

# Waco Tribune Herald

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Courtney Janecka, 12, and her mother, Cindy, make and sell beaded bracelets. Sales of the bracelets pay for copies of Cindy Janecka's book about surviving breast cancer, which are given away to people who need encouragement. BELOW: An example of the beaded bracelets, dubbed Courtney's Creations. Staff photos— Jerry Larson

Courtney Janecka, 12, makes and sells beaded bracelets, dubbed Courtney's Creations, and uses the money to give people who need encouragement copies of her mother's book about surviving cancer.

Courtney Janecka won her way to the nation's capital by wrapping bracelets around people's wrists.

Janecka, 12, was chosen as one of two Texas winners of The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards for 2016. She makes and sells beaded bracelets, then uses the profits to give people who need encouragement copies of her mother's book about surviving cancer.

"I just really thought that it was special that she had written a book to share with others — just how to find hope," Janecka said. "And I thought it was important that other people got that message."

Two students won from each state and Washington, D.C., with each winner receiving \$1,000, a trip to the capital in May and a silver medallion.

Harold Banks, spokesman for The Prudential Awards, said winners are selected by an independent panel that looks for volunteer longevity and the impact the student's work has on the community.

The awards, in their 21st year, had more than 29,000 students apply this year and are open to students in grades five to 12.

During the trip to Washington, 10 students will be chosen as national winners and will receive \$5,000 for themselves and \$5,000 for a charity of their choice.

Anyone can nominate a student, but if the nomination comes from an individual outside an official nonprofit group or organization, it must be certified by the student's principal, Banks said. Janecka was nominated by River Valley Intermediate School.

Janecka said she doesn't know what she is going to do with the reward money yet, but she is looking forward to traveling to Washington.

"I am really happy that I won," she said. "It's just a really big honor for me."

Janecka's mother, Cindy, published her first book, titled "This Can't Be Happening," in the summer of 2013. Cindy Janecka said she uses her yearlong battle with breast cancer to help patients and families through the treatment process.

Courtney Janecka was only a toddler when her mother underwent treatment in 2005, but after the book was published, she wanted to help her mother spread her message of hope.

"Her story, I think, is very relatable," Courtney Janecka said. "A lot of people, although they might not be going through the same type of cancer she had, by reading the book can understand what she went through and how to cope with things similar."

An example of Courtney's Creations.

Courtney Janecka, 12, and her mother, Cindy, make beaded bracelets. They sell the bracelets to pay for copies of Cindy Janecka's book about surviving cancer, which are given away to people who need encouragement.

- Staff photo— Jerry Larson



Courtney Janecka and her mother, along with some friends, have made close to 1,200 bracelets, dubbed Courtney's Creations, which are sold for \$10 at Morrison's Gifts, Simply Delicious Bakery and The Gift Horse.

Money raised from the bracelets has enabled the mother-daughter pair to give away 800 books to hospitals, churches and schools across the state.

The book is normally sold for \$13, but each bracelet pays for one book after the cost of supplies. Both the bracelets and the book are available online at [www.cindyjanecka.com](http://www.cindyjanecka.com).

Cindy Janecka regularly speaks about her experiences at churches and survivor events where she gives away as many books as possible. The pair have even made statewide tours to ensure that the books paid for by the bracelets are given away.

“My hope was to just get it in the hands of the people who needed it,” Cindy Janecka said. “And Courtney, she was only 18 months, so she doesn't really remember that. So the fact that she's kind of joined in with me on this is pretty cool.”