

Dance marathon for Riley surpasses goal

By Christy Mullins
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Bloomington high school students passed their goal at this weekend's dance marathon benefit for the Indianapolis-based Riley Hospital

for Children.

Students from North and South schools on Saturday raised \$68,092.75, organizers said. Their goal was \$50,000.

Indiana University's Dance Marathon organizers reported raising

another estimated \$10,000 for the hospital in a separate street-fair event Saturday on Kirkwood Avenue.

Official numbers for IU's Rockin' 4 Riley event were not available Sunday evening.



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Eastern Greene Honor Society members greet Homeward Bound walkers Sunday afternoon as they finish the 5K walk.



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A total of 807 walkers were registered to participate in the 5K Homeward Bound Walk through Bloomington and the Indiana University campus Sunday. The walk raised more than \$41,000 for various local organizations that help the homeless.

More photos online

See a photo gallery from the walk, published with this story at HeraldTimesOnline.com.

WALK Donations total \$41,000 so far

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a ceremony just feet away — for snacks and entertainment.

The Homeward Bound Walk has raised \$435,000 for Bloomington-area agencies since it began in 2003.

Statewide, it has raised \$3 million for approximately 100 agencies.

Mayer said donations will be accepted for the next 30 days online, by phone and by email.

To find out more about donating, visit www.homewardboundindiana.org/bloomington, call Mayer at 349-3430 or email her at mayerkr@bloomington.in.gov.

Park gets new name

By Christy Mullins
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The small public park on Third Street behind the Bloomington Police Department now bears the name of three prominent Bloomington families who deeded the land decades ago.

In a celebration Sunday, the park was rededicated as the Waldron, Hill and Buskirk Park. Members of each family attended, some from as far as New York, to thank the city for its recognition.

But "the families didn't seek this," Bloomington Mayor Mark Kruzan said. About a year ago, curious resident Evelyn Powers found the deed to Third Street Park on microfilm and brought it to Kruzan, the city's parks director and the city's legal department for some answers.

The original deed stated that the park would be named after the three families who sold the land to the

city in the early 1920s — for a lump sum of \$5,400. Until Sunday, the land had been known as Third Street Park, although officials aren't sure why.

"Of course I thought she was wrong," Kruzan said. "There was no way. But she was right."

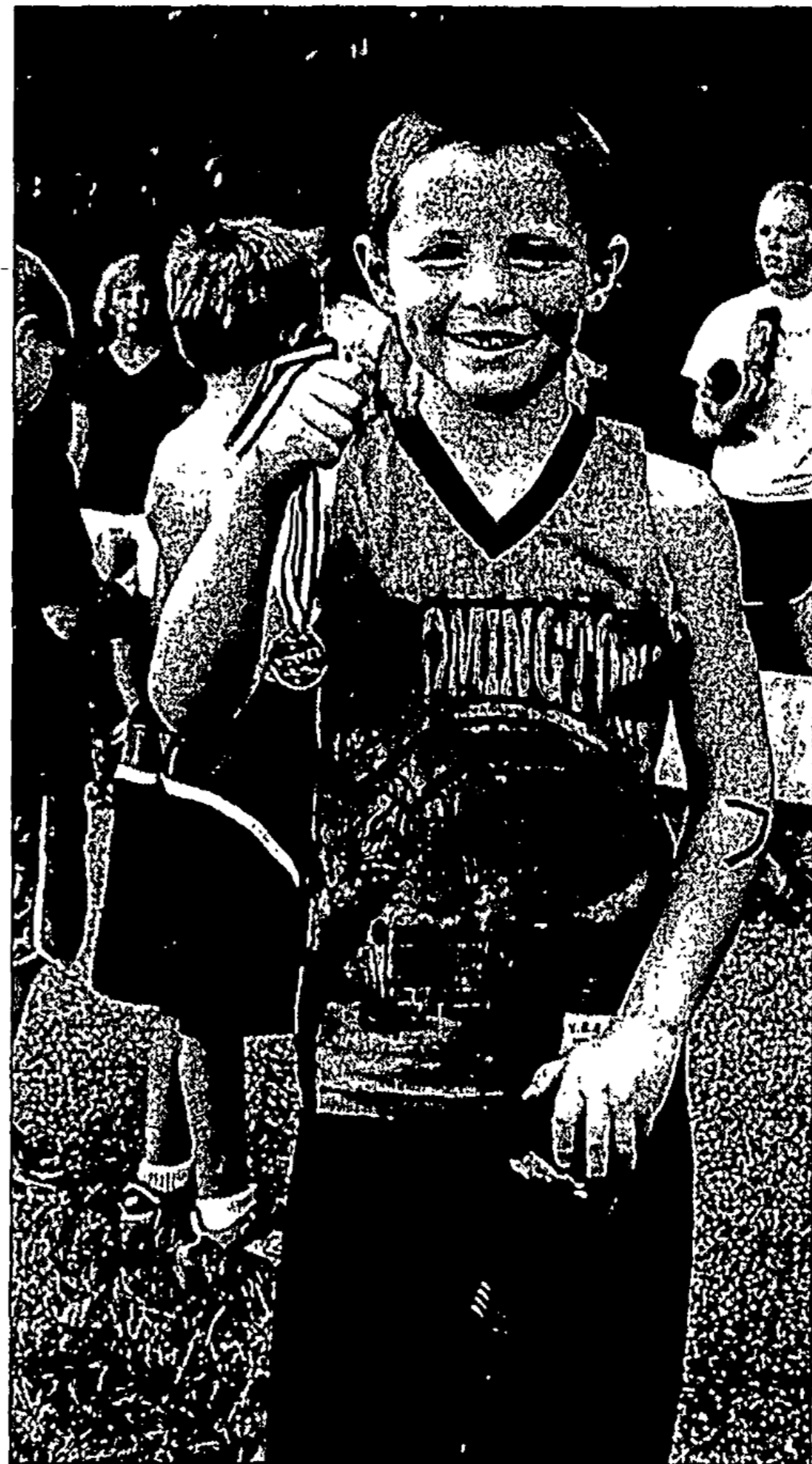
"Some might say government works slowly, but today we're getting it right."

In the background, hundreds of people occupied the park, finishing a 5K walk through Bloomington for homelessness awareness. A smaller crowd gathered for the rededication ceremony. Kruzan and others acknowledged that the park has remained free and open to the public, even during special events at its amphitheater.

"Call this park what you want," said Nat V. Hill, representing the Hill family. "So long as you maintain the belief that it should remain a free, public park."

"Our dream is for complete recovery. Eli certainly has the determination to work hard in therapy and get it done."

ANGIE DILTS, mother of 7-year-old Eli, who has cancer



COURTESY PHOTO

Eli Dilts holds a medal he earned after finishing a triathlon last August, just three months before being diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor.

ELI Young runners have a cause this year

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A few weeks later they said they realized the word "believe" contains Eli's name. Suddenly "I Run Because I bELieve" became the team's inspirational motto, and its T-shirts were emblazoned with the phrase.

One of the girls who helped come up with the idea, 9-year-old Sophie Yandt, told her parents she wanted to do something to lift Eli's spirits.

"Sophie ran in the fall run with Eli and had a personal connection with him," said Sophie's mother, Susan Hingle. "She and the other kids were moved by what Eli is going through and wanted to show their support."

Since Eli was diagnosed with medulloblastoma — a highly aggressive brain tumor — he has undergone surgery at the Riley Hospital for Children. He then went through months of radiation and chemotherapy, which he is still receiving today.

The surgery initially robbed him of his ability to walk and talk. But on St. Patrick's Day, Angie Dilts was in the hospital, sitting on Eli's bed, when he spoke his first words since the surgery.

"I love you," he said. "Those were the three sweetest words I've ever heard in life," Dilts said. "I started to cry."

Several weeks of speech therapy have helped him regain some of his speech, and it's hoped that physical and occupational therapy will eventually enable him to get back on his feet.

When Eli first learned what his running mates were doing on his behalf, he

said, "That is super duper cool."

Today, Eli is still in a wheelchair, but he's talking up a storm — even though his speech is a bit slurred.

"The doctors and nurses at Riley tell us he is a legend there for his attitude," Dilts said. "No matter what he's going through — vomiting, infections, painful procedures — he smiles at everyone."

Dilts said Eli had hoped to go to the Spring Run to show his support, but he is still at Riley Hospital, feeling extremely weak from ongoing chemotherapy treatments.

Soon he will be moved to an inpatient rehab unit where he will get intensive physical, occupational and speech therapy until his next round of chemo begins April 28.

Dilts said post-surgery CAT scans showed that surgeons were unable to remove a tiny piece of the brain tumor, and that the cancer had spread to two other places in Eli's brain and a spot in his spine.

"But after his radiation was over they did another CAT scan and found that the two spots in his brain and the spot in his spine were gone," she said. "And the original tumor had shrunk from 15 millimeters to 3 millimeters."

Before the cancer struck, Eli was a ball of energy, playing just about any sport under the sun.

Dilts said doctors hope when Eli completes his final round of chemotherapy treatments in July, he will be cancer-free.

She says she and her husband, Jeremy, can't help but believe her son's journey will have a happy ending.

"Our dream is for complete recovery," Dilts said. "Eli certainly has the determination to work hard in therapy and get it done."

TODAY
Peace talks in Libya REPORT BY JAMES H. COOPER

Local business
Big bid-ness

Local auctions remain a powerful way to buy and sell land, buildings and items. In Tuesday's Biz Net, read more about the history and business of local auctioneers.

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