

Rocky's Matz making impact off field

Fort Collins Coloradoan - Fort Collins, Colo.

Author: HAP FRY
Date: Jun 16, 2010
Start Page: n/a
Section: SPORTS
Text Word Count: 592

Document Text

HapFry@coloradoan.com

Bryan Matz could not have known what he was getting into four years ago when he stopped by the Fort Collins Respite Care Inc., to see if the organization would allow him to do his five hours of service learning required for a biology class.

"I definitely just went in there thinking this was just a project I wanted to get done for school," Matz said. "But after I spent my first day there, I just kind of saw what kind of an impact I could have."

Matz's impact on Respite Care Inc., which provides short-term care for children with special needs, has been huge.

Respite Care Inc. executive director LeAnn Massey said Matz has given countless hours to the organization over the past four years. And this spring, he was able to raise a significant amount of money for the program.

The 2010 Rocky Mountain High School graduate and baseball standout, along with his mother Heather, hatched up a plan where people would pledge money for each home run he hit this past season for the Lobos.

Matz didn't lead Rocky Mountain in homers, but he hit his share - six - and was able to raise \$2,540 in the process.

The former Rocky catcher, who will play baseball collegiately at the Air Force Academy, actually said he got the initial idea from a game his junior season when he timed it just right and hit a homer at the request of a Respite Care Inc. , patient who was at the game with his parents.

"One of the kids was screaming for me to hit a home run," Matz said. "I could hear his parents saying to him, 'he'll try his best, but it might not happen.' Fortunately I was able to hit one. I just kind of saw the impact it had on him, and it kind of gave me the idea to do something this year."

Turns out, Matz may have sparked a tradition within the Rocky Mountain baseball program. Incoming senior Jess Amedee will take over the reins next season as the Lobos' home run hitting poster boy for Respite Care Inc.

"It really tugs at my heart, but I didn't have anything to do with what Bryan did," said Rocky Mountain coach Scott Bullock, whose son Tagg has Down Syndrome. "I'm just honored to be able to coach a kid like him. If Jess wants to take it over, that's fine with me."

Massey said it's hard to put into words what Matz has done for her organization.

"He's really helped open up a whole new avenue for us," Massey said. "Even though we need money, we need (public relations) because there are a lot of families out there that are going at it alone. They don't know that we can help, and that we're here to help."

Rocky Mountain's baseball team is just one of several city athletic teams that have actively participated with Respite Care Inc. The Fort Collins and Poudre baseball teams also have had outings, and Massey said the Colorado State University football and men's basketball teams have expressed interest in volunteering.

Matz has a clear message to those who are looking to get involved in helping out with Respite Care Inc.

"It really has made me appreciate what I have a little more," Matz said. "What I can give to the kids is something so simple - it's just time - but to them it means the world. There's nothing like making a respite kid happy. It's hard to explain."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

Abstract (Document Summary)

Rocky Mountain's baseball team is just one of several city athletic teams that have actively participated with Respite Care Inc. The Fort Collins and Poudre baseball teams also have had outings, and Massey said the Colorado State University football and men's basketball teams have expressed interest in volunteering.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.