

Grant Besner Creates Website to Promote Laughter

Davie Teen Creates Website to Promote Laughter

BY DEBBY TEICH

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD GRANT BESNER OF DAVIE IS A BIG BELIEVER IN the saying, "Laughter is the best medicine." Through his new website, www.llamamamahaha.com, he has been encouraging others to do the same. Llama Mama: Healing Through Humor aims to cheer up children that are dealing with trauma in their lives.

Grant has always used humor to deal with difficult situations. In 2006, it helped him cope with the loss of his 11-year-old brother, who passed away after a five-month-long battle with Leukemia.

"As a kid going through a truly horrific experience, there was nothing I really could do to escape the reality I was living in," said Grant. "So, rather than keeping my head down, I got back on my feet and just tried to keep laughing and living, and it helped me get through it all. Life is way too short to be unhappy."

Last year, while he was volunteering at a hospital and joking around with kids, he was reminded of the powerful effect that laughter can have on healing.

"By using humor, I was able to make the day better for the sick children," said Grant. "I decided to create a funny website to cheer up kids who are struggling or dealing with loss. I would be able to draw upon my experience to help other kids dealing with similar issues."

In March 2013, he launched Llama Mama, an interactive website that features funny jokes, photos, videos and more. As editor, Grant makes sure that all of the content is appropriate for young children, and has no "triggers" that would set off any kind of negative emotional response. Some of his friends help him manage the website, including Alexander Lieberman, Carter Graves and Zachary Chase.

Llama Mama has already been a huge success. Grant says child life specialists in over 14 of America's top ranked children's hospitals share the website with their patients. Additionally, Llama Mama has already received more than 10,000 page views. Despite the success, however, Grant still isn't satisfied.

"This is something that has the potential to help a whole lot of kids, and we're not going to stop until every child who needs a laugh knows about this website," said Grant. "I want them to know there's a place they can go to escape whatever they're dealing with and just smile for a minute. It will make all the difference."

Grant is hoping to attend Duke, Brown or Yale in the fall 2015. He currently attends University School of NSU and has a 4.87 GPA. He is Interpretation Event Leader for his Speech and Debate team, captain of the swim team, and vice president of Student Council. He was recently named Top 6 in the country for Humorous Interpretation at the Yale University Speech and Debate Tournament.



Grant Besner checks his website.

For information, visit www.llamamamahaha.com or send an email to llamamamahaha@gmail.com.