

Heart transplant family back to “normal”

After learning of 10-year-old St. Joseph, Fullerton, student Xavia Pirozzi’s heart transplant earlier this year, St. Thomas Aquinas, Hampden, fourth grader Kaylea Collavini decided to help. So she developed a fundraising idea for her fellow students to pay money to dress out of uniform for a day.

Kaylea’s “Jeans Day” raised \$637 for the Pirozzi family who face a hefty after-insurance balance of medical bills. The family received donations from other schools and companies as well, including, among others: \$3,750 from St. Mark School, Fallston; \$877 from St. Margaret School, Bel Air; \$1,000 from a foundation in Indiana who read about Xavia in *The Catholic Review*; and another \$1,000 from a company in Charlotte, N.C., whose company president wanted to donate money after reading Xavia’s story.

Once again life with five children has returned to “normal,” reports Xavia’s mother, Nicolle Borys-Pirozzi, after the little girl spent almost a year in a Philadelphia hospital waiting for a new heart. “We do all of the usual things that families do. What a treat!”

Although her doctors have kept Xavia out of school during cold and flu season, the little girl is doing well and will return to her classroom shortly.

“It will give her a chance to be with her friends, get reacquainted, reconnect,” said Mrs. Borys-Pirozzi. “She will be ready to focus on school in September rather than having to handle a new grade, new teachers, and the stress of reconnecting with her friends all at the same time.”

The family continues to trek to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia monthly for cardiac catheterizations, heart biopsies, blood work, X-rays, EKGs, echocardiograms and physicals.

"Still no sign of rejection!" said Mrs. Pirozzi about her daughter's new heart. "She is having fun, playing tag, riding her bike, just doing kid stuff. It's a real blessing."