Pillowcase Project helps children prepare for emergencies

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As the sun streamed through the clouds and the Strawberry Festival beckoned the crowd to downtown Roanoke on Saturday, disaster was far from most minds.

But a block away, in the Jefferson College of Health Sciences, students and Red Cross volunteers could think of little else. They gathered Saturday to host what they hoped would be a major Pillowcase Project event that would draw hundreds of children in to learn about disaster preparedness through a program underwritten by Disney.

Grace Freeland, 10, of Roanoke, talks with her mom, Michelle Freeland, about what she learned to do in case of a house fire. Grace’s bedroom is on the second floor, and she learned to wave a pillow or blanket out the window to alert emergency responders.