

Local girl feels luck of the Irish ahead of St. Patrick's Day event

By Brock Weir

Kalea Kirsh, a familiar face at the Aurora Farmers' Market where she works with her father, is feeling a little bit lucky this week as members of the community rally to boost her towards her goal of making a difference.

Revellers looking to get their Irish on at Aw, Shucks! this Thursday, St. Patrick's Day, will have the chance to participate in a silent auction and fundraiser at the restaurant to help Kalea's family send her to Shad Valley this summer, a program focusing on business, math, science and engineering.

"I have always wanted to do something with science and research, and get into a career where I am researching medicine and researching cures for cancer," says the teen. "I always wanted to have an early start on it, but never knew how. When I heard about Shad, I thought it would be a great opportunity."

But opportunity comes at a cost and once she was accepted into the program, her family was left unsure how they would pay for the program, which runs July 3 through July 26 and is facilitated by several universities across Canada

Enter Aw, Shucks' Mary Georgiopolous who had a chance meeting with Kalea's mom, Bonnie, a few weeks ago. After learning of the situation from Bonnie, Mary sprang into action organizing a silent auction, which will take place at the restaurant from 6 - 10 p.m., featuring donations from businesses throughout the community.

"It's a Chicken Soup for the Soul miracle that strangers are rallying for Kalea because they have been so impressed with her since she was a little girl and has seen how much she does for people," says Bonnie. "Mary recognized me and I told her I was eating myself up that Kalea should miss going to Shad. I can't believe what an angel that woman is. Mary puts the awe in Aw, Shucks."

Adds Kalea: "This is so out of the ordinary, especially that somebody I didn't even know was going to do this fundraiser. To help me with my goals is amazing."