

## Saratoga Lacrosse Team Honors Olivia Allen's Memory, Raises Funds for Childhood Cancer Research

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*The Saratoga Springs and Jamesville-DeWitt girls varsity lacrosse teams honored the memory of Saratoga grad Olivia Allen before a game last week. Photos by Jonathon Norcross.*

SARATOGA SPRINGS — It was a bright, beautiful day in Saratoga Springs when two lacrosse teams took the field. But something was different about this game. Opposing teams wore matching shirts that displayed yellow ribbons. An American flag flew at half-mast. Handwritten notes tied to a fence bordering the field offered tributes to someone the community had lost.

On a seemingly typical Monday afternoon, the Saratoga Springs and Jamesville-DeWitt girls varsity lacrosse teams paid tribute to Olivia Allen, a recent Saratoga grad who succumbed to leukemia in March. Silently, they completed 47 passes back and forth, a symbolic gesture recognizing the 47 children who are diagnosed with cancer every day in the United States.

"On March 28, Olivia left a legacy of strength and determination," said Blue Streaks Coach Jennifer Furze while standing at midfield. "Liv's heroic story is being heard and felt throughout the entire country. It is truly a testament to the beautiful human being she was."

The remarks were deeply personal for Furze, whose daughter was best friends with Olivia. Months ago, Furze and her team began planning a collaboration with the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation's LaCROSSe Out Cancer campaign. Then, Olivia passed away. Since then, Furze said her team has been passionate about aiding the foundation.

"I think it's been a really great outlet for their grief," Furze said. "They're channeling the way that they're feeling, their emotions, into positivity. Because that's ultimately what Liv stood for."

On behalf of both teams, Coach Furze presented a \$10,000 check to the foundation. It took the teams only three weeks to raise the donated funds. The money will aid efforts to find cures for pediatric cancers.

According to Bonnie Lattimore, the foundation's director of strategic partnerships, cancer is the leading cause of death by disease for kids, but only 4% of federal funding for cancer research is devoted to children. "We try to do anything we can, like partner with Saratoga Springs lacrosse or other organizations, to try to fill that funding gap, and they've done a fantastic job," Lattimore said that \$50 funds about one hour of research. "This has a huge impact for pediatric cancer."

Olivia Allen graduated from Saratoga Springs High School in 2023 and planned to attend Florida State University to study nursing. She played for the Blue Streaks field hockey and gymnastic teams.

Below the lacrosse field's scoreboard, next to the half-mast flag, was an artful blue and yellow display that read "Live Like Liv."