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Helping kids kick cancer

COMPILED BY JENNIFER J. HEWETT

Killian Owen was a happy, brave and active 9-year-old, who loved being a kid. In December 1999, he was diagnosed with leukemia, going on to endure more than three years of chemotherapy treatments, surgeries and numerous stays in the hospital. Through it all, Killian remained optimistic, helping Children's Healthcare of Atlanta raise funds for a cancer cure, speaking at WSB's Care-A-Thon, and sharing with listeners what it was like living with cancer.



After Killian's death, his mother, Grainne Owen, started a national pediatric cancer fundraiser called Coaches Curing Kids Cancer. Clockwise from top: Parents Clay and Grainne Owen pose with sons Garrett, Finnian, Killian and Pierce in 2003.

After two relapses, Killian was the first child in the world to try a new cancer drug with special permission by the

Federal Drug Administration. But the disease had progressed too far, claiming his life in July 2003. Thanks to Coaches Curing Kids Cancer—an organization established by his parents to raise funds for pediatric cancer research through the CureSearch National Childhood Cancer Foundation—Killian’s spirit lives on.

The Coaches Curing Kids Cancer concept is simple: Instead of purchasing a coach’s trophy at the end of the season, money is donated to Coaches Curing Kids Cancer in the coach’s name. He or she then receives a T-shirt and a certificate for helping kids kick cancer, and the money goes to cancer research.

“We’re very close to a breakthrough that will revolutionize the treatment of childhood cancer,” says Killian’s mother, Grainne Owen of Marietta.

Wildly successful since its start in September 2004, close to \$100,000 has been donated by thousands of metro Atlanta kids. This year support is coming from teams and community-based groups across the U.S. For more information or to make a donation, visit www.curingkidscancer.org.

Seeking civic leaders

The Atlanta-based William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum is looking for people who promote tolerance, diversity and civic engagement in Georgia in an extraordinary manner. Nominations for their Civic Super Heroes Award, honoring volunteers in nonprofit organizations that support community-building activities, are being accepted until July 15, 2005.

Among the first winners of the awards this year are the Atlanta Jewish Coalition for Literacy, which provides volunteer literacy coaches and mentors for students throughout the metro Atlanta area; the East Atlanta Kids

Club, a community-based, after-school mentoring program for disadvantaged youth ages 7 to 13; and Project Open Hand, the largest home-delivery meal program in the country, serving people with critical, chronic or terminal illnesses. At least 10 awards will be presented through the end of August 2005.

For more information about the program or to nominate an organization, contact Haven Hawley at (678) 222-3700, ext. 239, or e-mail haven@thebreman.org.

A victory for Fort Benning youth

For its support of youth baseball, the Fort Benning Army Post won the top prize in the national 2004 Wisk Laundry Detergent “Win a Dream Field” contest, garnering \$20,000 for improvements to the base’s Gowdy Field. As part of the celebration, future baseball hall-of-famer Cal Ripken Jr. held hitting and fielding workshops with young players on April 29 at Fort Benning.

During the six-month contest, shoppers at the base’s commissary banded together to turn in 6,436 proofs of purchase from Wisk detergent bottles for points toward the grand prize of \$10,000 from Wisk. The Ripken Baseball foundation matched the donation, bringing the total winnings to \$20,000. Overall, more than 1,600 communities nationwide participated in the 2004 contest.

“It was a team effort with officers, soldiers, dependants and civilians actively involved. The field celebrates its 80th anniversary this year, and the upgrades will offer the community the opportunity to play our national pastime in an even better setting,” says Col. Rick Riera, Fort Benning’s garrison commander. Gowdy Field is home to approximately 100 youth, community and intramural baseball and softball games each year. Field improvements planned include new sod in foul areas, padding by dugouts, and a new infield and pitcher’s mound.

Youth baseball teams and organizations nationwide can compete for prizes in the 2005 “Win a Ball Field

Makeover” contest through the end of July. Official rules are available at www.wiskpoints.com.



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Georgians win at robotics challenge

More than 9,000 students from 19 countries participated in three separate robotics competitions at the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Championship in Atlanta, held April 21-23. During the competition, \$8 million in scholarships to science and engineering schools around the country was awarded.


Among the Georgia teams competing, Team 1414 from the Atlanta International School, earned the Autodesk Visualization Award; Team 35, "The Lasers," from Atlanta, won the FIRST Vex Challenge Build Award; Team 5, "The Shirt," from Stephenson High in Stone Mountain won the FIRST Vex Challenge Connect Award; and pairing with teams from Texas and Virginia, Team 48, "The Grady Scouts," from Atlanta, won the FIRST Vex Challenge Winning Alliance.

Next year's championship is set for April 27-29 at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. To learn more about FIRST, visit www.usfirst.org.

Georgia glimpses

- Savannah State University (SSU) student Sean Ingram, a senior political science major from Atlanta, recently won the prestigious Diplomacy Award at the Harvard World Model United Nations in Edinburgh, Scotland, for exemplifying the true spirit of diplomacy in the Middle East Multilateral Summit. Other SSU delegates participating in the Model UN March 29-April 1 were Carline Aliotte, Tiffani Robinson, George Seaborough, Jelani Byars, Jonetta Claxton, Travis Sumter, Charlie Ingram, Vernisha Davis and Torriel Lewis.

- The New York-based Ford Foundation selected three Georgians for its 2004 Leadership for a Changing World Award: Sandra Barnhill, executive director of Aid to Children of Imprisoned Mothers (AIM), Atlanta; Dázon Dixon Diallo, executive director of SisterLove, Atlanta; and Carolyn Dowse, executive director of the Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society, Sapelo Island. The award recognizes community-based leaders of social-change efforts in neighborhoods, towns and cities across America, and carries with it \$115,000 for each winner to use in advancing their work. More than 1,000 groups or individuals were nominated for the awards.

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**P. O. Box 1707
Tucker, Georgia 30085
(770) 270-6950 / 1(800) 544-4362**

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