

First annual kite festival to raise money for cancer research

Posted by [Joy Shrum-Reporter](#) On 03/16/2018

Leonardtown, MD- Fifty years ago, the survival rate for childhood leukemia was just three percent. Today, it's nearly 90 percent. Research and treatment has come a long way the past five decades but it's still not enough.

Despite the declining deaths, leukemia is still the second leading cause of cancer among those under the age of 20.

The mission of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is: cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, myeloma and all other blood cancers. Every nine minutes, someone in the United States dies from a blood cancer. LLS works tirelessly on research and treatment to help those battling blood cancers and improve the quality of life of patients and their families.

On average, blood cancers account for more than 10 percent of all new cancer cases diagnosed each year—the third leading cancer killer in the country. (Hunter Scott, pictured above, died from cancer in 2011)

The strides taken by LLS do not just benefit blood cancers. "It's important to raise money for LLS because it helps develop treatment for other cancers," explained Claire Broadhead (pictured right), childhood leukemia survivor. Forty percent of new cancer therapies stem from blood cancer research and treatments.

In St. Mary's County, it's estimated that 500 people are battling a blood cancer—that's higher than the national average.

Two local teens, Saar and Samir Shah (pictured below), who are cousins, have teamed up with a group of 20 other high school students to host the first annual Fly4ACure Kite Festival this Saturday, March 17, at the St. Mary's County Fairgrounds. All proceeds will go to LLS. Saar and Samir are hosting this fundraiser as part of the Student of the Year competition hosted by LLS. Last year, high school students around Maryland raised \$267,000. The Shah's have set a goal of \$200,000 in donations—between public and corporate donations. They need your help to reach their goal.

In addition to kite flying fun, there will be food, music, entertainment. Several special guests will be joining the fun, including Tampa Bay Buccaneer and Patuxent High School graduate Robert McClain, Congressman Steny Hoyer, local magician Reggie Rice, the band No Green Jelly Beenz and the Superheroes of Southern Maryland.

There will be a silent auction with dozens of items to bid on, including a 30-minute helicopter ride for three over Southern Maryland.

During the kite festival there will be a recognition ceremony to honor those who are battling, or lost their battle, with a blood cancer.

Fly4ACure begins at noon. Admission to the kite festival is \$10; children four and under are free. The event will be held rain or shine. [Click here](#) for more information.

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