

## Students show their support

By Amy Kent Assistant Editor | Posted: Thursday, October 1, 2015 6:00 am

CLINTON — There is typically one thing people can expect from Clinton High School's homecoming celebration — seeing that quintessential black and red of the River Kings and Queens plastered throughout the school and the community.

The CHS student body decided to throw tradition out the window this year for a good cause, and in doing so, is showing support for one of their own -junior Chris Foster - by turning Clinton High School's homecoming blue.

Foster, who has battled aggressive cancer on and off for a year, currently is undergoing intense treatment at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City and has taken a turn for the worse, according to his Response to Intervention teacher Jenny Hansen.

Because of that, the CHS sophomore football team decided it wanted to do something special and planned to wear armbands during the homecoming football game. When Jake Demotta sent a message to Foster on social media asking his favorite color (for the armbands), what happened after was something he never expected.

"I just messaged him on Facebook and asked what his favorite color was so we could wear it during our homecoming game, and when he responded back there was a huge, positive response from everybody," Demotta said. "Everybody loved the idea."

From there, students continued to share the idea on social media, generating message after message supporting the football team's concept, until one day someone suggested taking the idea one step further and making the homecoming T-shirts blue.

Lisa Reeg, Junior class adviser, said traditionally the junior class designs the shirts because proceeds go toward purchasing decorations for prom. When the initial design turned out differently than what the juniors had wanted, the class saw it as a perfect opportunity to try again.

That's when CHS Principal JR Kuch invited everyone in the student body to submit their own designs that would be taken to a vote. The vote was a landslide in favor of the blue shirt honoring Foster.

"Our initial T-shirt design was the traditional black and red. The blue wasn't even brought to our attention when we first were coming up with the T-shirt ideas; we were going along the lines of traditional," Reeg said. "When there was such a huge student outcry, they just really put it out there that they wanted to go outside of tradition and do something special. That was kind of a battle for a while because a lot of people were like this is tradition, but the student body really pushed to say this was more important, this symbolic gesture to Chris."

It is a gesture that is not lost on the CHS junior.

Because Foster is undergoing treatment, Hansen said she is unsure if he will be able to participate in any of the homecoming activities, but said he hopes to attend some of the varsity football game.

Either way, Hansen said Foster is overwhelmed by the kindness his fellow students are showing him.

"He just can't believe it and he said he's just very thankful to be a part of Clinton High," Hansen said. "Jacob did a huge thing that day, by opening up that conversation to him."

Seth Bolen, student council president, is working with the Clinton High School art department to create blue ribbons that can be purchased at the Oct. 9 football game, for those in the stands who don't have blue shirts to wear. While the proceeds from the T-shirt sales will still go to the junior class for prom, the sale of the ribbons will go to Foster and his family.

Though he knows community members may still have reservations to wear blue, specifically royal blue, to the homecoming game at Clinton High School, Bolen is hoping people will put tradition aside to support what the CHS students are trying to do.

"I hope the community gets the idea that Clinton High is moving in a new direction and we're really uniting as a student body with pride for the school, with pride for each other," Bolen said. "The fact that we're able to use this opportunity to stand behind one of our students at CHS, I think that's really awesome."

Homecoming T-shirts are available for \$10 and can be ordered at any of the district schools. The deadline for orders is today.

Assistant Editor Amy Kent can be contacted at amykent@clintonherald.com



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The Royal Network is this year's Clinton High School homecoming theme and in honor of Chris Foster, the T-shirts are royal blue.