

Swim raises \$10,000 for deceased grad

The first Don hit the water at 9 a.m. on Dec. 20. Thirty hours later, and 50 swimmers strong, the Loyola Blakefield Dons met their 100-mile goal, raising more than \$10,000 in the process.

Knowing this year's 100-mile swim for charity was done in the name of the late Staff Sgt. Joseph F. Curreri, a 1998 Loyola Blakefield graduate who initiated the swimming event a decade ago, buoyed students' efforts.

Curreri, a former USC swim team captain and a scholastic All-American while attending Loyola Blakefield, drowned on Oct. 26, 2007 during a training exercise near Panamao in the southern Philippines while serving as a Green Beret with the Army Special Forces. He was 27.

In years past, the Loyola swim program, led by head coach Keith Schertle, raised money for a variety of causes including The Leukemia Fund, The Johns Hopkins Burn Center, and The Ronald McDonald House; in 2006 it raised \$7,000 for The Cristo Rey School, Baltimore.

As the planning for the 2007 event approached, Dons' senior captain Evan Danz, a butterflyer and sprinter, knew just where the money raised would go; to the creation of The Greater Glory Scholarship Fund honoring Joe Curreri.

"The Joe Curreri Scholarship is so fitting since it was Joe who started this tradition," said Schertle. "Joe came to me about a water polo program and I told him there was no money in the budget for a brand-new program. That's when Joe came up with this fundraising idea."

The Dons were able to purchase their caps and equipment that year, but from that point forward the charity swim became more about raising money for worthy causes, keeping his swimmers in shape over the Christmas break and the ultimate team bonding experience. "We started with 10 kids years ago and it has just grown and grown, and now we have over 50 swimmers participating," said Schertle. With the

help of a few corporate sponsors, student-athletes going door-to-door for pledges and parents carrying pledge sheets to the office, the monetary goal was reached while the teambuilding brought true camaraderie and brotherhood to the pool deck.

“I think it’s one of the things that our guys leave here remembering,” said Schertle. “It’s about camaraderie with a very important cause and it’s hard to beat that.”