

Children's Health Update

Battling Serious Illness With Beads Of Courage

(NAPSA)—Children battling cancer and other serious illnesses can proudly wear their Beads of Courage.

Beads signify strength and courage and have been used throughout history as a form of luck and protection. Once said to protect warriors during long journeys, beads are now helping children with serious illnesses find the courage and strength needed to fight their battle.

Beads Of Courage

Beads of Courage is a not-for-profit organization whose sole mission is to encourage and strengthen resilience in children with cancer, a blood disorder or other serious illness through art-based programs. The children get colorful beads that communicate visually the many challenges they have overcome during their treatment.

For example, Dalton, diagnosed with neuroblastoma at age 4, is one of the many children who have benefited from the program. His mother, Patty, remembers the first time Dalton received his beads.

"The lights made the beautifully colored beads sparkle like jewels in a treasure chest," said Patty. "Beads of Courage has



A young patient at the Aflac Cancer Center and Blood Disorders Service of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta meets Aflac NASCAR driver Carl Edwards.

found a way to inspire children to eagerly fight for their lives and endure the unspeakable. Beads of Courage has given families the missing piece. The piece that makes chronically ill children focus on the reward, not the steps in between. The program shows us that our children are not giving up—nor shall we.”

What The Beads Mean

There's a bead guide that identifies over 25 treatments and procedures linked to each specific bead, not including handmade glass beads that are given to children for special reasons such as for overcoming a milestone. The yellow bead is for an overnight

stay in the hospital. The tortoise bead is for a spinal tap. And the one that glows in the dark? That's for a radiation treatment. The most coveted bead of all is the one received upon completion of treatment, the purple heart.

Most children will accumulate over 500 beads and a bead collection that spans well over 12 feet before finishing treatment.

Touched by the effect the program has on kids, Aflac and Beads of Courage have created an Aflac Duck Wingman Bead to bring a strong new message to kids: that they are never flying solo.

As a patient at the Aflac Cancer Center and Blood Disorders Service of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Dalton met Aflac NASCAR driver Carl Edwards. Dalton lent his Beads of Courage to Edwards to wear during his upcoming races for good luck.

What You Can Do

By making a \$5 donation at www.BeadsofCourage.org, you can sponsor an Aflac Duck Wingman Bead and remind a child with cancer that he or she is not alone. With your donation, Beads of Courage will send a child a Wingman Bead packaged with an Encouragement Book.