

Canton gridgers want to sack cancer

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They're seeing red at Canton High School about the ongoing ravages of cancer — enough for football players to wear pink on Friday night, Oct. 14. That night for the Chiefs home contest against Westland John Glenn is the annual “Coaches vs. Cancer” charity game, with proceeds to benefit the American Cancer Society.

Players, along with cheerleaders and pom pon girls, are all in on the mission to help raise awareness and dollars to fight the dreaded disease. Plymouth-Canton Steelers coach Angelo Lanava knows that from personal experience. His wife, Enza, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2014; she now is cancer-free.

“Unfortunately, no one is immune,” Angelo Lanava said. “We all know someone who has had it or is going through it now. Hopefully the student-athletes will know there is something we can all do to help, and that is donate to research.”

ADVERTISING

“Wearing pink in October isn’t enough, everyone needs to donate.”

Not just October

Enza Lanava, president of the Canton Football Boosters Club, only recently finished radiation treatment.

“Enza was diagnosed a little over two years ago,” he continued. “She finished her treatments two years ago. She is currently cancer-free and follows up with her doctors every three months.

“I think all survivors appreciate the support given by so many, especially in October, but we need to think of all cancers, and throughout the year.”

Following the theme of how cancer impacts everybody, Julie Baechler (wife of Canton Chiefs varsity coach Tim Baechler and a football boosters member) noted that lung cancer claimed her dad eight years ago.

Moreover, she continued, two of her best friends with ties to the football program (Enza Lanava, Tracy Boucher) have both dealt with breast cancer. Baechler stressed that the Coaches vs. Cancer event also is a good way for students to get involved and make a difference.

“The event brings awareness to this horrible disease,” she stressed. “Even more importantly, is the fact that the coaching staff participates in this event, which tells all these players that helping other people is the most important thing in life.

“Yes, of course, they want to win games. So for them to allow this distraction to occur during a game, *shows* the kids how important it is with action, not just words.”



Football coach Angelo Lanava (left) and his wife, breast cancer survivor Enza Lanava, are shown celebrating her successful completion of radiation treatment for breast cancer. (Photo: JULIE BAECHLER)

More than words

Football players will wear pink shirts to school on Oct. 14 (so will cheerleaders and pom squad members).

Players will make optional donations to the American Cancer Society. They will don cleats adorned with pink tape for the 7 p.m. game at Plymouth-Canton Educational Park against John Glenn.

Also, announcements (\$2 each) are being sold. Parents, relatives and friends can write the announcements at a table that will be set up, and JV and freshmen players will run those up to the press box for those to be read over the public address system.

Baechler said the cheerleaders will honor survivors and the memories of those who passed in several ways. They will sell ribbons, complete with names of loved ones, and those will be hung onto the fence around the football field.

Also, they will do a memory honor walk around the track before game time. Meanwhile, the pom squad will do a 50/50 raffle for ACS.

Lanava said he and his wife are grateful to the Canton Football Boosters Club and everybody involved in putting together the Coaches vs. Cancer event. But much more needs to be done.

“I am grateful to them for spreading awareness,” Lanava noted. “Women who were diagnosed prior to my wife (and donations) determined the course of treatment (Enza) should receive. It’s all about the research.”



Canton cheerleaders, all wearing pink shirts, perform a routine during last year's "Coaches vs. Cancer" benefit game. (Photo: SUBMITTED)

To help donate time or money for the Oct. 14 Coaches vs. Cancer event, contact Canton athletics director Vernon Crump at vernon.crump@pccsk12.com.

COACHES VS CANCER

What: The Canton Chiefs will host Westland John Glenn for the annual Coaches vs. Cancer benefit game.

When/where: Kickoff is 7 p.m. Friday at Plymouth-Canton Educational Park's varsity turf field.

Why: Canton football players, cheerleaders and members of the pom squad all are joining efforts to help raise awareness and money to fight cancer. Proceeds will be earmarked for the American Cancer Society.

Activities: There will be a memory honor walk before the game, ribbons with the names of loved ones will be attached to the stadium fence and players will wear pink on their cleats. Announcements also will be read over the public address system during the game. Folks can donate spare change at the gate.