

The Patriot Ledger

Benefit concert raises \$30,000

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For The Patriot Ledger

QUINCY - A benefit concert starring the Dropkick Murphys, a Boston-area rock band, raised almost \$30,000 for an education fund for the son of a former Milton woman who died of melanoma on Oct. 3.

The event, organized by friends of Laura Devine, a 36-year-old musician and songwriter from Wesport, raised \$29,610 for Devine's son, Zack, 9.

"We had also raised about \$11,000 before the concert, and the response has been overwhelming in every way," said concert organizer Ursula Macmillan, a friend of Devine's since junior high. "The Dropkick Murphys were really something else; they made this a phenomenal event."

The band performed a 100-minute set as the unannounced highlight of the all-day "Devine Spirit" benefit Saturday at the Beachcomber in Quincy.

Ken Casey of Milton, bassist for the band, was a longtime pal of Devine's.

"Laura was the most positive, uplifting person I've ever met," Casey said.

"Someone being able to keep that kind of enthusiasm and vitality at all times, whatever the situation, really made a big imprint on me," Casey said. "We knew each other growing up, and worked summers together in the Milton Parks Department from 1983 to 1987. We had a lot of time to talk, and I was the typical teenager in trouble in those days, but Laura was always there for me, encouraging me and pushing me forward."

"The Dropkicks played that show as if they were on the biggest stage in the world, not just a small club," said Kara Scanlon, the Quincy singer who often sang in a duet with Devine and served with Macmillan as co-chairwoman of the event. "Kenny (Casey) and Laura were very close, and he feels strongly about that teenage support thing they had. It was an amazing night, a great celebration of her life."

Pat and Jim McGettrick, whose dad, Jimmy, owns the Beachcomber, also grew up in Milton with Casey and Devine. Hosting their old pal's band at the Quincy club seemed farfetched until a few weeks ago.

Casey chatted with people at Devine's wake and learned that there was talk of a benefit concert. Although his band was scattered across the country, he insisted on being a part of the show. The problem was keeping it a secret so the venue was not overwhelmed.

The concert also included the Lisa Homans Trio, the Publicans, David Corey from WXKS, Paul Devin and Sean McGee, and Two Finger Split, all of whom had some connection to Laura Devine.

"We could've filled a much bigger hall, but we didn't want to displace people who meant so much to Laura," Macmillan said. "We all needed to connect and heal. A concert seemed a natural, and bands were tripping over themselves to play. We didn't want to see people mourning; we wanted smiles on everyone's faces. And Zack was there, too, and got to see how much people thought of his mom."

Zack now lives with Laura's sister Michelle in Weymouth; she has a son, Connary, about his age.

Zack managed to win the silent auction for Patriots tickets and spent yesterday attending the game against the Baltimore Ravens. Friends also made sure that Zack won the Trot Nixon autographed baseball, and he was keeping it close when last seen Saturday night.

"My only regret is that since I began succeeding in music, Laura never got to see me play," Casey said. "But hopefully, she was watching tonight."