

The Fight of Her Life

Genesis is battling a rare form of cancer. But with the support of CIS, her mentor Julie and her school community, she's fulfilling her dream of finishing high school and going to college.



SOURCE Communities In Schools Palm Beach County
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For Genesis Perozo, Riviera Beach Preparatory and Achievement Academy is a “second chance school” – a special high school for students like her who need another opportunity to complete their education.

Genesis is used to second chances. The South Florida student has had many in her short life and is determined to take advantage of this one, while she has time.

Battling a rare form of cancer, Genesis is fighting to beat it so she can finish high school this year and become the first in her family to go to college.

First diagnosed at 7, Genesis has won that battle twice before. She underwent successful surgery as a youngster only to have it return at 15 and force her into treatment again.

Both times, she had the love and support of her family to help her through.

Now, she's facing the battle alone.

Her family moved back to their home in Venezuela in her junior year while Genesis was in remission. Her mother has now begged her to return there but Genesis believes she has the best chance to fight her cancer and finish high school in the U.S. - where she's spent most of her life.

Communities In Schools of Palm Beach County is determined to help Genesis achieve her lifelong dream. They've matched her with a mentor who comes with the perfect balance of life experience and professional skills.

Julie Khanna is herself an alumna of Communities In Schools and understands some of the challenges Genesis is facing focusing on her work.

But perhaps her best qualification is that she's also an oncology nurse.

"People say it was divine intervention," said Khanna.

Together the two have forged more than just a mentoring relationship. They've created a personal bond.

Julie has helped Genesis get the medication she needs for chemotherapy, arranged for her transportation to treatment and coached her through the process of applying for college and much needed financial aid.

The entire CIS family has also adopted Genesis. In December, the school held a fundraising carnival called "Genesis Day" to help raise funds for Genesis.

Each day is battle for Genesis, some days just to get up out of bed. But with the help of Julie, she's managing to complete her work on time and will graduate.

And with the support of Julie and her CIS family, she's determined to begin college in the Fall.

