

Madison area

JANUARY 2011

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Lily's Fund, Luau seeks end to seizures



Lily Giroux

■ *By Teresa Paprock, Neighbors editor*

Like all toddlers, Lily Giroux fell down a lot. But her mom and dad, Anne and David Giroux, couldn't help but notice there was something strange about the way she was falling. She would drop to the ground like a rag doll, and was not aware time had passed.

Tests revealed that little Lily was having atonic seizures – a sudden loss of muscle tone – due to epilepsy.

No parent wants to hear that a child has epilepsy. But the Girouxes didn't wallow in pity for Lily. They worked with doctors, testing medications until

they found effective ones, and they took action: they started a non-profit organization, Lily's Fund. Their goal was to raise funds to support epilepsy research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Lily's Luau
Saturday evening,
January 15
Memorial Union
Great Hall

Today, Lily is a confident, beautiful 15-year-old girl who is looking forward to a luau – the third annual Lily's Luau, to be held Saturday evening, January 15, at the Memorial Union Great Hall. It's Lily's Fund's biggest fundraiser of the year, and Anne and David hope that it will help the University to come up with more "tools:"



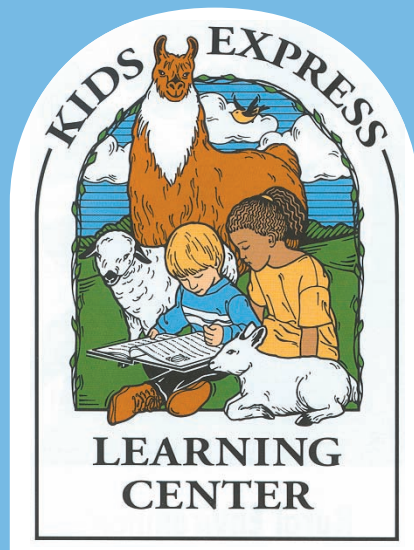
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"Lily's seizures have been under control for several years," says Anne, "but we have been through all the meds; we've used all the tools in the toolbox. We want there to be more tools in that toolbox for treatments in the future."

The Giroux family has become expert on the topic of epilepsy. Anne points out that epilepsy affects more

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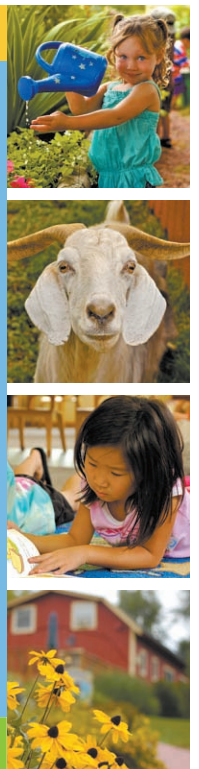
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Lily *continued from page 1*

people than multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Parkinson's disease combined, and kills more than 50,000 people a year – but receives less funding than any of those conditions. That's probably because

“The brain power there is amazing. Our goal is to find a fellow there whose whole job is to crack this code.”

– Anne Giroux

epileptic seizures are scary, and people don't like to think about them.

But Lily is in good company, as Thomas Edison, Florence Griffith-Joiner, Charles Dickens and Prince all suffered from epilepsy. Epilepsy can result from head trauma, or it can strike



Guests at last year's Lily's Luau danced into the evening.

for no known reason. One-third of people with epilepsy are able to control their seizures with medication, but the rest either get minimal relief or none at all.

Lily's mom and dad are both UW graduates, and Anne says, “The brain power there is amazing. Our goal is to find a fellow there whose whole job is to crack this code.”

Lily's Fund has been in existence for four years, and Anne says, “Our undertaking has gone viral.” Each luau gets bigger and brings Anne and David closer to their dream of jointly funding a new research fellowship in the UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

As for Lily, “She's a teenager,” says mom. “She's a little shy about it but on the other hand, she's very proud. She will tell you, ‘I have seizures.’ She has a very positive outlook on life.”

Tickets to the event may still be available; call 233-8692. More information is available at www.lilysfund.org. ■

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