Local dancer's fundraiser grows into charity gala

SickKids to benefit from event started by Jenny Bowser

By LISA TALLYN Staff Writer

What started as a dance re-Halton cital for cancer research back in 2008 at Christ the King Secondary School has evolved into a full-blown charity gala in Toronto set for Wednesday. Jenny Bowser, 20, of Georgetown, founder of the Dancers for Cancer event, said she came up with the idea in her high school math class.

"At the time, I had just lost my aunt to cancer, and she was a huge advocate and fundraiser up until she passed away. She inspired me to do some-

of just feel sorry for myself."

That event, put on by of Etobicoke. Bowser and friend and fellow Assistance Services of Halton raised to go to SickKids. Hills. The school continues to raised \$45,000 in total.

The sold-out Dancers for Cancer Charity Gala will be held tomorrow (Wednesday) at The Grand Banking Hall at One King West and all proceeds support The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids).

thing about the cause, instead The event is being co-chaired by Bowser's friend Gloria Kim

Bowser's aunt, Jane Rogdancer Melanie Chin in 2008, ers, left behind two-and-a-half raised more than \$10,000, year-old twins when she died, which went to the Canadian so Bowser said she knows her Cancer Society and Cancer aunt would want the money

They hope to raise \$50,000 hold the event, and so far has at the gala. Sportscaster Rod Black will be emcee and Canadian hockey icon Paul Henderson, a family friend of Bowser's who is currently battling leukemia, is the keynote speaker.

The evening features a three-course meal, various dancers- including dancers from local schools Centre Stage School of the Arts (Bowser's dance studio) and McGinley Academy of Irish Dance— and a silent auction.

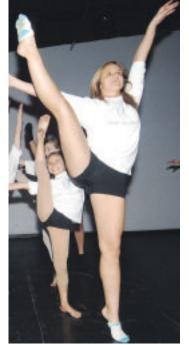
"Dancing is something every kid wants to do, and something that every child should have an opportunity to do," said co-chair Kim.

"It made all the sense in the world to donate to SickKids.

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Former Christ the King student Jenny Bowser has seen her high school fundraiser turn into a charity gala for the Hospital for Sick Children in only four years. File photo

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"It was important to us to connect to the cause and give back in a way that was meaningful to us. We are donating one third of the proceeds to the art therapy program, onethird to the Child Life program, and one-third to cancer research at SickKids. I know my aunt would be proud that we are giving the money back to kids," said Bowser.

Jessica Theocharides, Sick-Kids patient ambassador and competitive dancer, will share her SickKids experience at the event. Jessica was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) in 2009 and is now in remission

Bowser, currently studying Human Development at University of Guelph, with plans to be a lawyer, said she would love to host the event annually.

"I would love to be attached to Sick Kids every year," said Bowser, who added she's "blessed" to know the people and have the contacts she does.

"I have a million people to thank," said Bowser.

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