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Skin-cancer survivor brings shade sail to school

Former Tarwater student facilitates gift by foundation

Ty Young

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Students from Tarwater Elementary School jumped for joy Friday when one of their former students helped dedicate a shade sail for their recreation area Friday.

The significance of the gift may have been lost on the students, but for Tarwater alumnus and melanoma sufferer Kim Clark, it was a chance to give back and keep others safe.

The 15-year-old is an ambassador from the Shade Foundation, a non-profit group created by Shonda Schilling, wife of former Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Curt Schilling. Like Kim, she developed melanoma, a form a skin cancer, while living in Arizona.



The 15-foot-tall shade sail will cover the recreation area designated for developmentally challenged students at the school. It was donated by Phoenix shade and awning company Shade Central although Kim made the decision on which school received it.

Picking her old elementary school wasn't a tough choice, she said.

"My heart is here," she said. "They needed the shade and I had an opportunity to help."

Kim's condition has since stabilized, but this week her mother was

diagnosed with melanoma. Although Karen Clark said she draws inspiration from her daughter's three-year bout with the cancer, the news was still a shock.

"It's just bringing up all the emotions again," she said.

With the new shade sail, Tarwater Principal Jeff Hensley hopes his other students will not share the experience. He is proud that one of his former students would think of the school and conduct youth skin-safety seminars.

"It's so neat," he said. "When her mom called to say she wanted to donate the structure, I was just floored."

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