

# Cheer Up with Makeup.

## “How a Sweet Girl Turns 16”

“Cheer Up with Make-Up” and “Cheer Up with a Clean-Up” program is the creation of a local teenager, Tyler Connellan, a sophomore and cheerleader at Saint Rose High School. This unique program was introduced earlier this year at Jersey Shore University Medical Center.

**“I wanted to make the patients in the pediatric unit of the hospital where I volunteer feel good about themselves. I carry my little “doctor’s kit” full of hair, make-up and toiletries when I meet them and ask them what they would like done. I have a great big bow in my hair and big smile on my face when I greet each and every child. I know what it’s like to be staying in a hospital, it’s very easy to feel down and instead I want to give each child a great big lift in their spirits.”**



*Pictured Above: Tyler Connellan, Victoria Webster, Zoe Vaticano*

Tyler began volunteering at Jersey Shore hospital in the summer of 2010. She is an alumna of Saint Catharine School in Spring Lake where she was taught to put the corporal and spiritual works of mercy to work. “Our school always talked to us about visiting the sick, clothing the poor, and feeding the hungry. I always try to remember that to do these things is as important as my schoolwork and my sports.”

As a first grader, Tyler had a cyst on her spleen and had to have surgery at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). “I was there for one week and my mom would come in and paint my nails, comb my hair, and put it up and give me a sponge bath and rub essential oils on me. I felt like a different person when she was done and I wanted every child who has to stay in the hospital to know that there is a way to feel good. I’m just helping them lift their spirits.”

Tyler has volunteered over 100 hours at the hospital’s pediatric unit and presented her idea for “Cheer Up with Makeup and Cheer Up with A Clean-Up” to the staff and board this past fall. The hospital loved the idea and Tyler used her “Sweet 16” party as the official kick-off of the program. She invited 35 girls to her December 11th birthday dinner and requested donations of nail polish, lipstick, combs, mouthwash, toiletries and gift cards. She used her “presents” instead of presents to make goody bags and now she will distribute the “take home” bags to the patients.

“My friends were so incredibly generous at my birthday party, I still can’t get over how they shopped for my kids, I am so lucky to have such wonderful friends,” Tyler says.

Tyler also presented the idea to the principal of Saint Rose, Sister Kathy Nace. “I wanted to open up the idea to all students as a club. We are starting with the cheerleaders now, who helped me put together the goody bags, and they will come with me to visit the patients and do the makeovers. Spreading cheer is what it’s all about.”

Next year, Tyler hopes that the club will be open to any student who wants to help out at the hospital. “I think it would be great for anyone who wants to go into nursing or medical school to experience the

kids and how much they love to see us.”

Tyler keeps a journal of special patients who have touched her heart. One day she had a little girl named Kayla who had been stung by hundreds of wasps. Tyler shampooed her hair and gave her a manicure and make-over. Her smile and gratitude made Tyler’s day, actually her year! “That’s what it’s all about, making kids feel great!” Another time Tyler went in on Christmas Day to visit her kids. “Can you imagine being in the hospital on Christmas Day...I had to go in and see my kids, I brought them magazines and candy and they were so happy...it made me so happy too!”

When the Manager of Volunteer Services, Mr. Dennis Broschart first met Tyler in her interview, he was so impressed by her enthusiasm, compassion and genuine love of children that he insisted on walking her to the car and meeting her mother. “You have a very special girl here,” he said. “We didn’t have a spot in pediatrics, but I’m making one for her now.”

Tyler Connellan, who is a lifelong resident of Sea Girt, NJ, has been a cheerleader since she was in fifth grade. She has been chosen as an All-American the last two years. ■