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Basketballs help cancer battle

USD, KVHT Radio team up in effort

By David Lias
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South Dakota Football Coach Joe Glenn emerges from the KVHT "cash cube" during halftime of Saturday's game between South Dakota and Fort Wayne in the DakotaDome.

(Photo by David Lias)

The basketballs started bouncing in the DakotaDome at tip-off that started the Feb. 14 men's game between South Dakota and Oakland.

Twenty-four hours later, when a non-stop "Dribble-A-Thon" hosted by USD and Classic Hits 106.3 (KVHT), the Coyote Radio Network, had ended, all expectations had not only been realized, they had also been surpassed.

With an initial goal of raising \$1,000 in mind, local organizers discovered how truly generous the Vermillion and USD communities can be. Last week's activities raised \$5,000 in cash and pledges.

The event was held to benefit the family of Conrad Adam. Conrad, a 6-5 junior at T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre, is fighting osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. He underwent surgery in October that required the amputation of his left leg above the knee.

Because basketball has been an important part of Conrad's life and his family has strong ties to the University of South Dakota - his sister, Katherine, is a freshman at USD and his parents, Karl and Joan Adam of Pierre, are USD graduates - Coyote Athletics and USD President James W. Abbott set out to raise money to help pay for expenses related to Adam's battle with osteosarcoma.

"Since basketball has played a significant role in Conrad's life, we wanted to do something with Coyote men's basketball and the USD community to show our support for Conrad, who has been very courageous in this fight," Abbott said.

USD and Classic Hits 106.3 KVHT partnered with several other activities besides the "Dribble-A-Thon." They offered "Coyotes and Conrad" bracelets for sale for \$5 each, and wound up selling out of the 500 that had been ordered.

The university also hosted "Conrad Adam Night" at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 16 during the Coyotes men's basketball game vs. Fort Wayne at the DakotaDome.

During half time of that game, Abbott, Head Football Coach Joe Glenn, Charlie Coyote and Athletic Director David Herbster took turns gathering as much money as they could while inside the KVHT "Cash Cube."

Coyote Athletics also dedicated \$2 per ticket for new ticket sales for the game on Feb. 16 to Conrad's fund.

The "Coyotes & Conrad" bracelets, available on-line at GoYotes.com, features Conrad's special inspirational message "No One Fights Alone."

Those words kept KVHT's Randy Hammer, who had been awake for nearly 24 hours straight, going strong Friday afternoon, Feb. 15, as he

tended to matters in the radio station's recently-opened location at 16 E. Main Street in downtown Vermillion.

"Coyotes never fight alone," he said. "We've had people give \$500, \$100, \$50 ... right down to \$1. We've had such great response - more than we could ever ask for, because our original goal was \$1,000."

The fundraising effort, he said, had nearly raised \$1,500 by the time USD's Feb. 14 game had ended. Friday afternoon, a bar graph that Hammer had doodled on a whiteboard in KVHT's Vermillion office showed the total, at the time, had exceeded \$3,500.

There was a flurry of activity going on inside the radio station's downtown digs, all accented by the sounds of basketballs being bounced off the carpeted floors.

Charlie Coyote and USD cheerleaders were there, greeting visitors to the Vermillion location during station breaks. Members of the Vermillion Tanager boys' basketball team worked in shifts that afternoon, making sure basketballs kept bouncing until 7 p.m. Friday night - a full 24 hours.

Earlier that day, VHS coaches and members of the Tanager girls' basketball team had been at the station, dribbling basketballs.

"We've had USD men and women basketball players bouncing, and we've had a lot of folks from the university helping out," Hammer said. "We started dribbling basketballs at the beginning of the (Feb. 14) game, and we left the Dome at halftime to get down here to prepare for our broadcast."

He and another KVHT staffer discovered that a basketball and cold weather don't mix. A bit over a mile separates the DakotaDome and downtown Vermillion; during that winter night's journey, while dribbling their way to the station, they pressed on through the cold, even though the basketball began losing its bounce.

"That was a cold bouncing of the basketball," Hammer said, "and the ball itself even became flat on us."

They began non-stop live radio broadcasts, accented by continuous streaming video on the station's web page, beginning the moment they arrived at KVHT's Vermillion location.

"It's amazing how you think bouncing a basketball is easy, but on carpet, it's not so easy, and it becomes a heavy ball after awhile. Your forearms begin to hurt," he said.

Hammer and fellow KVHT staffer John Thayer and Simon Fuller worked and dribbled in shifts all through the night, making sure the ball kept

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Johnson thrilled with role at NMM

VPD beefing up local traffic patrol

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Before he became director of the National Music Museum (NMM) in Vermillion, Dr. Cleveland Johnson had been away from the field for some time.

Although trained as a musicologist and having served as dean of the School of Music at Greencastle, Indiana's DePauw University, Cleveland had most recently worked as executive director of the Thomas J. Watson Foundation in New York City.

"It was a private family foundation involved in educational fellowships or travel fellowships for graduate and college students," Johnson said. "That took me completely away from music. I was involved in very, very diverse fields of knowledge there, which was very interesting. But I was kind of seeing my career steering away from music. But then this came up and kind of sucked me back in."

"It's thrilling. I'm having a great time," he said. "I'm having a great time."

Johnson's official start date was Nov. 1, 2012, although he said he's "still getting all the details" of what his role requires.

"A position like this will probably take at least a year to cycle through, because every month brings something new," he said. "There's a certain seasonal nature to what goes on here. Summers are our heaviest period for visitation, winters are when our visitation drops off, but we get lots and lots of in-house work done."

"There are lots of opportunities to explore new directions," he said.

One of those directions will be toward increased fundraising.

"The museum is preparing to move into a capital campaign phase because we

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Thanks to grant funding from the South Dakota Office of Highway Safety, the Vermillion Police Department has stepped up its patrols of one of the community's biggest traffic problem areas.

The area in question is at the bottom of University Hill, where Chestnut Street, University Road and Burbank Road converge.

"We've had numerous speeding complaints from residents down there," said Lt. Luke Trowbridge. "We've had a few accidents. One of them was a fatality."

"So basically, we're just trying to do what we can to do an overall improvement of traffic safety in the area there," he said.

With the grant - which was effective for the federal fiscal year of Oct. 1-Sept. 30 - the police department was able to purchase equipment that would help to better monitor the traffic in that part of town.

"We have purchased a traffic data recorder and we've



Law enforcement and first responders from the city of Vermillion and Clay County investigate a fatal traffic accident that occurred March 20, 2011 at the intersection of Chestnut and South University streets in Vermillion. The Vermillion Police Department will be stepping up patrols of traffic problem area.

(Plain Talk file photo)

put that into use already," Trowbridge said. "That records the number of vehicles going to and from a location, and it records their speed, the date and the time, so we're able to pinpoint the time of day when the speeding is occurring. ..."

"We've been able to put that in place and actually determine that vehicles are in

fact speeding quite a bit down there," he said.

A digital speed board also is going to be put up on a semi-permanent basis at the bottom of the hill, Trowbridge said.

"It's going to be a somewhat mobile unit in the sense that we don't want people to become accustomed to it," he said. "We'll potentially move it around in the future, but it'll definitely be

used down in that location for most of 2013."

The police department also has applied for grant funding that will enable them to perform saturation patrols, during which they will look for drunk and impaired drivers, as well as those who are speeding.

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