

OSU football players team up for Miracle for Madison

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Two football stars from Ohio State University have teamed up to raise money to help a seven-year-old Dublin girl and other children afflicted with spinal Muscular Atrophy 1 (SMA1), the leading genetic killer of children under the age of two.

At last week's Miracle for Madison and Friends Angels at the End Zone fund-raiser - named after Madison Rose Reed -- former OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel, who led the 2002 team to a national championship, unveiled a print of himself and Rex Kern, quarterback of the 1968 OSU national championship team. Kern was unable to travel from his California home because of a back problem.

A portion of proceeds from the sale of the print will be donated to the Miracle for Madison Foundation for SMA research at the OSU Medical Center.

"Rex is the sole reason this project got started," Krenzel said. Kern came up with the idea and approached Krenzel in January.

The centerpiece of the print features Kern and Krenzel together after the Buckeyes won the national championship against Miami. At each corner is a picture of each player with his coach -- Krenzel with Jim Tressel and Kern with Woody Hayes.

There are action images of each player, as well as the scoreboard of each national championship game with the winning score.

"The Quarterbacks" print was created by artist Dorsey Nicholson, who was chosen to paint the International Motor Sports Hall of Fame Driver of the Year portraits.

There are 250 signed and numbered prints that come with a certificate of authenticity and with a football signed by both quarterbacks, with a picture of both in the center.

Ordering information is available from Horseshoe Legends at (877) 344-8083.

This year's Angel in the End Zone fund-raiser brought in more than \$100,000, bringing the six-year total for all fund-raising events for the foundation to more than \$600,000, said Annette Reed, Madison's mother.

"On the football field, our ultimate goal is to reach the end zone," Kern said prior to the event.

"For the thousands of kids battling SMA, it is even more crucial that we meet this goal. Leading scientists at OSU and across the country believe that treatments or a cure for this deadly disease can become a reality in the near term. The dedication of these families and the very real advancements in SMA science have brought us to the goal line -- and now only moderate funding is standing in our way."

Madison was diagnosed with SMA1 when she was eight months old. Fifty percent of the children afflicted with this don't live past the age of two.

SMA Type 1 destroys nerve cells known as motor neurons. They control voluntary movements such as crawling, walking, head and neck control and swallowing. Most deaths come from lung problems.

"As a parent of a child with SMA, you have to take each day at a time. When our daughter was first diagnosed with the disease, doctors told us she would not live more than a year. Madison is now seven years old and is still defying the odds," said her mother. "And now, with increased funding, treatments for SMA may actually become a reality for our daughter."

Her father, Carl Reed, is a social studies teacher at Dublin Coffman High School and a former OSU wrestler.

While individual members of the OSU football team support various charities, the Miracle for Madison Foundation is the only charity the entire OSU football team is involved in, said OSU assistant coach Bill Conley.

"At Ohio State we teach the players about humility and tell them part of their role is giving back to the community," he said. "This is one event we don't have to talk to them about. They look forward to coming here... even the guys who have gone on to the pros still come back."