

Jakob's Cause grows beyond wildest dreams in second shot at making difference



By Brock Weir

Jakob Israel noticed people were looking at him in a different way.

Not only that, they were also treating him just a little bit differently as well.

While this might have taken some time to get used to as did the feeling of losing his once lustrous locks he was full of pride that his initial \$500 fundraising goal shot up to a whopping \$5,600 by the time a stylist from Yellow Orange Salon shaved his head in front of the school to raise money for the Canadian Cancer Society.

It is a feat the Grade 5 student at Lester B. Pearson Public School hopes to repeat next month, with a new personal fundraising goal of \$6,000. This year, however, there is strength in numbers.

'Last year turned out so well I wanted to continue it,' Jakob explains. 'I looked at how much I raised last year. I thought, 'this is incredible. I raised that much money in a short period of time' and I just thought it was amazing. After I shaved my hair, I wanted to get some other people in and I thought this year was the perfect time to do it.'

Permission forms in hand, Jakob went class to class explaining the objective hoping to sign up a handful of others to join him up on that stage once again. What he wound up with was 15 of his fellow students and two teachers ready to cultivate their follicles for a June bounty.

'I was only expecting five or six kids to be doing it and I wasn't expecting teachers at all,' Jakob says. 'I think they signed up because they know it is a really good cause and they want to be a part of it. I feel like some people think it is just adults that can do this and bring that much to the table and do so much for the community, but I was only nine years old when I did it last year and I think a lot of people were surprised and wanted to help out a lot to make this a big thing. They saw I am not an adult. I am only nine, and they saw a kid is doing it and thought of it.'

As plans for the campaign, dubbed Jakob's Cause, get underway, his parents are looking on with pride. His dad, Steven, says it is 'incredible' to see how things have progressed.

'Cancer touches everybody and the fact he has had so many peers join him and people stopping me to ask if my son was Jakob really shows me he is reaching that side of the community and bringing that awareness out, which makes me proud.'

For Jakob, the message he is trying to convey is clear.

?If you start something, you need to finish it. It doesn't matter what anyone else says about it. If you have a dream to do, go out there and follow it. You can do whatever you want in life.?

For more, visit www.jakobscouse.ca.