

# “Celebration of Life” in Bayville

by David J. Criblez

The fireworks started early this year in Bayville on Saturday, July 3rd as seven year-old Bailey Ryan was celebrating his own independence of being cancer & treatment free for one year. Last year, his parents, Michael Ryan and his wife Alice Lovegrove, held “A Celebration of Life” marking the end of their middle child’s three-year battle with leukemia. The party was not only a personal celebration, but it also doubled as a fund-raiser for the Cancer Center for Kids at Winthrop University Hospital in Mineola. This year there was even more to celebrate as Bailey is not only healthy, but he has grown 4 inches and gained 20 pounds forming into a strong, solid young man. Therefore, the family decided to do it all over again to give back to the Cancer Center, which helped Bailey grapple with his illness.

Although Bailey no longer gets treatments, he has been going for check-ups every month for the past year (he will now go every two months). “As you go to the Cancer Center every month, you realize that the feeling of gratefulness doesn’t go away,” said Alice. “One of our sister-in-laws said that it almost seems more important to do the party after the fact. It makes sense. Plus, the Cancer Center was very appreciative for what we did last year and asked if we were doing it again.”

Alice admits that going back to the Cancer Center at this stage of the game is quite different. “Walking into the Cancer Center now and being a low priority is a really good feeling. You just feel really grateful,” she said. That gratefulness is what drives her and her family to put on this annual fund-raiser,



Seven year-old Bailey Ryan of Bayville wears a smile & his Uncle Sam hat at his 2nd annual “Celebration of Life” on July 3rd.

(Photo by Criblez)

~~\$15,000~~

which raised over ~~\$12,000~~ this year.

### Party Details

The party is held at the Ryan-Lovegrove home off of Bayville Avenue overlooking the Long Island Sound. Although there is no admission fee, attendees are encouraged to purchase raffle tickets for a slew of high-end prizes, all of which are donated. All proceeds from the tickets go directly to the Cancer Center for Kids at Winthrop University Hospital.

Prizes were distributed in different formats: Chinese Auction, Gala Prizes, a 50/50 Raffle, a Golf Cart Raffle and this year, even a black Labrador puppy was auctioned off. Guests enjoyed the

sunshine on the back lawn overlooking the Sound with a DJ spinning tunes and a barbecue buffet to feast on. There was even a Castle Bounce and swimming pool for the kids to play in.

Last year’s party was a big success. This year the pressure was on to repeat it. But this time around, the Ryans had more time to prepare. “Last year we had three weeks to put it together, this year we did it over the course of three months. It consumed everything,” Michael explained. “But I love the Fourth of July. This is my Christmas.”

A week before the event, Alice was afraid that they didn’t have enough raffle prizes, but in the end she was pleasantly surprised. “Last year was incredible, the prizes just poured in. This year that silver lining was still there. We got unbelievable support from our friends and community. We ended up with a ton of raffles.”

Family & friends pulled together to organize the raffles with Alice and Michael. Prizes came from businesses throughout Oyster Bay, East Norwich, Locust Valley, Bayville, Glen Cove, Mineola and beyond. Chinese Auction prizes (valued at \$100 and over) ranged from sporting goods, liquor, gift certificates, toys, movie passes, clothing, beauty products, etc. while Gala Prizes (valued at \$400 and over) were made up of Broadway tickets with limo rides, a flatscreen color TV, jewelry, dinner certificates, hotel stays, an autographed Islander jersey and more. “Not only is it a fun time for a good cause, but there’s a good chance you can win something,” stated Michael.

Walking along the Ryan compound it was almost impossible to see someone who wasn’t having a good

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time. “People come up to me and tell me that they are grateful to be invited and I say I’m so grateful that they come. Almost everybody at this party has shown us some support along the way even if it’s a ‘How’s Bailey doing’ in the supermarket,” said Alice.

### Donation Information

If you would like to make a donation, send a check to: Cancer Center for Kids at Winthrop-University Hospital, 200 Old Country Road, Suite 440, Mineola, NY 11501, Atten: Maxine Andrade. All checks must be made out to: Cancer Center for Kids @ WUH.