



Community Foundation
of Morgan County, Inc.
Investing in Our Quality of Life

First Ben Elo Memorial Soccer Camp a Success

July 31, 2009

MORGAN COUNTY, Ind. – The first annual Ben Elo Memorial Soccer Camp raised over \$9,000 as participants spent a warm week in June learning and honing skills of the sport. The fundraiser supports the Ben Elo Memorial Fund at the Community Foundation of Morgan County.

Some 60 volunteers prepared for the weeklong camp held June 22 to 26 at the Mooresville Soccer Complex. Licensed coaches included University of Notre Dame Head Coach Bobby Clark as well as coaches with playing and coaching experience from European Professional Soccer, Columbus Crew, Harvard, Indiana University and several area high school and travel club coaches.

Ben attended a Notre Dame camp in early July of 2008, where he met Coach Clark and made the All-Star team. Coach Clark held the opening ceremony at the Ben Elo Memorial Soccer Camp in memory of Ben, who passed away July 21, 2008, the summer before his freshmen year at Mooresville High School. The camp is his family's way of continuing his legacy by encouraging the game he loved as well as raising funds for several projects in Ben's memory through the Community Foundation of Morgan County.

“When the idea of the camp first came up, it was within the context of raising money for the Ben Elo Memorial Fund and the Ben Elo Memorial Scholarship,” said Ben's mother Melanie Elo. “The more we thought about it and prayed about it, the more we knew that having the camp was our opportunity to provide high-quality soccer development right here within this wonderful community and take the time to share some of the things about Ben that made him a young man of faith and maturity far beyond his years.”

Campers from grades 3 to 12 included boys and girls from all over central Indiana. Each day they were taught a new skill and heard a story about Ben's character and life. On Friday, the camp completed with a “Soccer Olympics.”

Countless people, organizations and businesses supported the camp with cash, donated products or services and volunteered their time to make the first camp an enormous success. “God blessed the camp throughout,” Melanie said. “Aside from the need to have one in the first place, we couldn't have asked for things to go more smoothly.”

“We are astounded at how many people got excited and started pitching in during the week and have offered items and services for next year,” the Elo family said in a thank you letter to sponsors.

About Ben Elo

One of Ben's great loves was soccer, which he began playing at age 4. From 2007 to 2008, he traveled all over the Midwest playing for the Carmel United Soccer Club in the Midwest Regional League. His team won the U14 State Championship in 2008, which was a personal goal of Ben's. Players and staff from Ben's soccer team volunteered for the camp this year in his memory.

Ben dreamed of some day playing soccer at the University of Notre Dame, for the US Olympic team and professionally for Manchester United in Europe.

In addition to excelling in sports, Ben was also a strong student academically. He was named to National Junior Honor Society and received the President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence.

Ben's family felt that his life was an example of the scripture verse Micah 6:8, which includes the character traits "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly."

"Ben 'lived his faith to affect change' every day by encouraging others in their faith, to know God, to work hard in school, and to make good choices. He worked hard toward his goals and helped us out wherever needed," Melanie said.

About the Fund at the CFMC

Ben's family wanted to continue his legacy by giving back to the Morgan County community. The Ben Elo Memorial Fund began with donations from family, friends and the community upon Ben's passing and continues to grow through additional donations and fundraisers. This fund will help present the soccer camp each year, provide a Character in Leadership Award, and support a grief ministry as well as support a college scholarship. The family would also like to ensure that the high school and sports venues have permanent defibrillators.

"Starting a fund at the Community Foundation in memory of a loved one is a wonderful way to preserve their legacy in the community," said CFMC Executive Director Tom Zoss. "There are many needs in the community, and as the Elo family has shown, there are also many ways to raise funds to help. The foundation can ensure that Ben's legacy will continue in this community for years to come."

Donations can be made to the Benjamin Elo Memorial Fund through the Community Foundation of Morgan County at 250 N. Monroe St., Mooresville, IN 46158. Checks can be written to CFMC with "Ben Elo Fund" in the memo.

More information on the Ben Elo Memorial Fund, how to start a fund, or the Community Foundation of Morgan County in general is available online at www.cfmconline.org or by calling the foundation at (317) 831-1232 or toll-free at (877) 822-6958. More information about Ben and the specific goals of the fund and camp are also available at www.BenElo16.org.