

Authorities Close Kid's Ice Cream Stand, Prompting Fundraisers and Death Threats

Bored and looking for something to do this summer, Danny Doherty hatched a plan to raise money for his brother's hockey team by selling homemade ice cream.

But a few days after setting up a stand and serving up vanilla, shaved chocolate and fluffernutter to about 20 people, Danny's family received a letter from the Norwood Board of Health ordering it shut down. Town officials had received a complaint and said that the 12-year-old's scheme violated the Massachusetts Food Code, a state regulation.

"I was surprised and upset," he said of the letter that came Aug. 5. "I don't understand because there are so many lemonade stands and they don't get shut down."

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Danny's mom, Nancy Doherty, who had encouraged her son to start the stand as long as he donated half of the proceeds to charity, also was taken aback.

"Somebody complained. That was the most disappointing part for us was that somebody thought it necessary to complain about a child's stand," she said. "It seemed a little, you know, crazy if you ask me."

Rather than give up, Danny decided to give away the ice cream and accept donations for the Boston Bear Cubs, a team featuring players with physical and developmental disabilities – including his brother, who is autistic.

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That's when the neighborhood fundraiser blew up and became the talk of Norwood, a suburban town about an hour from Boston.

The first day they gave away the ice cream, supplies ran out in 10 minutes and \$1,000 was raised. Then, word began to spread about the fundraiser and Danny's clash with the town. Local media ran stories about the stand, prompting scores of local businesses to hold their own fundraisers for the hockey team.

Town officials, meanwhile, said they received hate mail and death threats over the dispute, which they suggested has been badly mischaracterized in the media.

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