

## The worthiest cause

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Some of the Boston University men's hockey team may be sporting a new hair-do this summer.



Sophomore forward Wade Megan helped jump-start an effort among a group of BU players to shave their heads for children and families fighting pediatric cancer. Daily Free Press File Photo

Sophomore forwards Ross Gaudet, Wade Megan and Ryan Santana as well as former junior assistant captain Dave Warsofsky all plan to shave their heads at Gillette Stadium on June 5 in an effort to raise money for children and families fighting pediatric cancer.

The event, called the Kid's Cancer Buzz-Off, is being run by One Mission, a childhood cancer foundation started by the parents of former Children's Hospital Boston patient Nicholas Haseotes. Nicholas was diagnosed at seven months old with AML, a form of

leukemia, and spent six months undergoing treatment at Children's. According to a biography on the One Mission website, Nicholas is currently cancer-free.

In early March, flyers about the Kid's Cancer Buzz-Off were distributed at Agganis Arena, and Megan took one back to his room. He came across the flyer one day while preparing for practice and decided to start a fundraising page in his name on the organization's website. Megan set his original goal for \$250 before leaving for practice. "I just had it in my room and saw it lying around, so I signed up before I came to the rink," Megan said. "It's just for a good cause, for kids with cancer, so I decided to get it started."

By the time Megan got to the rink for practice, a few of his teammates had seen his page. Gaudet and Santana were the first to join Megan in setting up pages, and Warsofsky followed soon afterward. Megan said he had no personal connections to cancer; but Gaudet, Santana and Warsofsky do.

One of Gaudet's good friends was diagnosed with leukemia in fourth grade and is now a cancer survivor. Warsofsky's mother is a melanoma survivor.

Santana has lost two grandparents to cancer and is a cancer survivor himself. Doctors found a malignant tumor in Santana's foot when Santana was just 18 months old. They were able to remove the tumor surgically, and Santana required no further treatment. "I was pretty young, so I don't remember much of it," Santana said. "Thankfully it was just surgery and they were able to get to it before it started spreading. "But having some family members who went through chemotherapy, I'm able to understand not only what the person goes through but what the family goes through as well. It just makes you want to do what you can to raise some money for a good cause."

Megan, Gaudet, Santana and Warsofsky all set relatively low goals initially, but due to a strong response within the first two weeks of the fundraiser, both Gaudet and Santana raised their goals. Santana is now hoping to raise \$1000 by June 5 while Gaudet surpassed his new goal of \$350 and said he has talked to some of his teammates and their families who plan to donate as well.

Combined, the four players have already raised \$1,948.16.

"Cancer in general is one of those things that hits close to home for so many people and I think that's one of the reasons why it took off the way it did," Megan said. "It's pretty amazing the way it took off."

Cancer has been an especially prescient topic in the hockey world recently due to the April 3 death of 23-year-old Yale hockey player Mandi Schwartz, who had been fighting leukemia since December 2008. Schwartz's brothers, Jaden and Rylan Schwartz, both play hockey for Colorado College.

“I just saw that they did an ESPN special on [Schwartz] I think a year ago maybe,” Gaudet said. “I remember watching it and just feeling terrible, especially knowing that she couldn’t beat it. I can’t imagine how terrible it must have been for her and her family to go through it.

“She had hockey as a way to kind of get away from it at times when she could play. Anything we can do to help find a cure or help a family pay off some bills, it will help out.”

BU coach Jack Parker did not know his players were raising money for One Mission until a few days after they set up their fundraising efforts, but he said he was glad to hear that the players were helping out.

“I think it’s fabulous,” Parker said. “I think our guys and athletes in general should be a little bit more grateful for what a great situation they have compared to people who are less fortunate than themselves.

“For guys like my guys or any team to go out and try to help somebody who’s not in as good of shape as them is a great thing. Being grateful for your situation and being willing to help others is a very nice attribute.”

While Parker was happy to hear that the players were raising money for pediatric cancer, he may not be quite as happy with some of their hairstyles. Megan, who was looking a little shaggy at the time of his interview, said he was hoping to grow out his hair until the event at Gillette in June.

“You don’t have to but I think it makes it a little more exciting if you let it grow and shave it all off at the end,” Megan said. “So yeah, I’ll let it grow until June 5th if coach will allow it and then shave it all off then.”