

Tournament to spike fund-raising for Lou Gehrig's disease

By Tim Hurst
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North Farmington High School students in the Humanitarian Club this weekend will serve up a volleyball tournament event intended to spike awareness of

amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly referred to as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

"They don't really know how it starts,"
Dan Panock

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Dubbed an "All Night Happening," the 7 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Saturday event will also include plenty of video games, movies, donated pizza and pop, raffles and music, with WDRQ-FM morning disc jockey Jay Towers scheduled to be on hand.

Humanitarian Club members Kallyn Green, Dan Panock and Gretchen Pittluk last week said the marathon is for North students only, although parents and teachers will chaperone. With each student paying \$10 admission at the door, along with pledges from classmates, Panock said the goal is to raise \$4,500 to be donated to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, which oversees ALS research.

Panock, a junior, has a personal reason for putting on an ALS benefit, which the Humanitarian Club (sponsored by North teacher Kathy Meisner) began organizing in September. Steve Katz, father of Dan's friend, Ari, is in the advanced stages of the disease, which deteriorates muscles and robs the body of its motor power.

"He inspired it," said Panock, about Steve Katz' role in the marathon. "He endured."

Green, who attends 11th grade and is co-president of the Humanitarian Club with Andrea Coleman, said Panock "is aware of what it's done to (the Katz) family and so he wants to raise money for the foundation."

Steve, who was diagnosed in 1997 and then given up to five years to live, isn't strong enough to attend the benefit. But Panock said his wife, Joanne Katz, and Ari plan on being

there. "They don't really know how it starts," said Panock, who knew Steve for about a year before he became ill. "But it deteriorates the muscles. It (ALS) starts in the feet and works its way up. Or it starts in the hands."

Pittluk and Green said "All Night Happening" enables kids to have fun while still becoming aware of a serious disease. "It's an incredibly important cause for people to know about," said Pittluk, also a junior and the club's main publicist for the event.

Green said students weren't alone in helping a worthy cause. The applauded area businesses for their participation, particularly the Dominos Pizza at 14 Mile-Farmington, for donating "unlimited" pizza.

Meanwhile, in a written statement, Humanitarian Club co-president Coleman noted that the event "is a great way for students to have a fun time and help others."

The work of the Humanitarian Club and other student groups is getting attention from administrators and faculty.

"The kids have been really motivated toward sponsoring groups" that benefit charities, such as the Make A Wish Foundation, said North assistant principal Linda Lanigan. "And a lot of the kids are talking about this."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BECKER
Staying up: North Farmington students Dan Panock, Kallyn Green and Gretchen Pittluk are planning an all-night volleyball tournament.

The "All Night Happening" is the Humanitarian Club's biggest endeavor so far this year. Panock said the students also organized a mitten tree and rang kettles for the Salvation Army during the holidays.

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YMCA HIGHLIGHTS

WINTER CAMP
Winter Camp registration continues through Feb. 11. There will be field trips, swimming and recreational activities scheduled throughout the week. Kindergarten through fifth-graders can be a part of the YMCA environment for the week and have doing arts, crafts and games.

WINTER REGISTRATION
Winter II Registration begins Feb. 21. There is a wide variety of swim classes available. The YMCA swim program has been completely redesigned to be more comprehensive in nature to ensure all youngsters taking the YMCA swim lessons are completely competent. Kick Fit, Dance Fit and Arthritis exercise in the water are also available.

KIDS NIGHT OUT
Kids Night Out includes games, crafts and swimming for kindergartners through fifth grade students 7-10:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 12, at the Farmington YMCA. Pre-registration is required.

COFFEE HOUSE
Join YMCA team leaders for coffee, hot chocolate and entertainment in the Y youth center 7-11 p.m. Friday, Feb. 25. Open mike night for those enrolled in the YMCA Arts and Humanities program will be available for creative expression. Bring a friend and come for the fun.



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