

Children's Health

New Video Educates Classmates of Pediatric Cancer Patients

(NAPSA)—Assisting pediatric cancer survivors in acclimating back into the classroom is the focus of a new video being released by the Central Arkansas Radiation Therapy Institute (CARTI) in Little Rock.

“Just a Kid: A Cancer Education Program” is designed to help classmates and educators understand what pediatric cancer patients are going through and how they can play a positive role in the patient’s fight against cancer.

“Facing cancer is difficult at any age, but the cancer experience can be particularly traumatic for school-aged children,” says Mary Machen, CARTI Director of Community Outreach.

“At a stage in their lives when it is important to them to ‘fit in,’ cancer can make them ‘stand out’ in ways that are difficult for other children to understand,” says Machen, a licensed social worker.

The CARTI video aims to educate classmates and teachers about the side effects of cancer treatment, such as the loss of hair, weight gain from steroid medications, weight loss from chemotherapy or radiation treatment, skin discoloration and fatigue.

Because such side effects can impact children’s outward appearance and distinguish them as different from the norm, Machen says classmates who don’t understand what is happening can sometimes be unintentionally cruel or insensitive.

“Children can be cruel even when they don’t mean to be,” she explains. “As humans, we tend to fear what we don’t understand. Sometimes, as a defense mechanism, that fear may be expressed through name-calling or mockery,



Helping teachers and classmates understand what pediatric cancer patients are going through is the focus of a new video from CARTI.

which in turn can significantly harm the self-esteem and will of young patients.”

According to Machen, “Just a Kid” is intended to initiate an open discussion between teachers and students as they prepare to welcome a classmate fighting cancer back into the classroom.

“Our goal was to give students a better understanding of what the patient is going through, and in doing so, perhaps explain how they can help their classmate recapture some sense of normalcy,” says Machen.

“A pediatric cancer patient is, after all, still a kid,” reminds Machen. “They are just a kid with cancer.”

Copies of “Just a Kid: A Cancer Education Program” are available in VHS or DVD format at \$25 each (shipping included). For more information, visit www.justakidwithcancer.com.

Schools, libraries and health-related organizations may be eligible to receive a complimentary copy of “Just a Kid” by contacting CARTI at 501-660-7632.