



Kellie Agee (15) of Peoria wears the many strands of beads that document her fight against leukemia.

## Strength on a string

By Daniel Friedman

**HIPPIES WORE PEACE** symbols to voice opposition to war. Fifteen-year-old Kellie Agee's colorful beads symbolize her fight against leukemia. Each of the more than 1,000 beads, strung on 10 different strands, reminds her of a blood draw, needle stick, bone marrow transplant, spinal tap, round of chemotherapy, surgery or other treatments that started at 10:30 p.m. July 3, 2004, when she arrived at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

She was given a string of beads that spelled her name and each time she endured a procedure, a bead was added. Phoenix Children's, and many other hospitals around the country, use the Beads of Courage program to help kids endure lengthy treatments for serious illnesses.

At first Kellie wasn't interested in the beads. "I have cancer. What do I need these stupid beads for?" she told her mother, Tammy. But her mom kept collecting the beads and, without consciously deciding to, Kellie found herself deriving strength from them.

"They are a symbol of what I have gone through," says Kellie, who has been cancer-free for nearly three years. "An inspiration to move on to do what I have to do in the future. To not give up." As she walked around the hospital with hundreds of beads hanging on her IV pole, other kids in treatment realized that if Kellie could endure after so many procedures, they could too.

A current exhibit at the Arizona Museum for Youth in Mesa, "Every Bead Tells a Story," features the work of artist Christy Puetz, program director of Beads of Courage, as well as beads from Kellie and other children who are enduring serious illness. The exhibit will be up until Aug. 9. The beads labeled as Kellie's aren't her actual beads—she keeps the real ones at home. [beadsofcourage.org](http://beadsofcourage.org) or [arizonamuseumforyouth.com](http://arizonamuseumforyouth.com).

## A hankering for cookies and Ollie Cakes

By Daniel Friedman

**BRADY AND SHAUN BREESE** wanted to run a business based on what seemed like a simple concept: baking and selling cookies. But their first batch, created in November 2005 in the borrowed commercial kitchen of a local non-profit, was a disaster. The kitchen was a mess and feelings were hurt. They ended up apologizing to one another and deciding to try again another day. They did, and it's working.

Their store, Urban Cookies, is located on Seventh Street just north of Highland. It proves that people do want cookies baked mostly from organic ingredients (only the chocolate and local Hickman eggs are not organic). The Breeses recently expanded their product line to include Ollie Cakes—cupcakes named after their 4 month-old son, Oliver.

The business started out offering online sales only but "people wanted to come and get to know us," says Shaun. Cookies and cupcakes have a homey aspect that bespeaks friendliness and family, as does the bright and funky store interior. Oliver is "already a little celebrity and he adds something to the ambiance," says Shaun. "It makes us feel like what we are—a family business."

The cookies are thick and substantial, like homemade—though the Urban Trail cookies with almonds and raisins are probably better than anyone (except my wife) can make at home. Online orders can be sent in customized boxes. Use one of Urban Cookies' designs or upload one of your own logos or photos.

Brady does all the cooking, develops all the cookie recipes and does the kitchen

work. Shaun handles the marketing and all other tasks. Shaun's mother comes in Fridays to help do the bookkeeping and IT chores. [urbancookies.com](http://urbancookies.com).



Brady, Oliver and Shaun Breeses in their Phoenix store, Urban Cookies.