



## Bear business keeps girl busy, helps cancer patients



### News

Metro | Latest News

North County

Temecula/Riverside

Tijuana/Border

California

Nation

Mexico

World

Obituaries

Today's Paper

AP Headlines

Business

Technology

Biotech

Markets

In Depth

In Iraq

War on Terror

Pension Crisis

Special Reports

Multimedia

Photo Galleries

Topics

Education

Features

Health | Fitness

Military

Politics

Science

Solutions

Opinion

Columnists

Steve Breen

Forums

Weblogs

Services

Weather

Traffic

[SAVE THIS](#) [EMAIL THIS](#) [PRINT THIS](#) [MOST POPULAR](#)

By Sherry Parmet

UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

November 26, 2004

When Taylor Crabtree's grandmother was diagnosed with colon cancer, the little girl decided to paint hair clips, then sell them before Christmas and pour the profits into teddy bears for younger cancer patients.



SANDY HUFFAKER

Taylor Crabtree, 14, a student at La Costa Canyon High School, runs TayBear Co., a nonprofit organization that sells hand-painted hair clips to raise money to buy teddy bears for young cancer patients. She started TayBear as a fourth-grader.

Her goal of 50 bears astonished her mother.

"I thought, 'Oh, that's so sweet. The little entrepreneur,' " said Tricia Crabtree. "But I was worried – 50 bears?"

However, Taylor far exceeded her mark, by taking her sales pitch to friends and teachers. She was 7.

Taylor's grandmother recovered from her cancer, but the inspiration she provided has endured.

At 14, Taylor attends La Costa Canyon High School in Carlsbad by day while moonlighting as manager of TayBear Co., a nonprofit she started as a fourth-grader. Since its inception, the organization has recruited 800 youth volunteers to paint hair clips, and has raised \$100,000 and prepared bears that have been distributed to nearly 20,000 young patients with cancer and chronic blood diseases to almost 200 hospitals across the country.

The family garage is so jammed with boxes of stuffed animals and supplies that Taylor's parents must park in the driveway.

"A lot of people think you can't make a difference if you're little, but it's

- Just Fix It
- Surf Report
- Archives
- E-mail Newsletters
- Wireless | RSS
- Noticias en Enlace
- Internet Access



U.S. -Mexico border crossers will navigate between two time zones until April 1 because the United States went to Daylight Saving Time three weeks early this year. Share your stories with us about missed appointments, sleep deprivation, and how you are managing to keep track of the time. We'll post comments in the Tijuana/Border section of SignOnSanDiego. Contact Union-Tribune reporter Anna Cearley at [anna.cearley@uniontrib.com](mailto:anna.cearley@uniontrib.com).

**Sponsored Links**

not true," Taylor said.

Over the years, Taylor has shared this message with others, from 5-year-olds to adult audiences of thousands.

For Taylor, the success of her first project led to her next big fund-raiser – a hair-clip painting party at California State University San Marcos the following year.

Her mother chauffeured her to elementary and middle schools throughout the county so Taylor could share her vision with principals.

She wanted to supply a steady stream of bears for patients at UCSD Medical Center. At first her mother would accompany her to these meetings. After a while, she waited in the car. Taylor, who was perfectly at ease talking business with her elders, recruited 250 volunteers.

"My parents have taught me that shyness doesn't get you anywhere," she said. "You just got to go for everything with all you've got."

Word of her project spread. Kiwanis and Rotary groups asked Taylor to give speeches.

At age 10, she received her biggest invitation yet.

The Million Dollar Round Table, an international association of financial and insurance professionals, asked her to be the youngest speaker at its worldwide convention in San Francisco. After sharing her experiences with an audience of 6,800, she sold 5,000 hair clips in just four hours.

The hair clips come in many designs and are hand-painted in a rainbow of colors. They sell for \$2.50 a pair. Taylor has sold them online, in front of supermarkets and to parents, teachers and peers.

She buys custom-made bears in bulk at a discounted rate from Build-A-Bear Workshop. Unlike most teddy bears, they lie on their stomachs, so when placed on a child's chest in a hospital bed, the bear and the patient are face to face. Cash donations from businesses and individuals help Taylor with her greatest challenge, paying for shipping costs.

Volunteers come from many sources, including church groups, Girl Scout troops and elementary school classes. The one requirement is that only kids can paint the hair clips. And only kids can prepare the bears, which requires naming them, securing tags with the TayBear logo and giving each a hug.

"That's so they're delivered with love," said Taylor. "Anybody who wants to help can. It's kids helping kids."

Children from all over the nation contact Taylor for advice on their own service projects or to inquire how they can help. Hospitals call to place orders for more bears.

Jo Anne Foster, who is responsible for religious education and activities for teenage girls at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Vista, has asked her youths to volunteer for TayBear on numerous

You can save with the top-performing California Tax-Exempt Money Market Fund\*.

Learn more at [vanguard.com/taxfree](http://vanguard.com/taxfree)

[vanguard.com/taxfree](http://vanguard.com/taxfree)  
**Obtain Prospectus.**  
All investments are subject to risk. Vanguard Marketing Corp., Distributor. ©2007 The Vanguard Group, Inc.  
 \*Source: Lipper, Inc.

**Quicklinks**

- Restaurants ▶ Bars ▶
- Hotels ▶ Autos ▶
- Shopping ▶ Health ▶
- Eldercare ▶ Singles ▶

**Business Listings**

GO ▶

**Free Newsletters**

**SignOn News Alerts**  
*News as it happens*  
[Sign Up Now!](#)

[Cell Phone Alerts ▶](#)  
[Privacy Policy ▶](#)

### [Brand New Vegas Condos](#)

Starting at \$99,900. Be the first to preview. Click here! [www.desertshadowsl...](#)

### [\\$590K Mortgage < \\$1899/Mo](#)

Loan rates near 40-year lows. Think you pay too much? See new payment. [HomeLoans.LowerMy...](#)

### [What's Your Credit Score?](#)

The average U.S. credit score: 675. The cost to see yours: \$0. [www.freecreditreport...](#)

occasions.

"Instead of an adult, the girls are seeing someone their age who has reached out and helped people, making it more believable to them that they can make a difference," Foster said. "She has run that business since she was 7. Her parents haven't taken over. She's the one making all the decisions."

Foster has known the Crabtrees since her son was a classmate of Taylor's in kindergarten.

"Even then she was years beyond – intellectually," said Foster.

Taylor has other interests.

Over the summer, she was chosen to play on a selective Southern California girls volleyball team. She's on the debate and volleyball teams at La Costa Canyon High School, where she earns mostly A's and is enrolled in honors classes. She has also studied American Sign Language at Palomar College.

Taylor's long-term dreams include acceptance to an Ivy League school, followed by a career in politics.

For now, TayBear fills her free time.

Taylor's work has been recognized by politicians, multimillion-dollar companies and professional business associations.

Most recently Angel Soft bestowed on her its Angels in Action award, which included \$2,500 and a year's supply of toilet paper.

But her greatest reward is the pure joy of giving.

Her bears have generated poignant responses from children across the nation, like this one from a 9-year-old boy with non-Hodgkins lymphoma at The Children's Hospital at the OU Medical Center in Oklahoma City:

*"I got one of your bears 2 weeks ago when I went for my treatment. I sleep with him every night. I named him Little Scotty, and I love him a WHOLE lot ... Anytime I have a nightmare, I squeeze Little Scotty, and he gets rid of my bad dreams."*

■ Sherry Parmet: (760) 476-8238; [sherry.parmet@uniontrib.com](mailto:sherry.parmet@uniontrib.com)

## Local featured jobs

**CONSTRUCTION PROJECT ENGINEER**  
EL CAJON, CA SAN DIEGO CONTRACTING

**F&B OUTDOOR PROGRAM MANAGER**  
LA JOLLA, CA LODGE AT TORREY PINES

**FOOD EXPEDITOR**  
LA JOLLA, CA LODGE AT TORREY PINES

**DENTAL FRONT DESK; RDA**  
SAN DIEGO, CA MARINA SHAPIRO DDS

**SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR**  
ESCONDIDO, CA MOUNTAIN SHADOWS COMM HOMES

[More jobs](#)

## Guides

Vegas ▾ Spas/Salon ▾  
Travel ▾ Weddings ▾  
Wine ▾ Old Town ▾  
Baja ▾ Catering ▾  
Casino ▾ Home Imp. ▾  
Golf ▾ SD North ▾  
Gaslamp ▾