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By:  Raymond H.R. No. 169

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Smiles from Heaven, a nonprofit organization founded in 2019, is making a positive impact in the lives of children who are battling cancer; and

WHEREAS, Ray and Betsy Sanchez established Smiles from Heaven in loving memory of their two-year-old daughter, Bella Serena Sanchez, who passed away on April 9, 2019, following her fight with leukemia; the organization is dedicated to promoting childhood cancer awareness and to giving support, assistance, and hope to children and families receiving treatment for pediatric cancer or blood disorders; and

WHEREAS, Cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death for children past infancy in the United States; each year, approximately 175,000 families around the world hear the devastating news that their child has cancer, but thanks to improvements in treatment, more than 80 percent of patients with pediatric cancer in the U.S. will become long-term survivors; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, Smiles from Heaven has advocated for childhood cancer awareness throughout the state and nation in partnership with Be the Match, the South Texas Blood and Tissue Center, and GenCure; it has cumulatively served over 1,000 families, provided free travel totaling more than 1,000 miles to specialized treatment centers, and donated some 21,000 miles worth of fuel to help allay families' travel expenses; in addition to offering financial assistance, the organization hosts support groups and other programs to help parents and children cope with the emotional stresses that accompany a cancer diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, Smiles from Heaven has been a source of compassionate guidance to South Texas families going through a difficult and uncertain journey, and it is a pleasure to recognize this commendable organization and the inspiring work it has accomplished; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby honor Smiles from Heaven for its service to and advocacy in behalf of children living with cancer and extend to all those affiliated with the organization sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for the organization as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.