

Heroes of Hope

Tackle Cancer: In Memory of Dianna Orsini

When a loved one is lost it is important to remember them in every possible way, whether it is through photos and memories, or through our every day actions. That person has made an important impact in our life, and it is imperative that their fight is carried on. That is exactly what I did when my father passed away from cancer in 2003, and that is exactly what Anthony Orsini and his children did, when he lost his wife Dianna.

Dianna Orsini passed away in 2001 from breast cancer. For the past seven years, Anthony and his family have put together a rugby tournament, raising money in Dianna's name, and helping others fight the same battle she faced. Proceeds from the tournament were donated to organizations such as the American Cancer Society and the Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

"We raise the money not only in memory of Dianna, but for research as well. Faith is at a high risk and we want the best success for her," Anthony said.

Anthony's daughter, Faith, eight, and son, Sean, 11, are not the only members of the family that enjoy helping with the tournament. Anthony's wife, Jodi Orsini, and stepsons Ethan Manley, 10, and Bryce Manley, 8, have been helping to organize the event for the past two years as well.

Since their children are getting older, and all three boys play football, Anthony found a conflict with the rugby tournament and his children's practices. That is when the idea came to him to have a youth football benefit tournament instead. Both Anthony and Jodi serve on the West Allegheny Youth Association Board, and are active with both the youth football and cheerleading programs.

Although this is the first year for the youth football benefit tournament, Anthony has high hopes for success, as 24 teams have already registered for the event. Teams are broken down into levels, depending on the age of their players. The different levels are: 8 and under, 9 and under, 10 and under, 11 and under, and 13 and under. There are currently 24 teams registered, five per age level, aside from 13 and under in which there are four since West Allegheny does not have a 13 and under team.

The teams come from the South Suburban Youth Football League, in which West Allegheny belongs. Aside



ABOVE: The Orsini Family, left to right, front, Sean, Ethan, Bryce, and Faith; back, Jodi and Anthony.

from West Allegheny that has entered four teams, the other teams registered are Ar-Ken, Baldwin, Carlynton, and Montour. These four districts each have five teams registered, covering each of the different age level brackets.

Another aspect different this year than in the past is the donation of the proceeds. While in the past the money raised went to several different organizations supporting the research and cure of cancer, this year the money will be donated solely to the American Cancer Society. Last year the rugby tournament raised over \$8,000, and since Dianna's death in 2001, \$70,000 has been raised in her memory.

The tournament will be held on August 16 and 17, at the West Allegheny High School football field. Anthony explained that the school district has been very helpful while he has been planning this event.

"The school has been very corporative during this," Anthony said. "Both Dave McBain [West Allegheny Athletic Director] and Dr. DiSanti [West Allegheny Superintendent] have helped a lot with the events."

Admission charge, which is still to be determined, along with sponsorship, concessions, the selling of tournament T-shirts, and the team registration fees, all comprise the total donation amount.

This event is open to the public, so stop by West Allegheny football field on August 16 and 17 to help the Orsini family carry on Dianna's fight, and truly tackle cancer.

If you would like more information regarding the event, or are interesting in donating, please visit www.westayouth.com/tacklecancer.