

YOUR HOMETOWN ENQUIRER

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Local student leads campaign to raise money for cancer research



Riley Malloy PROVIDED

Riley Malloy, a senior at William Mason High School located in Mason, Ohio, was named the 2021 Cincinnati Student of the Year through the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society on April 9.

Through her campaign, Malloy hoped to honor her best friend, Maya Collins, who passed away from leukemia in 2017. Malloy's initial goal was to raise \$50,000, enough money to create a research portfolio in Collins' name. Malloy surpassed her original fundraising goal and raised over \$128,000 for LLS.

"I always wanted to be her friend – she had a personality that attracted people," Malloy said.

Through random acts of kindness, a painted high school parking spot and a tattoo, Malloy honored and remembered her best friend. After Collins' passing, Malloy made a vow to "Live Like Maya," a phrase that has since grown into a foundation with a mission of continuing Collins' legacy. The Live Like Maya Foundation was established in 2019 by Bonnie Collins, Maya Collins' mother.

Malloy's actions and commitment to "Live Like Maya" every day also led her to be nominated for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's (LLS) Students of the Year program, a campaign in which high schoolers compete to raise money for the research of blood cancers.

In order for a Students of the Year campaign to be successful, many people need to come together. The candidates are in charge of leading their fundraising teams. "I am the candidate – at LLS, they kind of refer to it as the CEO of my own campaign. I have 16 or 17 team members who are raising money. Team members are people who I asked, or who volunteered to be on my team," Malloy said.

Team members include Bonnie and Annabella Collins (Maya Collins' mother and sister), and Collins' first and second bone marrow donors, among others.

Through the Students of the Year program, Malloy collaborates with her team to raise money, but also partners with different businesses to implement fundraisers that support her campaign. Many of the businesses Malloy has worked with are located in or near Mason, Ohio.

Malloy has worked with organizations such as The Live Like Maya Foundation, Third Eye Brewing Company, Sonder Brewing, Raising Cane's, Culver's, Joella's Hot Chicken, City Barbecue, Menchie's Frozen Yogurt, El Caporal, Kendra Scott, Quatman Café and Panda Express. Through the collaboration with outside businesses, people can enjoy products from businesses they normally purchase from while simultaneously supporting cancer research.

"People eat out all of the time. Why not eat here on this night? Then, you're also doing a little bit of good," Malloy said.

In addition to raising money for a wonderful cause, Malloy has also had the opportunity to gain real-world, professional experience in the areas of marketing, public relations, project management and entrepreneurship during her time working with the Students of the Year campaign. She has done corporate sponsorship pitches at companies and law firms, and has worked closely with The Live Like Maya Foundation to promote her campaign and help raise money.

"It's been a lot of learning – not only about LLS as a

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AREA NEWS

Blue Ash Memorial Day Ceremony set for May 31

The City of Blue Ash invites the public to the 69th annual Memorial Day Ceremony on May 31 at 11:30 a.m. at the Blue Ash Bicentennial Veteran's Memorial in downtown Blue Ash.

Captain Steve Drefahl, US Navy (Retired), will serve as the keynote speaker.

Captain Drefahl has numerous personal military decorations including the Legion of Merit and three Navy Commendation Medals. He completed his 30 year career as the Director of Leadership Training for all Navy Reserve officers and continues to serve as a volunteer for

several organizations in the community. The Cincinnati Warbirds will perform a flyover, weather permitting.

Masks are required at this event. The parade has been canceled this year.

Rachel Murray, The City of Blue Ash

Memorial Day weekend festivities at Arlington Memorial Gardens Field of Memories open to public

The Arlington Memorial Gardens will once again create a Field of Memories to

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The Memorial Day Ceremony in the City of Blue Ash in 2017. PROVIDED

Student

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company, but also learning about how to do stuff like this," Malloy said. "Social media has been a huge help, and I want to go into PR. It's been good seeing what works and what doesn't work, and learning about how to make it personal to everybody."

Collins had to endure many harsh treatments during her battle with cancer. She endured chemotherapy as well as three bone marrow transplants. Malloy feels inspired to work with LLS's Students of the Year campaign so she can play a role in funding the research that will eventually help cancer treatments become less severe on the bodies of cancer patients.

"I wish people knew that the treatments do work. It's just that they're so horrible on the people who have to receive them," Malloy said. "One thing I

wish people knew about LLS is that their research doesn't just fund blood cancer. The research they do helps non-blood cancers like bone cancer, lung cancer and brain cancer, as well as other nonmalignant diseases like multiple sclerosis, diabetes and arthritis."

At many of her campaign's fundraising events, Malloy has been approached by numerous people – all of whom had a personal connection to cancer or were touched by her mission. Through Students of the Year, people of all walks of life have come together to remember loved ones and support the mission of finding better treatments and cures.

"It's been really inspiring. It's crazy to see not only how much cancer impacts people, which is really sad, but just how much of a uniting factor this has been," Malloy said.

Those who wish to learn more about Malloy's campaign, "Team Maya the Magnificent," can do so at <http://studentsoftheyear.org>.

Lindsay Wielonski

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