



## *Wilkes University - The Beacon*

Shown with the Jared Box are Alpha Chi officers Deana Sabol, president, Lindsey Hanna, secretary, and Amanda Edwards, treasurer.

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# **Jared Box Project Brightens Lives of Terminally Ill Children**

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Many who have passed through the Henry Student Center foyer during the passed few weeks have already seen the colorfully-decorated Jared Box, but markedly fewer know the story behind the charity that sparked one University club to bring the project to Wilkes.

Jared was a five-year-old little boy who was diagnosed with inoperable brain stem cancer in 1999. On every doctor's appointment during his fight against his illness, Jared would bring a backpack full of toys to help him get through the day. He would often ask his mother why the other children didn't bring any toys.

Upon losing his battle with cancer, the Janet Weis Children's Hospital, Jared's home hospital, decided to remember him by making plastic boxes filled with toys to give to other seriously ill children.

"While a child life volunteer at the Janet Weis Children's Hospital Geisinger in Danville (PA), I came across a brochure about the Jared Box. I cried when I learned the story behind the project ... I knew that the Jared Box would be a good [service project]," said Deana Sabol, President of Alpha Chi. which is a "co-educational society whose purpose is to promote academic excellence and exemplary character among college and university students," according to Sabol.

Like other Wilkes University organizations, Alpha Chi tries to perform a service project each semester. Sabol decided to take the idea of the Jared Box Project to the other officers and Alpha Chi's advisor, Dr. Dominick Trombetta. "They welcomed it with open arms," Sabol explained.

Alpha Chi then set up large donation boxes for toy and activity donations as well as piggy banks for monetary donations in the Henry Student Center.

"Our original goal was 200 boxes. Thanks to Student Government's donation, I think that we might be able to meet our goal," said Lindsey Hanna, Secretary of Alpha Chi. She added, "Right now, if I had to guess we probably could make around 50 boxes."

The SG donation Hanna referenced was given to the Jared Box on Wednesday, March 17, in the amount of \$500.

"In addition [to SG's donation], we received a significant amount of monetary and small gift donations from individuals throughout the campus community," said Sabol. In total, Alpha Chi will donate completed boxes valued at roughly \$1,000 dollars towards the Jared Box project.

Other organizations contributed substantially as well, namely Circle K, Tri Beta, Education Club and Alpha Chi themselves.

The four week-long drive for donations in the form of toys was a big success. "We filled two large boxes with toys," said Sabol.

"We want to help seriously ill children feel special by giving them a gift, a box full of goodies to occupy them during their hospital stay. It's a really great project and we have been overjoyed with the support we have gotten from the campus community," said Hanna.

"We [Alpha Chi] plan to have a meeting April 1, before Easter Break. In this meeting we are going to form a committee, which along with the officers, will set up the boxes on April 7. The boxes will be created by sorting items by age and gender, specifically newborns to two-year-olds and twelve to eighteen year old children. The boxes will contain not only toys but also anything from teething rings and rattles to books, puzzles, and journals," said Sabol.

Once this sorting process is complete, Alpha Chi will deliver the completed Jared boxes to the Janet Weis Children's Hospital on April 16. Contributions are being accepted until Friday, March 26. Donations can be left in the Jared Box on the first floor of the Henry Student Center or in the piggy bank located in the bookstore.