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"Rudy" and 14-year-old South Bend boy team up against childhood cancer

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Whether you're an Irish fan or not... The movie "Rudy" is arguably one of the most inspiring movies ever made.



But Sunday night, Rudy Ruettiger took part in a fundraiser for a group of people that inspires him.

It was a fundraiser for a childhood cancer foundation, whose biggest spokesman is a 14-year-old South Bend boy. □

Friends and family came together for a special night at the South Bend Marriott, that raised thousands of dollars for a new foundation.

They say it's just as important to raise awareness for the cause that leaves so many children battling for their lives.

For any young boy, the movie "Rudy" is inspirational.

“Cause he didn’t quit he just kept on going he kept on trying,” said 14-year old Austin McGowan.

For 14 year-old Austin, who has been fighting leukemia for more than a year, persistence is a hard-earned quality.

“I cry at night sometimes just because it hurts so much, at those times I just want to give up, I just want this to be over with,” Austin said.

As Austin has gone through treatment, Rudy's story has become a big part of his life.

“Rudy actually says I motivate him sometimes, he really motivates me, saying I'm not going to quit, I'm not going to quit, he's just always there for me, if I need to talk to him I'll just call,” Austin said.

Austin's grandfather is Dennis McGowan, better known as "D-Bob," a major character in the movie, and life-long friend of Rudy Ruettiger.

"Everybody says its a football movie, but it's really not, it pertains to this situation... It's a metaphor for life, and its been a lesson for us, and it continues to be a lesson for us," McGowan said.

For Rudy, knowing Austin puts things in perspective.

"Here he is thanking me for coming, and this guy's in pain and suffering and here I am worried about getting on an airplane and getting a ticket," Ruettiger said.

The ticket brought Rudy to a fundraising event in South Bend, for the Henry Tucker Foundation.

Henry was a 6-year old Austin met while they were getting treatment.

"I mean I only got to know him for 4 to 6 months, but he was like a little brother to me and I'm just going to miss him. I pray for him every night," Austin said.

While the fundraiser meant a lot to the tucker and McGowan families, Austin hopes it has an even bigger impact, in memory of Henry.

"I saw him go through his whole transplant, and he died, it was just really sad for me. I just want this to make sure that everyone knows about childhood cancer and it's a serious thing, and we need to put a stop to it," Austin said.

Austin fell sick earlier this week, and he has double hip replacement surgery coming up soon.

But, he was still able to enjoy the event tonight, which meant so much to his friends and family.

The Henry Tucker Foundation's mission is to offer support to families of children with terminal childhood cancers.

Austin was excited about the Foundation's plans to buy X-Boxes and Wii's for children receiving treatment, so they'll have something to do while they're in the hospital.

Click below for links to Austin and Henry's websites (may require free subscription to caringbridge.org).

Find this article at:

<http://www.wndu.com/home/headlines/17146206.html>

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