

SuperSibs! founder an Energizer finalist

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Years ago, Melanie Goldish's son, Travis, had a rare form of leukemia.

He was in grave health, but the family pulled together.

The experience motivated Goldish to start SuperSibs! — a charity that supports children whose siblings suffer from cancer.

What started in 2002 out of her Hoffman Estates basement will have helped 10,000 children nationwide by the end of the year — including Goldish's younger son, Spencer.

Travis, now 14, has since undergone a bone marrow transplant and his cancer is in remission. His journey continued Wednesday as he graduated from eighth grade at Plum Grove Junior High School in Rolling Meadows.

But when Goldish got to the SuperSibs! office in Rolling Meadows Wednesday, she got a big surprise.

Her friends and family were gathered like a pack of bunnies in front of the office, all wearing pink rabbit ears.

Because of Goldish's work with SuperSibs!, she is line to win \$10,000, plus a \$5,000 charitable donation from the Energizer company.

Goldish is one of 10 finalists for the battery company's Keep Going Hall of Fame Award, which recognizes people with an indomitable charitable spirit, much like the company's mascot, the bass drum-pounding pink, plush bunny.

The winner, to be announced in September, will be decided through online voting. Cast your votes at www.energizer.com/halloffame. Voting starts June 14 and ends Aug. 1, and voters can cast ballots once daily.



Friends and family all don fuzzy, pink bunny ears Wednesday as they greet Melanie Goldish with the news she's a finalist for the Energizer Keep Going Hall of Fame Award. (Mark Welsh/Daily Herald)

"It's been a big day for me. It's been a long journey," Goldish said, sobbing. "I usually don't break down like this."

"Nobody deserves this more than you," SuperSibs! administrative assistant Jude Bramer told Goldish.

About 350 volunteers help SuperSibs! send comfort packages to sooth children, ages 4 to 18, coping with a brother or sister suffering from cancer.

One of those volunteers is Hoffman Estates' Sheri Liebovich, a 2004 graduate of Fremd High School in Palatine. Liebovich, a junior at Syracuse University in New York, still donates her time at the office when she returns home for the holidays.

"What (Goldish) does is amazing, and I look up to her for it," she said.

One of Liebovich's friends, Kendra Nickel, nominated Goldish for the award. Energizer received hundreds of applicants.

Goldish works at SuperSibs! full time, often logging more than 40 hours a week. If she wins, she'll put some of the money into her charity and set aside the rest for her sons' college funds.

"She does the work of about five people and she does it so fast," SuperSibs! director of development Suzanne Skala said.