

[Print This Article](#)

kdavis@gainesvilletimes.com

Helping out a neighbor: Flowery Branch donates money to sick West Forsyth player

Last Friday night in Cumming, the Flowery Branch and West Forsyth football teams battled.

Back and forth, up and down and until the last second, the two teams fought with the Falcons coming out the victors thanks to a Connor Shaw Hail Mary pass with less than a minute to play.

Last Friday night, a battle that resulted in a great game was justly overshadowed by an even greater gesture.

The family of West Forsyth senior safety Trey Rood, who was All-Region 7-AAA as a junior and currently has Stage 4 cancer, was presented with \$4,515 care of the Flowery Branch Touchdown Club.

"A few of us saw the story about him in the Atlanta paper last weekend and when we had our touchdown club meeting Monday, we discussed doing something for his family," said Amy Todd, wife of Flowery Branch Touchdown Club President Andy Todd, mother of Falcons' senior center Austin Todd and head of membership for the club.

"We all have 17-year-old boys who love football, and the thought was going through all of our heads that it could be any one of our boys fighting the kind of fight Trey is having to."

Without treatment, the life expectancy of a patient with Rood's type of cancer — metastatic melanoma — is six months.

Rather than have a surgical procedure that might include removing half of his lung, Rood and his family have chosen to go the alternative medicine route, seeking treatments in Germany not approved in the United States. It costs nearly \$80,000 a month for Rood's treatment, and health insurance hasn't covered any of it.

Despite the stress on not only his mind but his body, Rood still suits up for West Forsyth and still plays nearly every down. In fact, he had a number of tackles and an interception in last Friday's game against Flowery Branch.

"His goal was to play his senior year of football and it's incredible what he's done," Todd said. "The difference is that he's also fighting a battle that's beyond comprehension and helping his family wasn't a question for us, it was a necessity."

After their touchdown club meeting last Monday, an e-mail was sent to not only club members, but others in the community asking that donations be made for Rood's family.

When Flowery Branch Athletics Director Shannon Benton called his counterpart at West Forsyth on Tuesday, he informed him of what was going on and said that they'd probably be able to raise about \$2,500.

"I wanted to thank them with some kind of announcement," West Forsyth athletics director Dennis Stromie said. "But (Shannon) Benton told me that publicity wasn't what they were doing it for."

The sum quoted by Benton increased dramatically in the week leading up to the game and in the 30 minutes the Flowery Branch faithful took up collections prior to kickoff at Wolverines Stadium on Friday night.

"People came (Friday night) with checks already written," Todd said. "It was an overwhelming response from the community and it was clear that people were moved by his story."

At halftime, Stromie got his wish of publicly recognizing Flowery Branch's efforts when Todd and her husband agreed to meet the Rood's at midfield after the bands played for a presentation and a few words from Stromie.

"I wanted our people to know what their people did for us," Stromie said. "It was such a great learning experience

for us as a new school.

"I looked at our side and told them what was going on and they stood and clapped and then I looked at the Flowery Branch side and told them how much we appreciated them and that no matter what happened in the game, we were community and the whole place went nuts. I get chills thinking about that moment.

"We're all just floored that they spent the energy to do something for one of our kids and it's been so eye opening to know that people who don't know Trey, want to help him."

Thanks to an e-mail, 30 minutes of collecting prior to gametime and the generosity of strangers, the Rood's were handed \$4,515 to help with the care of their son.

"Athletic competition is great and wonderful and we all love it," Todd said. "But when it comes to something like taking care of our kids, there are no opposing teams.

"It was one community helping another and it's really humbling to see what a community — this community — can do when people come together for a sole purpose."

<http://www.gainesvilletimes.com/news/article/25265>