

*From Style magazine archives:*

Shane's Village, an El Dorado Hills organization formed to support Shane Rogers—an 8-year-old boy with acute lymphocytic leukemia—is also a testimony to the power of friendship.

Kristen Rogers received her son's diagnosis in a hospital emergency room last July. "At that moment, in the emergency



Diane Fontana/Style magazine

room by myself," she says, "I felt very alone." She made two calls: first to her husband, Sean, then to her friend Ruth Farfan. Farfan and her husband "dropped what they were doing and came," Rogers says. "That was the beginning of the incredible amount of support we have received."

Farfan and three friends, Jenn Soto, Kim Casarella and Kristin Roth, established Shane's Village to "try to keep a smile on Shane's face during what is probably one of the toughest things he'll ever have to go through," Soto says. In the months since, "like wildfire," Rogers says, Shane's story has touched hearts all over the world. The centerpiece is the Shane's Village Facebook page. With candor and optimism, Rogers writes almost daily of Shane's grueling weekly chemotherapy treatments—which are now once a month—his encouraging test results and even his setbacks. More than 1,100 friends follow her posts.

The first 29 days of the planned three-year course of treatment were the worst; Shane lost 15 pounds and temporary use of his arms and legs. Six months later, Web site photos reveal a healthier little boy with a constant grin on his face. Recent posts report good test results, some fun times, and even a little hair regrowth. Perhaps most heartwarming are the notes from faraway followers who have never met Shane, including the mayor of a town in Germany and a police chief in Missouri. Early on, Rogers came up with the slogan "You got this, Shane" to motivate her son, and scores of Facebook fans—including the Seattle Seahawks starters—responded with photos of signs bearing those words. "Seeing the signs is really, really big for Shane," Soto says.

As a pharmaceutical rep, now on unpaid medical leave, Rogers liked feeling that she was helping people. Since Shane's illness, she is envisioning new ways to do that. Seeing how much comfort stuffed animals bring Shane, she and her friends formed Courage & Comfort to donate "fuzzy, comfy, soft" never-used animals and blankets to hospitalized children. Last December, the group delivered more than 600 items. They plan to hold a second Courage & Comfort campaign this summer. Shane's Village also sponsors blood drives, to bank blood in Shane's name, and is holding fundraisers to help the family financially.

Not only is the family's income down, but they also had to move to a one-story house when Shane could no longer manage stairs. Until the paperwork to become a nonprofit is complete, Shane's Village has been adopted by the El Dorado Hills Firefighters' Association, which accepts donations on Shane's behalf. The founders plan to keep the organization operating even after Shane is well. "A lot of people don't have the support they need," Rogers says. "My goal is to help other families. "