



# Staten Island Advance

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## Students rally behind those with lupus

By MARISSA DiBARTOLO



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Jessica Teresco (second from right) spearheaded the Walk for Lupus at Wagner College and used her aunt, Grace-Marie Kilmer (seated), as her inspiration.

Jessica Teresco was looking to bring a slice of her home and family to Staten Island. A Long Island native and Wagner College freshman, she spearheaded the college's first Walk for Lupus on Nov. 13, with the help of the school's Physician Assistant Association (PAA).

Ms. Teresco's aunt and inspiration, Grace-Marie Kilmer, suffers from the chronic autoimmune disease, which can impact the skin, joints and internal organs, and the physician assistant student

usually participates in the national version of the walk on Long Island.

"It's more about the support than it is about the money," said Ms. Teresco, who explained that the funds raised during the event will go to the Lupus Foundation of America. "My aunt didn't know about the walk and I wanted her to see that people do care."

More than 80 people attended the Staten Island event, including community members and Greek organizations from the Grymes Hill college. Ms. Teresco's goal of \$500 was exceeded, with attendees giving monetary donations and purchasing raffles for New York Jets tickets as well as gift certificates to local restaurants.

And of course, it wouldn't have been possible without her aunt, who was by her side during the event.

"To behold the surprise, joy, and gratitude of Jessica's Aunt Grace was a miracle in itself. It made the walk all worthwhile to be able to witness the effects of the walk on one particular beneficiary," said Caitlyn Grima of Annadale, a PAA member who helped plan the walk.

Added member Nereus Mogaria of South Beach, "This was for a great cause and it raised awareness about the disease of lupus and how it affects the community. I'm looking forward to it next year."