

February is Career & Technical Education Month

Alexis Roberson, 13, of Caraway, Ark., a seventh-grader at Riverside High School and an FBLA member, launched a campaign that collected more than 1,500 coloring books and 600 boxes of crayons for hospitalized children in memory of her best friend. "When I was little, my mom was single and struggled to put food on the table," said Alexis. That experience sparked a desire to help others in difficult circumstances. As a result, she has distributed "survival kits" through first responders and also provided blankets and cooling fans to nursing home residents. But her biggest volunteer activity has been pursuing the dream of her best friend, Bailey, who passed away in 2016.

Bailey said that coloring helped take her mind off being sick for a little while, and dreamed of collecting coloring books and crayons for other sick children. "She never got the chance to make her dream come true," said Alexis, "so I started Books for Bailey in her memory." She asked for donations on Facebook and enlisted the help of her mother, a local FBLA chapter, a fundraising partner, and the town of Lake City. Schools across the state began helping, too, and just in time for Christmas, Alexis was able to deliver coloring books and supplies to well over a thousand smiling children at St. Jude Children's

Research Hospital. Alexis is now collecting soda can tabs to support a Ronald McDonald House in Memphis to honor her late friend. Alexis has been honored by Prudential Insurance Company as a State Honoree for [The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards](#).



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