

There's a New Tiger in Town

On Sunday February 24, in Geil Lounge at Wittenberg you could hear and laughter and squeals. The Women's Basketball team gathered around the tables, munching on sandwiches and chips, while five-year-old Rozlyn "Roz" Abott ran around the stairs, exploring her surroundings. She walked up to the other girls saying, "We're gonna get pie-faced!" She's referring to the board game, "Pie Face!" where players turn a lever trying to avoid getting a face full of whip cream. The game is special to Roz because it's one she's able to play, unlike basketball. Why? Because Roz suffers from epilepsy and encephalitis.

The Women's Basketball team has joined Team Impact, an organization that stands to "improve the quality of life for children facing life-threatening and chronic illnesses through the power of team."

"So, many kids in Roz's situation want to be able to be part of a sports team but can't," explained head coach, Sarah Jurewicz.

Team Impact approached Jurewicz, and after some research, she brought it to her team.

The knew it immediately they wanted to welcome a Team Impact child to their team. Thankfully, there was a child about thirty minutes away from Wittenberg, who had applied to be a part of Team Impact. That child is Roz.

Junior Bobbie Clayton is the lead contact between Team Impact and the basketball team, but Senior Ali Miller, Sophomores

Not only does Roz attend basketball games and sit with the team on the bench, but she was given a signing day, jersey, and even her own locker in the team's locker room.

"It was cool to see just how happy she was," said Clayton referencing the signing last December. "Thirty or so people showed up and filled the seats. It was cool to see."



Haley Danemiller and Becca Ziska, and Freshmen Maryssa Herschler are also involved in coordinating events and working with Clayton and Team Impact.

"It's cool to see our team accepting her and including her," said Clayton as she watched Roz play in Wittenberg's arcade that Sunday afternoon.

"[Team Impact] asks you to not just make it about a kid on a bench," describes Jurewicz. "Get to know them as people and not just guests on your bench."

By spending their Sunday afternoon playing with Roz, the Women's Basketball team is doing just that. They've been asked to host bonding time with Roz at

least twice a month outside of home games. So far, they've spent time with her at Young's Dairy Farm and held the signing. They are looking forward to more time with Roz in the future.

In fact, Team Impact asks for a two year commitment, so Roz will continue being a member of the team, even after seniors like Miller graduate.

"She's made this year, especially for myself as a senior, even more memorable," explained Miller. "Roz is only five, but I want to be like her."




Are you interested in joining the Hero Project and helping us find heroes on campus and around the world to celebrate? We would love to have you on board! We meet every Tuesday from 8:30-9:00 in Hollenbeck 131.

Working with Team Impact and accepting Roz into their family has made a difference in the lives of these student-athletes. "It makes us realize there's more to basketball," shared Clayton. "When we lose, she's always smiling."

"The game is about doing what we love, with the people that we love because we are lucky enough to do so," shared Miller. "In ten years, I won't remember every season's record or the drills we ran in practice. But I will never forget the smile on Roz's face when she is with us. I'd like to thank Roz for an inspirational cap to my senior year."

The Hero Project salutes the Wittenberg Women's Basketball team for using their platform as athletes to serve a family in need.

Follow us on:

Facebook: The Hero Project 

Twitter: @heroprojectwitt 

Wordpress: heroprojectblog.wordpress.com 