

'Just Drew It' shirts honor special young man

Written by Jim Ecker

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Once in awhile, a special person comes along and touches the hearts and souls of countless people in his community.

Drew Wall was such a person, and he had only 16 short years on earth to spread his message.

Drew passed away Monday after a five-year battle with cancer, but his spirit and determination will not be soon forgotten.

Drew's friends and admirers are hustling to keep up with the requests for the special purple "Just Drew It" shirts that commemorate his life and expand his message.

Kennedy parents began with an order of 280 shirts, not sure where this was headed. They placed a second order for 500 more shirts, and now a third order for an additional 800. That puts the total at approximately 1,600 shirts and there's no end in sight. People are snapping them up.

"It shows what Drew was all about," said Mike Murdock, one of the Kennedy parents who is helping with the sales. "It confirms the impact Drew had on his group on earth, but it also confirms the impact he had on people who didn't even know him."

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Drew was diagnosed with cancer when he was 11 years old. He lost part of one leg to the disease, then ultimately lost his life.

Instead of feeling sorry for himself, he served as a positive role model in the fight against cancer and in the fight for people with disabilities. He met with a governor, a senator and the president of the United States while fighting for others.

He gave speeches and gave people hope, all the way to his last breath on earth.

"When we think we're having a bad day, we need to put things in perspective and really understand what a bad day is really all about," Murdock remarked.

They've received orders for the "Just Drew It" T-shirts and polo shirts from Cedar Rapids Washington, Xavier, Madison Elementary School, Taft Middle School, North Linn High School, Iowa City High and Jefferson. Kennedy High School has been a sea of purple this week as the Cougars pay tribute to their special friend.

"They're asking what they can do to help out," Murdock said of Kennedy students. "They want to be a part of it."

Jefferson High School just placed an order for 100 shirts and wanted to know how soon they could get them. A mother of a girl who plays basketball at North Linn wanted 35 shirts for a game this past Tuesday night and the Kennedy folks delivered.

There will be a special "Purple Out Night" at Kennedy on Friday, Dec. 14 when the Cougars host Washington in a girl/boy basketball doubleheader.

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The shirts have been on sale at the Kennedy Activities Office daily from 7:15 to 7:55 a.m. and from 2:45 to 3:15 p.m. The Kennedy parents have established new website to keep up with the demand, so now people can place their orders at drewwall.logo-shop.net.

There have been requests from people in Alaska, New York and Florida, thanks to the Internet, Twitter and Facebook. The Kennedy parents originally thought they would stop selling the shirts by Christmas, but it could go on from there.

"As this thing has grown, we don't want to eliminate anyone who potentially wants to be a part of it and support it," Murdock said.

All proceeds will go to the Drew Wall LIVESTRONG Fund or to the Wall family directly. Drew is survived by his parents, Doug and Robin Wall, and by his younger brother, Adam.

[Drew's obituary](#) can found on page 8A of Thursday's edition of The Gazette. It consumes nearly two full columns with his achievements and life story.

The shirts are modestly priced. The T-shirts are \$10 or \$12, and the polo shirts are \$25 or \$27. There are a variety of sizes, from kids sizes through adults, including Triple-X Large.

People will be able to order their shirts on Sunday during visitation at Kennedy High School from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Black Box Theater. Services will be held Monday at 2 p.m. at the New Covenant Bible Church at 3090 North Center Point Road NE in Cedar Rapids.

Murdock suspects there might be lots of people wearing the purple "Just Drew It" shirts at the visitation. "I think you'll see them all over the place on Sunday," he said.

Drew's life on earth is finished, but his unbridled spirit and determination live on.

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