

## Local children honored as youngest Red Cross Heroes

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The Ranieri children and their friends have fun at the Snow Party fundraiser for the Red Cross. Pictured from left to right: Olivia Ranieri, Lisa Nicole Roberts, Nicholas Ranieri (in elf attire) and Kira Roberts.

**PALM CITY** — When most people hear the word hero, they imagine someone with superhuman strength, or a person who runs into a burning building to save a life. To say the least, it would be unusual to imagine two snowball-yielding children in that role. However, that is exactly who was honored as heroes of Martin County at the awards luncheon for the Martin County Chapter of the American Red Cross on Friday, June 4.

Honored as the youngest participants in the Red Cross Heroes Campaign, Olivia Ranieri, 12, and Nicholas Ranieri, 10, of Palm City, co-hosted a snow party to raise awareness and funds for the American Red Cross. Support was provided by their parents, Rob and Stacy Ranieri, Cassidy's Ice, and a generous group of friends and family throughout the country.

The Heroes Campaign is a grassroots effort for the American Red Cross that helps to raise awareness about the services the American Red Cross provides while also raising money that supports local needs for disaster relief, health and safety education and more.

Each Hero pledges to raise \$1,000 for the Red Cross during the campaign period. Olivia and Nicholas set their goal even higher at \$1,200 and worked for weeks to achieve their personal fundraising goal. They were thrilled to know that in the end they surpassed their goal by raising \$1,365 and were able to donate even more money to the Red Cross.

Funds came in the form of personal donations from friends and family locally, but through the use of Facebook, the Ranieri's were able to generate more donations for the Heroes campaign from unlikely sources. "Some of the donors were old friends of mine and Rob's that we have not seen in 20 years, but they saw our Facebook postings and were impressed enough by the kids' efforts to contribute to their campaign. It was really very touching to have these childhood friends support our own children's philanthropic efforts and what a testament to the power of social media," explained Stacy Ranieri.

The Ranieri kids plan to participate in the Heroes Campaign again next year and are already brainstorming on their next fundraising idea. The Martin County Chapter of the American Red Cross is funded by local dollars. The Chapter receives no Federal, State or local tax funding. To donate your dollars or your time, or be a part of the Red Cross Heroes campaign, call (772) 287-2002 or go to <http://www.martinredcross.org> for more info.

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