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Children battling cancer get hero's welcome

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By RANDY NEVES for Kgw.com

PORTLAND, Ore. -- Children battling serious illness got a hero's welcome today in downtown Portland.

At the World Trade Center plaza it was a celebration of bravery and heroism.

The Children's Cancer Association unveiled its 2009 Wall of Courage, featuring 25 local children and teens fighting against grave illnesses.

14-year-old Lopaka Swope is five months out of chemotherapy and hopes to overcome cancer to live a long, happy life.

"Everybody told me not to give up because I had to do this," said Swope, one of the honored heroes.

Sunday's family fair was pirate-themed.

It's the non-profit's 13th year organizing the Celebration of Courage.

"The children that we're honoring today have all exhibited an incredible amount of courage as they face serious illness like cancer or heart disease or brain injury," said Mary Turina of the Children's Cancer Association.