

Hundreds 'Rock the Curve' showing support of Curvy Girls

By Marianne Mueller
Reporter

ROCKFORD — "Curvy Girls of Northern Illinois Have Your Back."

This slogan rang true on the flip side as group supporters came out in droves at the first ever "Rock The Curve" for Scoliosis.

Sunshine filled the sky as 250 joined in a two-mile walk on Sunday, June 12. Opening action took place outside the log lodge of Rockford's YMCA. Each person who registered donned a green T-shirt reading,

"The Curvy Girls, Rock the Curve" in blue. The year 2011 and date also appeared. A white vertebrae ran through the middle of shirts making a noticeable statement. Choices of ribbon styles were worn as well.

Sponsors filled the back of the shirt. Everyone taking part in Rock The Curve received a goodie bag containing a water bottle, an ice pack, a pack of gum, and animal crackers. Face painting created smiles along with indoor action.

Beautiful items lined a table ready for challengers to win either a silent auction or raffle basket, or specialty pieces. A 50/50 raffle added excitement. Handmade bracerlets, magnets and key chains were sold in hopes of raising extra funds by members of the Illinois Curvy



A Curvy Girls banner was proudly displayed during the fund-raiser.

Marianne Mueller photos

teasing, "It is too bad that the Curvy Girls original founder from Long Island, New York, Leah Stoltz was unable to be on hand at the Rock The Curve event.

After a few minutes he called Leah Stoltz up, surprising Illinois Curvy Girls originator, Julia Dayton. Loud cheering proceeded as Miss Stoltz tapped into her story.

"I felt so alone and isolated," she said. "I knew I couldn't imagine continuing to feel that

Dayton a wish charm followed by warm hugs.

Everyone lined up ready to walk along the very scenic Sinnissippi bike path. A large banner was carried followed by Curvy Girls members waving flags.

After returning to the log lodge, the girls remained focused as each shared their personal stories.

Founder Leah Stoltz furthered her comments, "I was diagnosed while finishing my

Julia Dayton. Julia inspired, through her words.

"I was diagnosed in 2009," she said. "My curve was at 55 percent. I wear a brace 23 hours a day and am the youngest leader." Miss Dayton's inspiration came from learning of Leah's story.

Each Curvy Girl spoke with specifics about varying

degrees discovered. Age ranges of Curvy Girls run from eight to 18. Local Curvy Girls hail from different nearby cities or towns.

Extra highlights of Rock the Curve include Curvy Girls members giving webmaster, Chip Gammel a special gift. The girls presented him with a navy blue embroidered golf Polo. Gracing the shirt was embroidered with the Curvy Girls logo. Additionally each girl signed thank you card for Mr. Gammel's generosity.

Gammel serves as web designer, along with maintaining the site free of charge.

More support was shown by Kohl's Cares, Lilly Lou's, Lilly Bear Photography, and Tupperware. The winner of the 50/50 raffle returned \$130 back to Julia Dayton. He stated, I am returning the money so that more of you may attend the convention next spring.

By teaming up, more than \$9,500 was raised. Future plans include attending the National convention in Long Island, NY, advancing Scoliosis-related programs, and extending research efforts. One main goal remains at the heart of every Curvy Girl. No Curvy Girl will ever have to bear Scoliosis alone.

Faith Lutheran invites

Girls.

To differentiate themselves, Curvy Girls wore original pink shirts.

Serving as Master of ceremonies was local television personality, Aaron Wilson. Wilson welcomed everyone followed by a breathtaking announcement. He began by

way. This is part of the reason I started a group in 2005. We meet to compare stories, laugh in full support of each other. Since then we have been featured on HALO awards.

There are now 20 groups in seventeen different states. This has been a dream come true." Stoltz presented Julia

first year of middle school with Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis. I had to wear a brace to school. On June 27, 2006 I had two titanium rods and 22 screws affixed to my spine.

"The intention behind starting a support group was simple. I wanted to talk to other girls going through the same things, feeling alone or different, angry about having to wear a brace, and worried about having surgery. With my mom's help eventually Curvy Girls of Long Island was formed. During meetings Curvy Girls discuss teen related issues, how to wear clothing tips, and share stories.

Leah Stoltz touched hearts with her words.

"There really are two parts to Scoliosis. The first is the obvious physical portion. The other is the emotional part, which is where you all come in. You are our emotional brace, thank you for helping us through this tough time as we deal with this. How we overcome this is how we will face the rest of our lives."

Group leader of the Illinois Curvy Girls is 10-year-old

public to ice cream social

SOUTH BELOIT — Faith Lutheran Church, 1305 Blackhawk Blvd., South Beloit, invites the public to a free Ice Cream Social from 4 to 6 p.m. on Sunday, July 10.

Cake and ice cream will be served, and food will be available for purchase. In addition, there will be games for adults and children and door prizes.



Julia Dayton (second from left) walks with other Curvy Girls.



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