



A GIFT FROM GIA

Gia was an energetic eighth grade student at Margaret Mace School when she was stricken with a severe asthma attack that she never recovered from. The Chiarella family spent their last Christmas with Gia at Camden Cooper University Hospital, which is the sending hospital for severe trauma cases from Cape May County. The staff was wonderful to the patients and their families. Gia Chiarella was a lifelong resident of the Wildwoods who passed suddenly on December 29, 1998, at the age of 13. The Gift From Gia program was a way to fill the empty spot under Gia's tree, and has turned into a tribute to her.

A Gift From Gia Program solicits donations of unwrapped gifts which will be distributed to sick and needy children who unfortunately spend their holidays in Camden Cooper University Hospital. When each donation is tagged, "A Gift From Gia" and dispersed, the families naturally ask who Gia is. The hospital staff tells the patients Gia's story, and so her name and memory lives on.

An oil-painted portrait of Gia is exhibited at Margaret Mace School, the grade school that she attended. Her eighth grade class commissioned a well known local artist to paint her portrait. Upon its unveiling and dedication in the brand new Gia Marcella Chiarella Atrium, it was said that it would be illuminated twenty four hours a day, every day forever. If you drive by the school and look through the large glass entry, you will see her, awash in a soft light, smiling.

Margaret Mace School will be accepting unwrapped gifts throughout the month of December and placing them under the Christmas tree in the Gia Marcella Chiarella Atrium.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Margaret Mace School at 522-1454.