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*By Kelly Quinlan*

Neighbor Newspapers Sports Editor

On a warm windy Monday afternoon just north of the city limits, about 120 business executives are dressed in their finest golf gear and hitting the links at Manor Ridge for a noble cause. These men and women are participating in the annual Coaches Curing Kids' Cancer Golf Tournament created by two people who took the tragic death of their child and tried to do something so that other parents would not have to go through the same things they did.

Clay and Grainne Owen are a typical upper-middle class family from Atlanta who until a few years ago had a typical life with their four boys until their son Killian was diagnosed with leukemia at age 5.

His battle lasted 3½ years and during that time the Owens tried every form of treatment available and was forced to jump through hoops from the Federal Drug Administration and other agencies that blocked the use of experimental drugs on children. After seeing the lack of funding for research and all the recent medical breakthroughs that were on the verge of saving lives, the Owens decided they need to do something about it.

"The whole idea for this charity started before we lost Killian while he was still sick. He was on the WSB Care-athon and one of [their] other sons, Pierce's, basketball coach heard him on there and was so inspired by Killian's positive attitude that he told his players instead of the traditional coaches' gift that they should donate money to the hospital [Children's Healthcare of Atlanta]," Grainne said. "On the one-year anniversary of Killian's passing, I went to the hospital and told them about this idea we had for coaches getting their players to donate money instead of giving end of the season gifts and make that into a fundraiser for pediatric cancer patients."

The Owens launched the charity out of their house with Grainne taking on the task like a full-time job.

"These researchers were desperately under funded because these drugs are not big money earners for drug companies," Grainne said. "When I saw how close they were to a breakthrough I realized this was something we had to do."

Starting off as a grassroots effort, they built a Web site, and then a chance meeting gave the young charity a spokesperson.

"My son Dan works for the Atlanta Sports Council and I was here to do a kickoff luncheon, and while we were getting ready for the show, Clay Owen made a presentation and I was just tremendously impressed with his story and what he had to say about his family and what happened to Killian. It was like God saying to me that this is something I have to do," ESPN college football analyst Lee Corso said. "I have been to thousands of banquets and I never got up and walked over to somebody and said I want to help you. I told them I will do whatever you want me to do to help your family. I told them to count me in to go anywhere in the country to help your family."

Since that day Corso has been the honorary chairman for Curing Kids' Cancer. The nonprofit has since added a golf tournament and hopes to add other events in the future to raise funds and awareness for

cancer research for children.

"I do a lot of these events and this is the only one that I want to come [to] on my own," he said. "Most of the others are sponsor events so I go. This is the only event that I personally come to help raise money. The biggest thing about this corporation is that they give all the money to pediatric cancer. A lot of charity events have these administrative fees and they put a hell of a lot of money in their own pockets, so I do not go to those events any more."

At the golf tournament Corso entertained, schmoozed and gave out expert college football nuggets of information in hopes of raising money.

Grainne and her husband Clay are hoping to expand the horizons of Curing Kids' Cancer to other states, with the hopes of raising even more money that can go into those specific areas. Coaches and teachers can ask their students to give contributions to Coaches Curing Cancer in lieu of a traditional gift and the teachers will receive a hat or a T-shirt.

So far the Owens have raised more than \$100,000 a year with their charity and they are making a difference for local children with cancer.

"Grainne and Clay Owen are true heroes as they turned their personal tragedy into hope for the parents of other children traveling the childhood cancer journey. Curing Kids' Cancer is a true partner in our efforts to cure childhood cancer," said Diane Vaughan, senior development officer for the Aflac Cancer Center and Blood Disorders Service of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. "They have funded much-needed infrastructure in our clinical research office, which enables us to conduct more clinical trials that will ultimately bring us closer to a cure. We are so grateful for their remarkable support."

The Owens' charity gave \$147,000 to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta last year and hope to surpass that amount in 2008.

Information: visit [www.curingkidscancer.org](http://www.curingkidscancer.org)

## Special photo



**From left, Clay Owen, Pierce Owen, 16, Garrett Owen, 14, Lee Corso and Finn Owen, 10.**

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# Sports

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## Turning tragedy into

# TRIUMPH

By Kelly Gosselin  
Major League Sports Editor

**O**n a rainy Monday afternoon last month, the Owens family gathered for a private funeral at Dover High for a twelve-year-old boy named Clayton. Clayton had been diagnosed with leukemia, and his death had been a tragedy for the Owens family.

Clayton's death was a tragedy for the Owens family, but it was also a triumph for the Owens family.

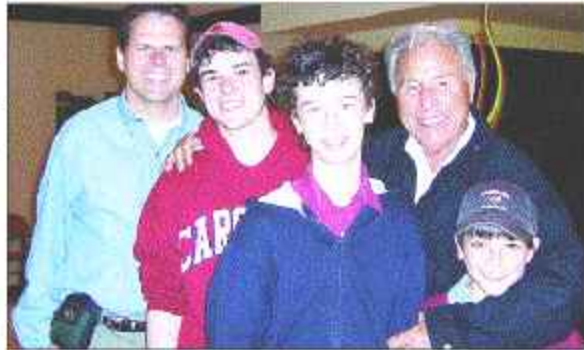
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Special photo

From left, Clay Owen, Pierce Owen, 16, Garrett Owen, 14, Lee Owen and Finn Owen, 10

family, I had thought I would have to go somewhere in the nearby hills to bury him. Clayton had been diagnosed with leukemia, and his death was a tragedy for the Owens family.

to give something to the Clayton Foundation. Clayton had been diagnosed with leukemia, and his death was a tragedy for the Owens family.



Major League Sports Editor

Benjamin Harrison (11) slides home during a state playoff game against Archbishop of Holy Innocents Episcopal School for the second time.

## Defending champ Holy Innocents' out of the baseball playoff picture

By Kelly Gosselin  
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## Lovett baseball advances to state semifinals

By Kelly Gosselin  
Major League Sports Editor



Major League Sports Editor

Lovett's Max Williams (19) sliding to home during game 2 of night 2 of the 2008 state playoffs.

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