



Frontiersman
July 22, 2003

Cold Stone Creamery dishing out wishes

By CASEY RESSLER-Valley Life editor

Cold Stone Creamery is helping dish out wishes, as the Wasilla area business is part of the "World's Largest Ice Cream Social."

Thursday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., the ice cream social is bringing together kids and adults for a tasty concoction of cake batter ice cream with Oreos, M&Ms and chocolate fudge mixed in. There will be a clown balloon artist, carnival games, music and dancing.

But there is also a serious side to the social. Like the Wasilla store, Cold Stone Creamery locations around the country are hosting the event to help raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

"Every year, there is a new ice cream creation designed by a Make-A-Wish child, and that's what we serve," said Wasilla manager Stephanie Newberry. "This event is really kid-friendly."

You can stop by and get the concoction for free. Of course, donations to the Make-A-Wish Foundation will gladly be accepted. Last year, the Wasilla store participated in the first-ever event and people supported it, Newberry said.

"It was a lot busier last year than any other day," Newberry said. "This year, we are getting ready for even more people. I think all the stores are. We're trying to make it bigger and better every year."

For the Alaska stores, this year's even is extra special. The Make-A-Wish child who inspired the creation, 8-year-old Alexei of Atlanta, recently completed his wish, which was to come to Alaska.

"He wanted to see the wildlife of Alaska, so he went to Denali National Park and the SeaLife Center," Newberry said. "He stopped by our store. We've got his star up."

Stars are another way people can help support the World's Largest Ice Cream Social. By purchasing a star to be hung in Cold Stone Creamery, people are donating to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. That part of the fund-raiser is going well in Wasilla.

"We've sold a lot more stars this year than we did last year," Newberry said.

Alexei was born in Khabarovsk, Russia in 1995 and adopted by Anji and Brett at 17 months. After turning 6 1/2, the energetic and outgoing boy started to get sick. On March 18, 2002, he brought home his report card from first grade and a note from the clinic that he had a fever of 100.7 degrees.

After numerous doctor visits in which he didn't respond to medication, he was diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy, meaning his heart was about twice as large as it should be.

Alexei needed a new heart to survive, and he got just that after 20 days on the heart transplant list. He received his transplant on April 16, 2002 and has been growing stronger every day.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants wishes to children with life-threatening illnesses. Some children want to visit a place, such as Alaska, while others want to meet celebrities or enjoy a particular experience.

The World's Largest Ice Cream Social takes place during National Ice Cream Month, making it a natural fit.

"The month-long celebration to honor National Ice Cream Month allows ice cream lovers around the country to enjoy their favorite treats while helping to grant wishes for children in their own communities," said Paula Van Ness, president and CEO of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

For more information about the event this year, interested people can call the Wasilla Cold Stone Creamery at 357-2653. There will be similar celebrations at the other Alaska Cold Stone Creamery locations, including the three stores in Anchorage and the Eagle River location.