View From The Hill
(11/19/09)

WKU Volleyball - Kela's Crew

Over the past four years…WKU’s  volleyball team has raised nearly 50-thousand dollars for cancer research.

In this week’s “View  from the Hill”, Amy Bingham tells us how the effort to honor a beloved Bowling Green doctor hit even closer to home for the team this past year.

A fundraiser known as “Kela’s Crew” was the brainchild of Volleyball coach Travis Hudson.  He first met Dr. Kela Fee when she delivered his oldest son.

It was a connection that will impact Coach Hudson for the rest of his life.

WKU’S volleyball team does more than win games…every time they serve an ace…money is donated to the James Graham Brown Cancer Center.

“I watched her so valiantly fight to the bitter end.”

Coach Hudson is talking about Dr. Kela Fee.  The  doctor who delivered his first child.

“I’ll never forget walking that doctors office for the first time and having the room absolutely lit up by her and her making us feel like the most special parents that ever graced the earth.”

Kela was diagnosed with cancer in the fall of 2004.  Shortly after that, Coach Hudson reached out to her about a way the team could help.

“I felt an overwhelming need or feeling to do something to help and so Kela’s crew was born from that.”

Kela succumbed to cancer in December of 2008 devastating the entire community…and the team she had grown so close to.

“For them to see how Kela handled the adversity she was dealt on a personal level is something that will stick with those kids for the rest of their lives.”

Hudson had no idea the impact Kela’s ordeal would have on him personally just over three months after her death.

“On March 23rd of this year I was diagnosed with a malignant melanoma skin cancer on my left shoulder and it really hit home and kind of came full circle.”

“I know that in that week of my diagnosis I could feel her presence with me on so many levels.”

After surgery, Hudson remains cancer free.  He continues to draw strength from Kela’s family who this year started an endowed scholarship for a senior volleyball player in Kela’s name.

“I was completely honored, she’s an amazing person to try to live up to and to receive the first scholarship is just an honor…really blessed to have that opportunity.”

Aquila Orr was injured in the fifth match of the season and must cheer her teammates on from the sidelines.  She too has learned so many lessons from Fee and says Kela’s crew has been an important part of the volleyball team.

“I think it’s an important lesson for us all that you can make a difference.  Being part of the volleyball team isn’t just being part of the volleyball team.  It’s giving back to the community and Kela’s crew really helped us do that.”

And for Coach Hudson, the fight against cancer is a fight he’s more determined than ever to win.

“Something I said all along which I believed was Kela’s crew is not just a fight for Kela and her family…it’s a fight for each and every one of us and our families.”

WKU won the Sun Belt Conference Volleyball Tournament last year just weeks before Kela Fee passed away.

This year’s tournament is underway today through Saturday at E.A. Diddle Arena.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.