Mansfield Teacher Gets $7,000 Haircut for Cancer Research Fundraiser

Cancer is the number one disease killer of children in America, but Mansfield Elementary School students were on a mission this fall to change that, thanks in part to an exciting challenge by physical education teacher, Jon Krieger.

Mansfield Elementary School special needs pre-kindergarten paraprofessional Paige Smith, whose sister was diagnosed with childhood cancer at age 12 and passed away when she was 18, suggested the school support the Rally Organization this school year. Krieger recalled the organization’s support of his own family during a time of need and was all in.

“This is something that affects me personally, as my son went through treatment three times—he’s in remission and is a freshman in college now in Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee and doing well,” said Krieger. “It was a journey we went through—a rough road—but with organizations like Rally and Cure they were very instrumental in helping us along the way to get through it.”

To encourage the students to collect change for the fundraiser, Krieger offered to shave his head if they met his challenge to raise $5,000 for the Rally Organization.

“The goal was to raise $5,000 and I told them if they raised that collecting change, they would get to see me bald—they would get to see my head shaved, just like (Mansfield Principal) Mr. (Chris) Haymore. They loved it and said ‘okay’ and went after it,” said Krieger, who admitted he’s had short haircuts before but has never been bald.

The Mansfield student body met the challenge and actually far surpassed it by raising $7,017.11. With the challenge met, students gathered in the school gym recently, while others watched live on Zoom, as school principal, Chris Haymore and other teachers took turns shaving Krieger’s head.

“Having some experience in that realm (being bald) I asked him if he was sure he wanted to do it because he hadn’t been bald before,” laughed Haymore. “I told him it was a life-changing experience
because he’s going to wake up in the morning and not know what to do with all the free time he has because he doesn’t have to dry or style his hair.”

Haymore added, “I think it was a good challenge and Coach Krieger is a good sport to do this for the kids.”

While the school principal was thrilled with the students’ success in the cancer research fundraiser, he admitted he wasn’t surprised due to the support the school receives from the community.

“This school has a wonderful student body, and you can tell by the amount of money we raised that it has community support as well,” Haymore explained. “This is a community school within the city limits of Mansfield and the community supports it. And you can tell that from the work they did with this fundraiser. The teaching staff, every member of the staff here—the paraprofessionals, custodians, the cafeteria crew—everybody is involved in this school, and I think a fundraiser like this shows it. Within the span of a month, they collected seven thousand dollars in change—I just think it shows the support this school has. I think it’s a big part of the community and our folks are good people.”

According to Smith, 93 cents per dollar raised for the Rally Foundation goes directly to research childhood cancer.

“We wanted to get together and do something that goes directly for kids, and I think we kind of hit this one out of the park with our students and families who supported it here.”

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