

Sweet Sixteen for a Cause

By Elizabeth Schafer

This past June was an especially exciting beginning of summer for me because I was able to celebrate my Sweet Sixteen with a party. To commemorate this milestone birthday, I decided that I wanted to invite several of my family and friends over to my house to celebrate. However, this was no normal house party, because both of my parents have very large extended families and I have many friends who play an important role in my life.

When first planning this spectacular event, I decided that I wanted to do something different to make it memorable. I quickly decided that, as a gift to me, I wanted everyone to donate money to NOAH. This was an easy decision for me because I realized that I would make others overjoyed, which would in turn make me happier than any material object could.

I constantly want to do fundraisers for NOAH, but I also wanted to find a way to raise money without putting too much of a burden on my family and friends. Raising money from my Sweet Sixteen celebration seemed like the perfect idea. Instead of spending money on a gift for me, everyone could join me by making a donation to NOAH, a community that I am a part of and love to support.

When my guests found out what I wanted to do, they quickly became excited and

desired to make my dreams come true. I was overwhelmed by the generosity shown by my friends and family as everyone made large donations to this valuable organization. Many people also gave me separate gifts because they felt I should still receive a little something for my selfless action. Some people even went out of their way to write me letters thanking me for my generosity.

Although others viewed my decision as selfless and generous, I just thought that this was the right thing to do. Being a member of this wonderful NOAH community for many years, I have discovered the joy that this organization can bring to so many of us.

I am privileged to have an extremely strong support system, which includes my loving parents and outstanding vision teacher Paulette DeMarinis. With assistance from many people, I am always informed about the latest assistive technology. I have been able to receive many wonderful modifications that have enabled me

to make my academic dreams become a reality. I am blessed to have many amazing friends who accept me just the way I am. Although I am very lucky, I realize that many people do not have the same opportunities I have. NOAH is here to help many of those people take hold of those opportunities. Through NOAH I have met many friends that I can empathize with, as well as make new memories. NOAH has



given me so much. I want others to be able to experience all that NOAH has to offer.

NOAH has helped many people, and although everyone wishes that help could be free, the harsh reality is that nothing is free. To show my appreciation for all that NOAH has done

for so many of us, I decided to give back. I am overjoyed to announce that I was able to raise \$3,300 for NOAH! I am so thankful to everyone who helped me support this extraordinary organization.