

CC – TOKC / James Ragan – Aug 2014

***Begin with image of James fading into frame (become visible or moving forward maybe?)...*

This is the face of strength and inspiration – the face of a visionary leader at the early age of 20, whose efforts to fight his own battle with cancer became a cause to find a cure for others.

**Show front of Baker MS? ... or other shot...*

... and it all began when James Ragan was a 13-year-old student here at Baker Middle School.

Mecklin Ragan – Triumph Over Kid's Cancer

(1:03) ~~I think in the beginning~~ for James, it was more about he had cancer and no one really knew what cancer was ... his friends had maybe lost a grandparent, a family member or a loved one, but no one really knew what cancer was or that children could get it...

(1:22) so I think in the beginning it was more about trying to educate people – ‘hi, I have cancer, I’m 13 years old and I’m in eighth grade at Baker Middle School’ ... ~~and that was just kind of the beginning~~ and he just wanted to do something in the community to spread awareness ...

That ‘something’ soon became more than anyone could have imagined ...

Mecklin

(1:53) seven-eight months later, James was technically deemed ‘cancer free’ – and my parents said ‘James, let’s have a birthday party or do something – you’ve beaten cancer, it’s kind of big deal’

(2:25) so then we were watching Animal House and we got to the scene where they have the Toga Party, and he said, ‘mom, dad – that’s what I want’ and at first they were said, ‘oh, haha, you want a toga party – that’s a great joke,’ – but he said ‘no seriously – let’s do it, we can make it a fundraiser and it doesn’t have to be about my birthday – we’ll make it about cancer.’

Instead of birthday gifts, James asked for donations to Driscoll Children’s Hospital.

Later ... when his cancer came back, the fundraising continued ...

And James soon became the founder of what is now an internationally-known organization.

Mecklin

(3:11) (CUT) ... that’s part of the reason why TOKC was even able to become a foundation and why we continue to do so well over the last few years – it’s this Corpus Christi community that always – that always helped us and honored James and wanted to do more

(3:54) and I think a lot of people- young and old – drew inspiration from that and James drew a lot of his strength from them -- and their prayers -- and their support ... and their kindness.

Charlie Hicks – Board Member, TOKC

(5:27) We all have a spirit and James had one that was infectious to say the least – he really had an ability of crossing all spectrums – age, he influenced those older and those younger – he had a way of doing it across socioeconomic lines – didn’t matter where you came from, where you work, where your status in life was or where you might find yourself.

(6:35) I personally believe that he's out there – he's working in us and through us, and even those who didn't know him have a sense of how imp he was, not only in TOKC, but just the path and the journey that he was given – not only from his diagnosis at age 13 to his passage at age 20; that 7 years were pretty critical – he achieved more in a seven-year window than most people achieve in an entire lifetime.

(5:52) Our mission with TOKC is to try and keep that spirit moving forward – and it's not easy by any means

Mecklin

(5:48) Unfortunately pediatric cancer is so underfunded because, from a business standpoint, pharmaceutical companies don't see funding pediatric cancer as profitable because there are so few cases ... **(6:51)** All of the kids I know who have pediatric cancer are bright, intelligent young men and women who like James do their best in the face of great odds and it's unfortunate that a lot of times the deck is stacked against them.

(6:33) ~~I think that that was part of the foundation's work trying to educate ppl~~ you know if we could save these kids, imagine how much bigger and better our world here would be.

The foundation continues its mission through fundraising – including events taking place in CCISD schools every year, where our students are handing over checks to Triumph Over Kid Cancer.

... and this September, the foundation will host a city-wide event so that everyone can participate.

Charlie

(3:01) Certainly the 'Giddy Up' Race that we're going to have on Sept. 6 is a real draw – there's a 1k walk and a 5k run, and a 10k run – so really people at all levels can participate, with the funds we raise going towards our mission – which is genomic research in the program at MD Anderson

(3:22) The beauty is that every dollar we make is matched by MD Anderson; so if we can raise \$25 – 30 – 50 – 100 thousand, that turns into 200 thousand – and that's HUGE for us and for cancer ... and for pediatric cancer as we try to find a cure.

... even with all the success for the foundation, board members say they still have plenty of work to do – because they remember one young man who would keep moving forward, no matter what obstacles were in his way.

Charlie

(9:14) he had a very unique perspective because we would – as older golfers – complain of a sore back or stiff leg or something – and if you would go down a path of maybe whining a little bit or maybe overly complaining, James always had a quick response

***Show Charlie's face here:*

(9:38) I'd say 'man my back hurt today and my arms are stiff and I can't believe I feel bad,' and he's say: "It's not cancer."

Mecklin

(4:40) He could be having the worst day of his week and he would still get up and get out of bed and hopefully go to the golf course, even if he only lasted 20 minutes he was going to do something – (CUT) – he really did his best to make the most of his moments.

For Consideration (tell me what you think):

In Memoriam -

INSERT CLIP of James' graduation speech:

6:15 – “Since I’ve been at MD Anderson...

To

8:08 – “...if you do that one thing.” (fade w/ applause)

**Sign-up info for:*

“Giddy Up” Race – In Honor of James A. Ragan

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