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University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



A Taste of Hope

05.21.2007 | Health, Students Sideline by leukemia and chemotherapy, University of Dayton student Jamie Baker started cooking dinner for her family. Her compilation of family recipes and suggestions turned into a cookbook that has raised more than \$3,000, all of which she will donate to the American Cancer Society.

Baker, from Fort Thomas, Ky., started compiling the cookbook in March. It includes her story about her fight with cancer, inspirational quotes and Bible verses. She initially printed 150 books, but those sold out in a week. Anyone interested in obtaining a cookbook for a minimum donation of \$15 can e-mail Baker at bakerjac@notes.udayton.edu.

"Most people say they try to start reading, but they can't finish it because they get emotional," the chemical engineering major and environmental engineering minor said about *The Taste of Hope*. "They say I'm a huge inspiration. When they get flustered at work, they realize it's not a big deal. Knowing your life has benefited someone else is one of the best feelings."

Baker also realized during her battle that she can work to benefit others by being an engineer. When asked whether the thought of using her chemical engineering background to help develop cancer-fighting drugs crossed her mind, she said, "It hasn't, but I care more."

"I got into environmental engineering because of global warming. As I study more and see environmental concerns that cause some cancers (her form is not caused by environmental factors), I'm more interested in that."

Before her illness, Baker said, "It wasn't clear to me how closely engineering and service are related. Now it's more common sense. Engineers are typically the start of any project and the first line of making sure those projects keep people safe."

As a student, Baker already has done work to make sure people are safe. She helped monitor compliance with EPA and Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations at GE Aircraft Engines in Evendale, near Cincinnati.

Doctors diagnosed Baker with acute myelogenous leukemia last October. She went into remission after a month of intense treatments and has been in remission ever since. Her doctors told her there is a 50 to 60 percent chance the cancer could return to her body. If it doesn't return before February 2009, she can say she is cured.

"I'm getting through this with the love, support and prayers of family and friends, especially my UD friends including my boyfriend, Jonathan Rausch," Baker said.

Some of that support includes free printing and binding of some of the cookbooks courtesy of the parents of a UD classmate. Amy Tiedge, Rausch's stepsister and a UD student, is selling wristbands that say "I Will" for \$5. Proceeds will benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Baker said hundreds of family members and friends have been wearing the wristbands that imply "I will beat this." Anyone can order wristbands by e-mailing Baker.

Baker, a junior, resumed classes this summer after missing the 2006-07 school year.

For interviews, contact Shawn Robinson at 937-229-3391.