Crowd rallies for Games

Saturday events will help victims of cancer, families

Bernard Chaillot
Vermilion Bureau Editor

LAFAYETTE — Kaitlyn Petijean, 6, jumped up and down in an inflatable castle until her freckles were a blur Wednesday at a pep rally at the Cajundome to boost Saturday’s Games of Acadiana.

The inaugural games from noon to 9 p.m. at the Cajundome are a spinoff of the Miles for Miles Foundation for cancer research and support efforts for Acadiana cancer patients and their families.

Hank and Debbie Perret started the foundation after the 1996 cancer death of their son Miles, 8.

“We wanted to find a way to remember Miles and for his brothers to remember him in a fun and positive way that helps others deal with the same kind of loss we went through as a family,” Debbie Perret said.

Among participants Wednesday were 15th Judicial District judges Thomas Duplantier and Jules Edwards III, who showed up with his 8-year-old son, Julien, a third-grader at Ascension Day School, who soon joined Petijean in the inflatable fun-jump.

“Almost everyone has been touched by cancer either within their own family or through close friends and acquaintances,” Edwards said. “Anything we can do to ease their suffering and work to find a cure is worth the effort.”

George and Susan Petijean, owners of Kaitlyn’s Rose flower shop on Guilbeau Road, are among business people donating portions of their sales to the foundation and games. “We knew Miles from being friends with the Perret family, and are helping in our own small way as so many others are,” Susan Petijean said.

Robert Trahan of Lafayette Motors, co-organizer of the games, said so many individuals and businesses have made donations that registration fees of $100 for teams and $125 for individuals are being waived.

“We are able to open up the event to everyone free of charge because the people of Acadiana have opened up their hearts and assured that the first of many annual games will be a resounding success,” Trahan said. “Of course, we will still be accepting donations Saturday to go toward the fight against cancer.”