

The Lake Forest Leader

LFA, Falcons hockey teams participate in 100 Miles for Danny, raise awareness for epilepsy



Nick Curley, who was the original organizer of 100 Miles for Danny, participates in the event. Nicole Carrow/22nd Century Media

Neil Milbert, Freelance Reporter
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Lake Forest Academy welcomed members of The Danny Did Foundation and surrounding communities to participate in a fundraising event to raise awareness for epilepsy on Sunday, April 7.

The Danny Did Foundation was started after the sudden death of Mike and Mariann Stanton's 4-year-old son on Dec. 12, 2009. Their son, Danny, died because of a sudden epileptic seizure. Mike Stanton wrote at the conclusion of his son's obituary, "Please go out and enjoy your life. Danny did."

Danny's story made national news, which inspired Mike and Mariann Stanton to start the Danny Did Foundation. Their hope was that the foundation would be "...his continued place in the world."

The Danny Did Foundation's primary mission is to prevent deaths caused by seizures. The foundation attempts to prevent deaths caused by seizures by advancing public awareness of epilepsy and sudden unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP), by striving to improve communication about SUDEP between medical professionals and families affected by seizures and advocating for the mainstream acceptance and use of seizure detection and prevention devices that may assist in preventing seizure-related deaths.

The foundation's first venture was pizza and beer after a Loyola University basketball game in February of 2010.

That was the start of something big: in the intervening years the Danny Did Foundation, co-founded by Mike and Mariann Stanton, has raised more than \$5 million and has assisted families in all 50 states and 11 countries.

Mike Stanton's brother, Tom Stanton, is the foundation's executive director. The other full-time employee is Mary Duffy, whose son, Charlie, was one of Danny's friends.

Playing a supporting role as volunteers at foundation events are the three other Stanton brothers, Liam, Pete and Paddy, and three sisters, Katie, Megan (Stanton-Anderson) and Anne (Colassanto) and their families.

The foundation held a major event at Lake Forest Academy's MacKenzie Ice Arena on Sunday, April 7, in which a variety of local communities and school participated.

The event, 100 Miles for Danny, consisted of 20 teams skating legs of five miles — 55 laps of the rink — from 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

Mike Stanton headed the Friends of Danny team that skated miles 96-100.

Each team raised a minimum of \$1,000 for the foundation.



Among the participating hockey teams from the North Shore, were the Lake Forest Academy Prep Hockey team, Lake Forest Falcons, Loyola Academy girls' hockey team, Wilmette Braves and Tribe NS Winnetka Sacred Heart elementary school.

Providing some big-time atmosphere were Blackhawks' mascot Tommy Hawk, the Blackhawks' Ice Crew, the Blackhawks' Street Team and former Blackhawk player Brandon Bollig, who won a Stanley Cup with the Blackhawks.

"We do these events in the spirit of Danny," said Tom Stanton. "If he was here, this was the kind of day he would love."

100 Miles for Danny was the brain child of Nick Curley, a Taft High School freshman from Chicago's Norwood Park neighborhood, who in 2012 conceived an earlier fund-raising bonanza by the same name for the Danny Did Foundation.

"My parents went to a Danny Did fundraiser and I had no clue what it was about," Curley said. "I asked them about it. They explained to me the whole story about Danny and the foundation his parents and family had created. My cousin has the same disease and I didn't want what happened to Danny happen to her. I wanted to do something.

"Being a 7-year-old at the time my options were kind of limited. What I was good at was hockey. I asked my parents: 'What if I used hockey as a fundraiser?' And my parents gave me the idea of skating 100 miles over the summer. Obviously, I couldn't do it all in one day so they contacted a bunch of different rinks."

Not only did 20 rinks respond, they helped generate publicity for 100 Miles for Danny, first in Illinois and then nation-wide.

Curley began his tour at the Glenview Ice Center and it concluded between periods of a Chicago Wolves game in Allstate Arena.

According to Tom Stanton, Curley raised almost \$40,000.

Last September the thought of a different format for the 100-mile skate crossed Curley's mind:

"Instead of having all this publicity generated from one person going a total of 100 miles at 20 different rinks, why not have 20 different teams go a total of 100 miles at one rink?" Curley said.

"That way they would tell their friends and their friends would tell other friends. I told Tom and he thought it was a great idea so my parents and I reached out to all of our friends from different teams in the hockey community."

Again, the response was excellent.

In addition to the contingents from the North Shore, the list of teams that were represented included Notre Dame College Prep, Saint Ignatius College Prep, the Skokie Flyers' Bantams, Nick and his teammates on the Lincolnwood Bulldogs, the McFetridge Bulldogs from Chicago, the Chicago Fire Department and the Ozaukee Ice Dogs from Wisconsin.

Among the other sports undertakings under the auspices of the Danny Did Foundation are sponsorship of a 60-member team in the Chicago Marathon, a kids' kickball tournament in the Edgebrook neighborhood of Chicago and a youth basketball tournament in Niles.

The Foundation's Hearts and Hugs gala is at Theatre On the Lake in Lincoln Park on Nov. 9.

"I want to thank Darrin Madeley, the former NHL goalie who directs and coaches the hockey team at Lake Forest Academy, for having us here and donating the ice for the entire day.

Fundraising for 100 Miles for Danny open until the end of April. To make a donation, visit the Danny Did Foundation at www.dannydid.org.