

What's the "Buzz" about?

by Nicole BYWATER

Mark and Rose Tuck honor their daughter's memory and help others at the Kid's Cancer Buzz-Off in Dallas on May 4

Even though it's been 24 years since her daughter passed away from a rare form of soft tissue cancer, Rose Tuck still remembers the names of the nurses they saw at Children's Medical Center Dallas. She remembers the little red shopping cart she used every month to carry a quilt and other special decorations that made her daughter Jennie's hospital room feel less like a doctor's office and more like a regular teenager's bedroom. She remembers Friday nights spent taking her daughter to cheer and play in the band at the middle school football game, followed up with blood work at the hospital and then pizza with her youth group at St. Jude.

"Even as we were going through treatment, she never lost her identity," Rose says. "That was important to her, important to us and I think important to the kids she was around. Nothing stopped her."

The importance of being able to keep some normality even as you're fighting cancer is what Rose remembers. And it's why she and her husband Mark are supporters of One Mission, a childhood cancer foundation dedicated to enhancing the lives of pediatric cancer patients and their families.

"I can relate to this because I know what it's like to be stuck in a hospital room with a very sick child, yet somehow the world continues on," Rose says. "One of the things One Mission does—and it's just a small part of what

they do, but it makes a world of difference—is that they create a personalized package of items and décor to make a patient's room more special. It's not curing cancer. But it's a big thing."

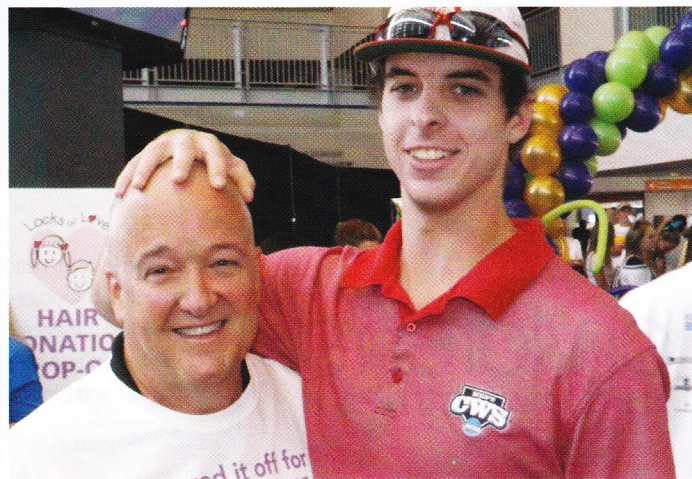
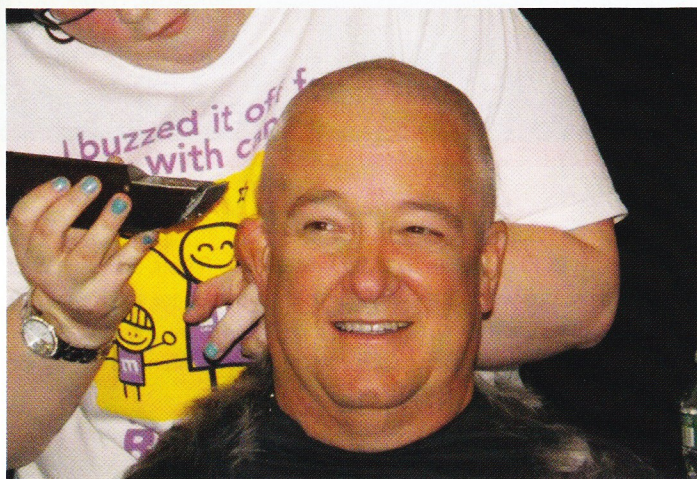
One Mission focuses on patients

Mark and Rose have lived in Allen since 1986. Mark's job requires him to commute to Boston, which is where he first heard about One Mission in 2012, through a co-worker and friend who is the neighbor of the group's founders, Ashley and Ari Haseotes.

One Mission was born out of the Haseotes' personal journey with cancer, when at seven months old, their son Nicholas was diagnosed with AML, a rare form of leukemia. They spent six months living at Boston Children's Hospital—their lives turned upside down. Thanks to advancements in research and the compassionate care and expert treatment their son received, today Nicholas is cancer-free.

"As soon as I heard Ashley's story and about One Mission and the amazing work they were doing at Boston Children's Hospital, I immediately thought about our experience at Children's in Dallas," Mark says. "They're not just about fundraising, but instead, they create endowments so that these programs are long-lasting and sustainable."

That first year, Mark made a donation to his friend's



team, but it was too late to participate himself. In 2013, Mark became what's known as a "Buzzee," and had his head shaved—something he hadn't done since his Navy boot camp days some 40 years ago. Mark brought Rose and their son, David, to the event known as The Kid's Cancer Buzz-Off, held at Gillette Stadium, near Boston.

After getting buzzed, (along with 865 other men, women and children) Mark got some signatures from current and past New England Patriots players. "Surprisingly, [New England tight end] Rob Gronkowski shaves his head for this event every year," Mark says. "He then goes to Boston Children's Hospital to show the kids. That's just greatness. And we spent the remainder of the day touring the Boston area in our special t-shirts noting our status and the reason we 'buzzed.' The effort really raises awareness for those kids and also tells them that so many people love them and are thinking enough of them to shave in solidarity."

Since it began in 2010, the Kids Cancer Buzz-Off has raised nearly \$2 million, with 1465 people getting their heads shaved in honor and support of kids with cancer—kids who don't have the choice to lose their hair. In addition to raising funds for One Mission, seeing a freshly shaved head is a great conversation starter and allows participants to bring greater awareness to the cause.

"When you've got a shiny bald head, people always ask, 'Why'd you do that?'" Mark says. "And for us, it's in memory of our daughter, but also in the larger scheme it's showing solidarity to the thousands of kids sitting in hospital rooms wondering if anyone cares."

Mark was so impressed by his experience in Boston that he invited the organizers to bring the Buzz-Off to Dallas and Children's Medical Center. They agreed that the city would be a good fit and the first Buzz-Off to be held outside of Boston will be Sunday, May 4 at AT&T Stadium (home of the Dallas Cowboys).

Team Tuck

So far, the support for the event in Dallas has been tremendous. Mark says, "We've had Studio J and Rod's Barbershop both volunteer their services for the day and we're really excited about the momentum the event is gaining."



L to R: Mark, David, Reece and Steven Tuck

Team Tuck will be represented this year with four "buzzes": Mark, his sons David, 22, and Steven, 36, and grandson Reece, 5. Having attended last year's event with his parents, David says he was blown away by its magnitude and knew immediately that he wanted to participate this year. "I remember thinking that it was ironic that every "buzzee" was cloaked in a (salon) cape as they were converted into real life superheroes," David says. "I couldn't help thinking how paradoxical the scene was—everyone looked like Dr. Evil, but so much good was being exercised."

David remembers feeling exceptionally proud of his dad for what he was doing, and how happily he donned that cue-ball look once the hairstylist removed his apron. "As we toured the city that afternoon, my dad exhibited a tremendous amount of joy revealing the background of his new haircut," adds David, who will be getting buzzed in honor of Jennie, as well as Cameron Lindsay, a friend who recently passed away from the same rare form of cancer.

In addition to the Dallas event, The Buzz-Off will also take place again in Boston on June 8. Between the two events, organizers hope to raise an additional \$1.6 million; which will go a long way in providing help, hope, care and support to over 2,000 pediatric cancer patients and their families.

For Mark and Rose Tuck, being part of this event couldn't be more meaningful. "This year is the 20th reunion for the class that would have graduated with Jennie and they've done so much in remembering her," Rose says. "When she was fighting cancer, that just became part of our norm. She continued to live life to the fullest and I think that's one reason she has impacted so many people's lives, even to this day." ❖

Nicole Bywater is a freelance writer from Allen.