

business movement

Popping a legacy of love

By Deborah Fleishman

At age 28, Sarah Conrow of Dallas is already giving back to the organization that helped her family when Alzheimer's disease slowly overtook her beloved grandmother.

In fact, it was with her grandmother's secret family recipe for caramel corn that Ms. Conrow launched her year-old business, I Love Popcorn. She donates 10 percent of the proceeds from specially packaged tins to the Alzheimer's Association.

Her grandmother Gladys Levendofsky was diagnosed with the disease about nine years ago.

"My grandfather was covering up little things, like that she had forgotten how to write a letter," Ms. Conrow says.

It wasn't until her grandfather died and her grandmother moved to Dallas (just after her diagnosis) that Ms. Conrow, her mother, Marlyn Conrow, and other family members got first-hand experience with the disease and wanted to help raise awareness about Alzheimer's any way they could.

"My grandmother was a fighter and the hardest worker I have ever seen," Ms. Conrow says. "There were no doctors around when she and her twin brother were born in the 1920s. They were so small their mother put them in

shoe boxes and sat them near the stove to keep them warm.

"I feel so grateful to have had the time with her. She was amazing."

Although the Conrow family has always cooked together, Ms. Conrow learned the caramel popcorn recipe directly from her grandmother. Ms. Conrow always knew she wanted to work for herself and then the idea hit her: "I think I can sell this."

Ms. Conrow started I Love Popcorn out of a church kitchen and has been going full-tilt since. She prepares each vat of the 30 gourmet flavors herself (although she has a little help when she gets really busy) and packs them in a variety of decorative tins and bags. Her store is located at 1751 Eldorado Parkway, in McKinney, and orders can be placed online at www.ilovepopcorn.com.

The popcorn tins supporting Alzheimer's display the association's logo and are wrapped in purple cellophane with a purple bow. Each tin holds a trio of flavors, including the trademark caramel.

Every donation is a tribute to her grandmother:

"She is the heart of I Love Popcorn," Ms. Conrow says.

“My grandmother was a fighter and the hardest worker I have ever seen. I feel so grateful to have had the time with her.”

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