

Lane's Law offered at Kentucky Youth Assembly

By Erin Schmitt Gleaner staff

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A Kentucky Youth Assembly bill that promotes assistance for families who have children diagnosed with cancer has received a big thumbs-up from Lane Goodwin's family.

Holy Name of Jesus Catholic School students presented "Lane's Law" to Lane Goodwin's parents, George and Angie Goodwin, and his 8-year-old brother, Landen, in the school's cafeteria Thursday morning.

Many Holy Name seventh- and eighth-grade students attended the Kentucky Youth Assembly held in Louisville Dec. 6-8. Inspired by Lane Goodwin, a Beech Grove teen with a positive attitude who lost his battle to cancer Oct. 17, the students drafted a bill meant to impact many people's lives for the better.

"It's made my Christmas," George Goodwin said following the presentation during which his family received a framed copy of the bill, "I don't even think I want a gift now."

The youths intend the bill to be a present to Kentucky families with children age 18 and younger who have been diagnosed with cancer, or who have last their battle with the disease.

The provisions set forth by the bill include allowing eligible Kentuckians a 30 percent deduction of medical and related expenses from their income off their state income tax. The deduction applies to medical expenses and money associated with traveling expenses for treatment, such as hotel accommodations and food.

Lane's Law also allows a child's parents or legal guardian to miss work for a 90-day period without being fired or punished by their employer.

"No parent should struggle to pay for medication or expensive hospital stays," said seventh-grade student Tyler Durham, who helped author the bill. "These are just a few outstanding acts to help families stay financially stable when their child is diagnosed with cancer.

A loud, clear chorus of "Ayes" echoed approval of Lane's Law Thursday. It got a similar reaction in Louisville earlier this month, when it was passed by the KYA House and Senate.

Angie Goodwin called the bill a huge blessing.

"They've put their hearts into this, it's very clear," she said, tearing up. "It's very emotional for us. To watch kids helping kids is pretty amazing because you hear so much bad stuff, but when you have this huge group of kids come together for other kids across the state, it's pretty amazing."

Bethany Young, a seventh-grade co-author of the bill, said it hit home for her because she had several family members pass away from cancer. Young was also one of the several hundred thousand that followed Lane's story through social media.

"I followed Lane on Facebook and I felt like he wanted to make a difference and he wanted to help families," Young said, "so I wanted to help him help."

Seventh-grader Simon Sutton, another co-author of the bill, said Lane's Law was a tribute to Holy Name fifth-grader Nathan Bach, who also recently lost his battle with cancer.

The students said they never dreamed the bill would go so far.

"We just hope it becomes reality," said Durham.

Lane's Law will be included in a child action package that will be shared with Kentucky legislators in Frankfort, said Christina Shires, a Holy Name teacher who oversaw the KYA participation.

"I hope this will get bigger and bigger and people really make a difference with it, because if us eighth-graders can do it, obviously adults can do it," said student Logan Douglas, who included Lane's Law as part of his platform for KYA governor.

Henderson County Attorney Steve Gold, who also sits on the KYA board, said he'd already tried to put a bug in the ear of one legislator. Gold encouraged the Holy Name students to speak up for what they believe in, because not only are they the community's future, they are also the present and can have their voices heard today.

Lane, who has relatives in Henderson and Henderson County, is an inspiration everyone can draw on, Gold added, as he asked everyone to give the late teen's signature thumbs-up sign.

Angie Goodwin said she is sure Lane was watching everyone Thursday and "smiling huge," still as positive and upbeat as ever.



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