Boston Scientific honors memory with giving

Employees gather to honor colleague who died after cancer fight

By Michele Lutes
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Blue duffle bags filled with teddy bears, blankets and coloring books were decorated by Valencia’s Boston Scientific employees to bring joy to foster children and honor one of their employees.

Legal department admin Dodie Largent died a few months ago, after years of battling cancer. She had a passion for helping others, her coworkers said. Her and her daughter had a special place in their hearts for foster children.

“She had found out about (Together We Rise) because foster kids are given a trash bag to carry their belongings into the home they go to,” said Rita Bojalian, business unit attorney for Neuromodulation Division of Boston Scientific. “She wanted to do something that was special for them so they felt like they had something they could call their own and inspired them for the future.”

Largent’s colleagues described her as a very energetic, caring, kind person, who always thought of everyone in the department. She wanted to make the world a better place.

After she died, her co-workers decided creating the bags for foster children with the national organization, Together We Rise, would be a great way to remember her.

“We wanted to carry on that tradition and we miss her so much,” Largent said. “It’s a small way of remembering her,” said Maulik Nanavaty, president of the Neuromodulation Division of Boston Scientific. “It tells you how much it meant to her.”

A portrait of Largent was set at the end of the assembly line, where the bags were piled after they were completed.

“Everybody picks up a bag, goes to a table and they actually personalize each one with whatever creative positive image they want to portray,” Bojalian said.

Stencils were laid out to help with designs, but some employees decided to free hand designs, some with inspiring sayings.

“I was very impressed. I thought it was pre-printed until looking at them here now,” Nanavaty said. “It’s very touching.”

After the bags are finished, “They go through the assembly line and they put in a teddy bear, a blanket, a hygiene kit, coloring books and crayons,” Bojalian said. “We are going to drop them off today.”

Boston Scientific created 81 bags and raised more than $2,300. They hand delivered the bags to Los Angeles County Family Services in Santa Clarita.

“This is really core to our values,” Nanavaty said. “One of the values we find very important is caring. We feel this is a way to give back to the community and be able to contribute beyond what we do.”

The organization Together We Rise is a nonprofit organization comprised of motivated young adults and former foster youth,” according to its website. “Our vision is to improve the lives of children in foster care, who often find themselves forgotten and neglected by the public. We collaborate with individuals, companies, and community partners to bring resources to foster youth and use service-learning activities to educate volunteers on issues surrounding the foster care system.”

Boston Scientific plans to continue this tradition, Nanavaty said. “This will continue on. We do many of these different things. As long as we feel we are making a difference, we can’t stop.”

“We are lucky to work at a company were we have people who care so much about people,” Bojalian said. “This effort we have undertaken is going to make an impact in our area and in our city.”