

Letter to the Editor

A message from a THON child

By CRAIG DeWALT
FOR THE CAPITAL TIMES
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I write to you not only as a Penn State Alum, but as a former Four Diamonds child whose life was touched by Penn State students and the Four Diamonds Fund. I want to share my story and how THON has impacted my life today. For the past couple of years drama has come between the THON committee and the Student Government Association. Without taking sides, I want to stress the importance of THON as a selfless act rather than a selfish possession.

When I was eleven years old I was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma. Rhabdomyosarcoma is a soft tissue cancer which is most common in children. It all started when I discovered a mass growing on my uvula in the back of my mouth. I also felt some lumps on my neck. I underwent surgery to find out if the lumps were cancer. After a six-hour surgery, I was told that I had cancer. Immediately I thought that I was going to die. It was then when my family met with a Four Diamonds representative and I discovered a sense of hope. I was told that my cancer was highly

curable which added a sense of relief for me. My family was told that the Four Diamonds Fund would cover any expenses that our family insurance wouldn't cover. This was an immediate sense of relief for my parents. Throughout my year long battle with cancer, the Four Diamonds representatives were always there to add a positive outlook.

After the year-long battle, I was told that my cancer was cured. I would still have to make periodic visits to the clinic for check-ups, but the cancer was gone. It was then when I visited my first THON at University Park. I had heard many awesome stories about THON, but I had no idea what it was all about. When I walked into the building, I was immediately embraced by an overwhelming amount of college students. They could have been out enjoying their own lives, but instead they were there helping me to enjoy my life. At this point in time, I didn't know how much work was involved with THON, but I was happy that I had a place to go with fellow Four Diamonds children to get away from the horror that is cancer.

When I was thirteen, the cancer came back again in the same location. I had to undergo another

year-long battle with a more severe round of chemotherapy. Once again, the Four Diamonds fund was by my side, and picked up any expenses that our insurance couldn't pay for. Without the Four Diamonds Fund there is no way that my family would have been able to pay for two battles with cancer and still maintained enough money to give me and my sister a good life.

When choosing a college, I went with Penn State partially because it fit my needs but also because of THON. When I began at Penn State Harrisburg as a freshman, I didn't know that a THON committee existed. It wasn't until the very end of my sophomore year that I discovered the THON committee. After discussing interested in THON with a friend named Augie Bravo, I was asked to serve as the THON committee chair for Penn State Harrisburg my junior year. Before my term as Harrisburg's THON Chair, the schools highest profit total was \$5,000. Also, there weren't too many THON committee members, and there was a low sense of understanding of THON. My three goals for the 2007 THON committee were to double the profit total, increase the amount of people involved, and rapidly spread the word about

THON to our students. After raising over \$12,000, compiling a committee of over 50 members, and increasing the word of THON, Penn State Harrisburg was headed in the right direction.

The following year went the opposite direction. The passion was still there, but a conflict of selfishness and drama set in. The 2008 THON committee and the Student Government Association had differing opinions of each other. A few personal differences got in the way of one of Penn State's greatest traditions. Because of these differences members of the THON committee were divided, and not united. There was a limited amount of communication within the committee and several people refused to do any fundraising unless changes were made.

THON isn't a popularity contest. It isn't a place to turn when you want to be in charge of something for the sole purpose of being in charge. It isn't a place for members to fight and turn against one another. There is no room for drama within THON. THON isn't the place for selfish individuals. It's a place for selfless people who want to make a difference. It's about changing a child's life. It's about standing up during family hour, and listening to families talk

about how it has changed their lives. It's about standing hand-in-hand with the person beside you as you watch the final total for the current year as it is raised on the Bryce Jordan Center stage. It's about the butterflies that swarm through your chest when you realize that you were a part of raising \$6 million. But more importantly, it's about seeing the children running around with smiles on their faces, knowing that they love you and they don't even know your name. That is what THON is about. Being part of a \$6 million philanthropy without anybody knowing your name, or that you even contributed. It's a selfless act, not a selfish possession.

With that being said, I hope you all look at the THON Committee with a different outlook. It's not about who's in charge. It's not about why they are in charge. It's about doing your part to the fullest of your abilities to make sure that we raise the most money possible. There is not one person, or one group of people that are above THON. We don't do this for Penn State, we don't do this for personal reputations, we don't do this for the Student Government Association, we do this...For The Kids.

Letter to the Editor

The Capital Times needs better, more sports coverage

By AMANDA BASILE
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Dear Editor,

As an active student on this campus, involved in both athletics and clubs, I am consistently disappointed in the Capital Times coverage of our campus. The Sports Section of the newspaper never covers sports events on our campus and the scores of recent games aren't even printed – and we wonder why we don't have a good fan base at our games? It is upsetting that one of your 26 staff writers can't take an hour out of their week to come to a home game for one of the sports currently in season on this campus to talk to the teams, to actually see them in action, and to write an article about it. Speaking of talking to athletes, it is my understanding that

"Athlete of the Week" articles in any other newspaper or website focus on athletes *in season* that have *excelled* in their respective sport during that particular time period. For example, in the time between the first issue of the Capital Times and the second there was a woman's soccer player who scored three goals in nine minutes, three volleyball players who set or matched school records against Penn State York, and the men's cross country team brought home their first team victory this year. I mean no disrespect to the athletes who were honored at all, but I believe they could be recognized during their respective seasons.

Also, there are events, speakers, and panel discussions happening on this campus all the time, yet they are rarely covered by the paper. So many articles that fill the Capital Times are national

news articles. These articles are often interesting, but when I pick up a campus newspaper I am hoping to read news about Penn State Harrisburg, what students are doing on and around this campus, and what events are coming up. Overall, I enjoy picking up the newspaper every other week and looking through it, but I would love to see some more coverage of this campus, and I know I'm not alone.

Thank you,

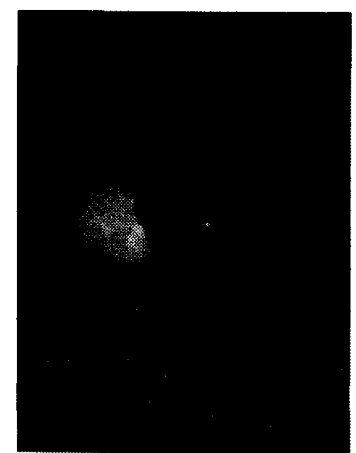
Amanda Basile

P.S. Men's Soccer Play-offs our on OUR campus this weekend – come out and support your boys!! The first round game is at 2PM on Friday vs. SUNY Cobleskill. And don't forget to wish the women's soccer team good luck as they travel to New York for their first round game on Thursday.

President's Corner



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Editor's note

The Student Government Association is provided space in each issue of The Capital Times for communicating with the Penn State Harrisburg student body. Neither the SGA president nor vice president chose to utilize the space and opportunity for this issue.