



**PRESS
RELEASE**

Bassett Unified School District

on the move

904 North Willow Avenue ■ La Puente, CA 91746 ■ (626) 931-3000 ■ (626) 931-3020 ■ www.bassettusd.org

For Immediate Release

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Bassett Unified Student Survivor of Stage 4 Cancer Celebrated for Strength, Courage

LA PUENTE, CA – When Alexis Rodriguez finished fourth grade at Sunkist Elementary in June 2012, instead of spending her summer swimming in the river during family camping trips, she launched into a full-scale battle against stage four Burkitt’s lymphoma.

“I just accepted that this was going to happen and hopefully I could keep going,” Rodriguez, 15, said. “I always told my parents that I wasn’t going to make it, and they told me to keep my chin up, that I was strong and to keep on going.”

Now, she’s a Bassett High sophomore and plays the flute in the school’s marching band, and is a member of the cheer squad, swim team and Associated Student Body. Her cheer box is painted green, the color representing Burkitt’s, with “stage four lymphoma” written across it.

Rodriguez was honored for her battle with the illness at Bassett High’s Oct. 13 varsity football game, which was dedicated to students who have been affected by cancer. Athletes and attendees from both sides sported pink in recognition of breast cancer awareness month, and pinned on green ribbons in support of Alexis.

“Alexis is an extremely strong and brave young woman and is an inspiration to her peers,” Bassett Unified Interim Superintendent Debra French said. “Our teachers, administrators and students dedicating their time to support Alexis is an example of the commitment they bring to their classrooms every day.”

During halftime, her classmates surprised her with a large, white teddy bear, roses and a sign with signatures and positive notes to celebrate her resilience and life.

“I was so surprised and overwhelmed,” Rodriguez said. “I thought it was going to be a normal day but it became something very special to me.”

The disease caused golf ball-sized lumps in Rodriguez’s lymph nodes and the cancer spread to her liver and bone marrow. After 12 bone marrow extractions, more than 50 transfusions for blood and platelets, eight months of chemotherapy treatments and hospitalization, and

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hundreds of family members and friends visiting and supporting her, she was able to say she made it.

“Now I show respect to people who have been affected by any cancer,” Rodriguez said.

Her parents were determined to ensure their daughter had a smooth transition back to school while ensuring she recovered from her treatments. Rodriguez was able to do a home study program with Sunkist teachers volunteering their time to academically support Rodriguez at home until she was able to attend school.

“We always support her, 100 percent,” her parents Amadeo and Jessica Rodriguez, said. “Everything that she’s doing is a positive thing.”

Since her recovery, Rodriguez participated in beauty pageants and promoted awareness for children’s cancer. She also brought a plain T-shirt to school for her peers to write positive words on before the football game to encourage cancer survivors and those who are hospitalized.

“I got support when I went through treatments, and my family and friends encouraged me,” Rodriguez said. “I love all of them very much.”

Rodriguez plans to pursue music and work at Disneyland, the happiest place on Earth.

“My goal is to make sure to put a smile on every kid’s face,” she said.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

102617_BASSETT_ALEXUS1: Bassett High sophomore Alexis Rodriguez (right) is embraced by her classmate during halftime at an Oct. 13 football game, which was dedicated to students who have been affected by cancer. Athletes and attendees from both sides sported pink in recognition of breast cancer awareness month, and pinned on green ribbons in support of Rodriguez.

102617_BASSETT_ALEXUS2: Bassett High sophomore Alexis Rodriguez (holding teddy bear) was surprised by her peers with flowers and positive messages during halftime at an Oct. 13 football game in support of her resilience and life after fighting stage four Burkitt’s lymphoma in elementary school.

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