

What is community?

It has a few meanings;

~a group of people living in the same place, (*Bakersfield*) or having a particular characteristic in common. (*Cole*)

~a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals. We often don't realize how important our community is or how special it can be until we are needed. **Sometimes we are needed as a community and sometimes our community needs someone.**



This past year that need was Cole Paquette. Did he need his community or did his community need him?

Cole is at least a 4th generation of Paquette's that have lived in our small community. He was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in 2016. A cancer the medical field knew little about. Was he willing to fight? You bet he was and our community was behind him 100%. Not only were Cole and Bakersfield willing to go the distance but also our surrounding communities. Together they put up the fight of their lives!

While Cole and his family met with doctors and specialists, Bakersfield began organizing fundraisers. Support systems were put in place. This community wanted to know everything they could about this rare disease so the learning began. It

became our focus for the next 12 months. Bakersfield was ready to do whatever they could to help fight this battle with Cole.

There were bad days and bad weeks. There were good days and good weeks. Still our battle continued.

Who was fighting this battle harder than anyone? Cole was! But if you were to ask him how are you doing? His response would be, "Good." Good! Whether he was extremely sick or in pain, most of the time he was good. Behind that word was a boy teaching his community a whole lot about life. He taught us to fight! To not believe everything you are told. To stand up to any and every challenge. He taught us to face things head on. He taught us to laugh and to cry with each other. He taught us to love like we've never loved before. He taught his peers to do their best and to hold on to each other and show your true feelings. He taught us so many things but the one thing that will always stand out is, he taught us to NEVER GIVE UP!

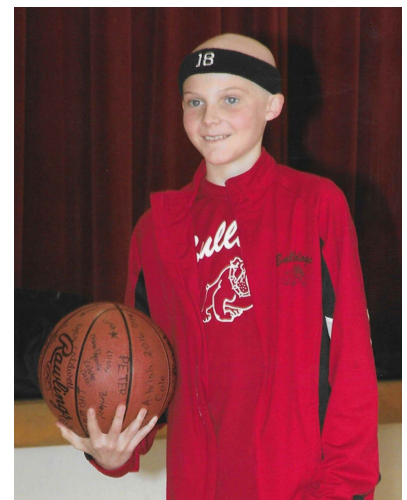
Together Cole and his Bakersfield community fought the biggest battle of all..... LIFE!

Did we give up? NO

Did we win? YES

Yes, because Cole taught us one more thing. He taught us that even after the battle is over and we come to terms with the unknown, we can still fight! Fight for a cure! Fight to keep our community strong.

And most of all love life, no matter what it throws at us!



Thank you Cole for making such a huge impact on our little community. May you Rest in Peace, and may you look down on us and remind us every once in awhile how truly special we all are.