

food for thought

GOURMET
Insider

On January 24th Liam Witt, son of OXO executives Larry Witt and Gretchen Holt, lost his four year battle with Neuroblastoma. He was six years old.

There are no words to describe the tragedy of a 6-year old child spending two thirds of his all-too-short life battling such an insidious disease. There are many words to describe the spirit with which Liam faced that challenge. Courage. Determination. Grace. Dignity. Love. And so many more.

When Liam was first diagnosed in 2007 it might have been easy for his parents to throw up their hands in despair, raging at the fate that life had dealt them and their beloved son. Instead the pair pooled their considerable talents to launch Cookies For Kids' Cancer, a non-profit organization whose mission is to raise awareness of and funds for pediatric cancer research. Their goal has been and is, to provide funding to support better and safer treatments to battle childhood cancers.

The primary means by which Cookies raises funds is through individual bake sales, enlisting the support of those who are moved to action by the heart-rending thought of children suffering from cancer. Many of you may already know of Liam's story either directly or indirectly. I recall, and some of you may too, sitting in a bus full of retailers and vendors at the last Gourmet Show in San Francisco, returning from an HTI vineyard excursion. HTI's Bob Coviello, who only moments before had heard for the first time of Liam's plight was so moved he rose then and there to share the story with those on-board and offer any who chose, the opportunity to donate to Cookies For Kids' Cancer. The reaction was instantaneous and unanimous. Liam's was the type of story that moves people instantly, viscerally to action.

At the Housewares Charity Event

"There are many things in life that are beyond our control to change. This need not be one of them."

by Bill McLoughlin



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A Cause Worth Marketing Cookies For Kids' Cancer Needs You

Monday March 7, Helen of Troy Chairman, President and CEO Jerry Rubin will be honored with a Humanitarian of the Year Award along with Crate and Barrel's Barbara Turf, who will receive a Lifetime Humanitarian Award. Honorees at the event each year are able to designate a charity to receive a portion of the event's proceeds. Rubin this year has designated Cookies For Kids' Cancer for that honor.

You may be wondering what this has to do with you, your store, or a magazine whose day-to-day focus is offering ways to better merchandise gourmet housewares. The answer is relatively simple.

There are times in life when we are offered the opportunity to do something noble, meaningful and selfless. There are times when we have the opportunity to improve our business and perhaps even, our public perception. There are very few times when we have the opportunity to do

both simultaneously.

Liam Witt would have been 7-years old this May. To honor his memory and extend the fight against pediatric cancer **Cookies For Kids' Cancer has set a goal of conducting 700 bake sales in the month of May. Packaged goods giant Glad Products has committed \$225,000 to match all money raised by Cookies For Kids' Cancer bake sales during that month.**

There are few industries that are better positioned than this one to

synergistically support this effort. A large portion of this industry is built around the kinds of products it takes to make great cookies. Housewares retailers virtually without exception carry bakeware along with all the other implements needed to make cookies.

The effort need not be extravagant. A simple display with the Cookies For Kids' Cancer story, a few tools and bakeware pieces, perhaps one or more designated as a "Cookies" piece with a portion of the sales to be donated to the organization. If you feel so moved, perhaps your store could host a bake sale or serve as rallying point to support others who are planning to host one.

Those of us with children certainly understand what it is to worry about their physical and emotional wellbeing, even in the best of times. How much more terrifying must it be for those whose worst fears are confirmed by a doctor's diagnosis that their child has been stricken with this most deadly of afflictions. Every day 50 families hear that news.

How frightening must it be for these children, many of whom cannot understand what is happening to them, who barely understand life and all it offers only to have it slowly, painfully taken from them.

There are many things in life that are beyond our control to change. This need not be one of them.

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