’s St. Baldrick’s event at Silver Creek High School raised over \$1,000 for the organization.

Jenkins added about why she chose St. Baldrick’s, “Childhood cancer research is the most underfunded cancer research there is and it shouldn’t be because every two minutes a child is diagnosed with cancer. I just want to raise awareness.”

Jenkins concluded, “I want to thank my family and friends and of course, the Student Council and Silver Creek High School for letting us host here.”

The first St. Baldrick’s event was held in Manhattan in 2000 during the annual reinsurance industry’s St. Patrick’s Day party. The goal for the first event was shaving 17 heads and raising \$17,000. The goal was achieved as 19 heads were shaved during the event at Jim Brady’s Pub raising \$104,000 to fund the research of the Children’s Oncology Group.

The idea of St. Baldrick’s came to Tim Kenny in 1999 when he asked friends John Bender and Enda McDonnell “how will you give back in return for your own good fortune in business?”

The grand idea hit Bender while looking at McConnell’s thick head of hair. They would shave

their heads for donations for kids with cancer!