

Principal: The legacy of CHS junior Chris Foster will live on

By Alexandria Bryson Herald Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, November 5, 2015 8:00 am

CLINTON — A Clinton 16-year-old who lost his battle with cancer this week is being remembered today as a teen who cared about everyone else's happiness before his own and ended up bringing a whole community together.

Chris Foster, a Clinton High School junior, died Monday at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City. He had been battling neuroblastoma, a form of adrenal cancer, since he was 15. His aunt, Teah Foster, said Chris had fought it three times. In mid-September, he found out the cancer had made it to his brain, Teah said.

In his final months, Clinton High School and the community at large rallied around Chris, wearing his favorite color — blue — at Homecoming festivities and raising funds for his family.

Clinton High School Principal JR Kuch told the Herald this week that Chris's legacy is a far-reaching one and that he will be remembered for a very long time.

"What made the community and school support even more special was the fact that Chris was a kid who was just a kid," Kuch said. "He wasn't a superstar athlete, he wasn't involved in any school activities. I know he loved the NBA and video games, which made him like almost any teenage boy. The community and school came to support just a normal everyday student. I am so proud of the community for what they did.

"This was something that united CHS and Clinton. However, what I have come to reflect on was that Chris wasn't just average or a normal everyday student. The amount of courage and bravery that he displayed did more for our students than any lesson we could teach in the classroom. Chris showed exactly what it means to persevere, and continue to fight against all odds. He will serve as a role model for a long time at CHS. So in essence, he wasn't normal at all."

His friends remember Chris, the son of Krista and Larry Wilson of Clinton and Trevor Foster of Muscatine, as always being happy.

"He never showed he was in pain, he never complained about it at all — not even to his mom. He made sure everyone was OK before himself; he cared about others and wanted everyone happy before his own happiness," said Carlee Kibler, Chris's best friend.

"He said that he wanted to win, even though if he did pass he wanted everyone to be OK, no matter what. If he did pass he wanted everyone to take care of each other because he wouldn't be there to do it," Jocey Claussen, Chris's girlfriend, said. "His mom was his best friend. He told me he really wanted her to be OK."

The school had two different fundraisers for him. The first year that he was diagnosed, there was a large fundraiser around Christmas, followed by the other during this year's Homecoming. Students also sent him big cards as well as videos of the whole school telling him to get better and how much they all supported him, said Jenny Hansen, an RTI teacher who worked with Chris on his schooling.

"Chris always came into my classroom after school. He was never asked to stay after but just liked to come in to get his work done. He was in honors classes and he really cared about schooling and about his education," Hansen said. "Chris was very excited about the kids coming together. Chris felt like the most important kid in the world, which is what we all intended."

There was a silent auction and students sold bracelets, glow sticks and blue ribbons, with all donations going to Chris. T-shirts to support Chris were sold at the school and donation cans were put out at gas stations to help raise money for him. There were posts on social media to show support, and for Homecoming week the students wrote "Support Chris Foster" all over town.

At sporting events, all the volleyball players wore blue for their warm ups, and everyone in the volleyball stands wore blue. At the Homecoming football game, community members, the student body and even Davenport West's visiting spectators wore blue. Davenport West donated \$500 not even knowing him, said Kibler.

"I thought it was really special — two different communities coming in and showing support for Chris. I definitely didn't expect both communities to come together to show their support the way they did," Dru Foster, Chris's cousin, said.

In all, more than \$5,000 from the students, staff and other community members was raised for Chris since he was diagnosed.

"I think Chris was actually a positive inspiration for us," added McKenzie Petersen, Clinton High volleyball player. "Never once did we see him frown. He was always smiling. From what we heard, he was always trying to do things for others."



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Chris Foster's funeral service will take place at 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 7, at Lemke Funeral Homes - South Chapel, 2610 Manufacturing Drive. Visitation will be from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 6, at Lemke Funeral Homes - South Chapel. Burial will take place at Clinton Lawn Cemetery.