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Last modified: Thursday, May 5, 2011 11:15 AM CDT

Talent show to benefit camp

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Caroline Ford was at the ALIVE Center when she saw a brochure for the Center for Courageous Kids.

"I had heard of it before but wasn't that familiar with it," the 14-year-old Bowling Green girl said.

The Center for Courageous Kids provides a camp experience for medically fragile children and is completely free to their families. After reading about it, Caroline felt touched by the mission set by Elizabeth Turner Campbell, who died in February.

"The founder, Elizabeth Turner Campbell, wanted to provide sick children a place to feel normal and just be a kid. I never met her but after touring the camp, that's what made me want to do the showcase," she said. "It gave me goosebumps. I felt like I'd met her before. She really was an extraordinary person. She really does continue to bring joy to children. Her legacy is really inspiring. You can leave something behind and make a difference."

Caroline wants to help make a difference for the camp with The Showcase for the Center for Courageous Kids. Presented by the Young Artist Alliance and Drobocky Orthodontics, the show will be at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday at the Capitol Arts Center. Tickets are \$5.

"Anyone can go to summer camp, but kids who have these chronic illnesses need the Center for Courageous Kids. It's so important for young artists to realize it's not about us," she said. "You have the privilege and responsibility to make life easier for someone else. I think we can really make a difference this year."

Stormi Murtie, communications director at the Center for Courageous Kids, said the proceeds will go directly toward programming for the medically fragile children served there.

"We have over 8,000 served from 30 states and Canada," she said. "It humbles us that families will travel such a long distance where their children can feel normal for half a second."

Murtie said she met Caroline and her family when they toured the center.

"Caroline Ford is an amazing young woman who exemplifies the spirit of our founder, Elizabeth Turner Campbell, in showing that one woman can truly make a difference," she said. "It's been a beautiful partnership in the truest sense of the word. We're thrilled about not only the event, but also making good friends."

The Young Artist Alliance started last year in response to the earthquake in Haiti, Caroline said. The fundraiser helped the American Red Cross Haiti Relief effort.

"I was watching the news and it got me thinking that it would be great to have a showcase to benefit Haiti," she said. "We raised more than \$4,000. It was so successful and so much fun. I learned so much."

In the fall, the group did "Will Sing for Food" as a food drive for the American Red Cross Food Pantry.

"Performers brought in cans," Caroline said. "We raised 3,000 cans."

For this showcase, there will be 53 acts - about 25 for each show. The Red River Fiddlers will open the 3 p.m. show, and the Western Kentucky University Pre-College String Program will open at 7 p.m. Two young artists will also receive the Young Artist Alliance's Young Artist of the Year Award, which is given to young performers who are using their performances, talents and abilities to help make the community and/or world a better place.

"They will be two completely different shows," Caroline said.

Caroline said she is grateful for the help she has received in putting the show together and hopes to continue the showcase as an annual event.

"We hope to expand it and keep doing it," she said. "I think it's a great addition to the community. We have such a great team effort."

Other sponsors for the event include Alvin and Alice Ford, Mike and Belle Lady Hunt, Houchens Insurance Group and Community Foundation of Bowling Green-Warren County.