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Levy speaks up in support of 'Cure the Blue' campaign

Friday June 12, 2015 | By: Aaron Garland, Sports reporter | Sports



Left to right are Dan Reininga, president and CEO of Lake Shore Savings Bank, with Booker Edgerson, Marv Levy and Bills Alumni President Ed Rutkowski. PHOTO / DAVE ECKHARDT

Booker Edgerson, a star defensive back on the Buffalo Bills' 1964 and 1965 AFL Championship teams, looks at all the positives the pink initiative has done for breast cancer awareness, and there lies his vision for a program he's introduced.

Through the Buffalo Bills Alumni Foundation, which consists of former players dedicated to contributing to society and charitable causes, Edgerson is in the midst of pushing his "Cure the Blue" program further. A two-time survivor of prostate cancer, Edgerson's goal for the project is to raise awareness and money for research of the disease.

Edgerson spoke at a news conference Friday (June 12) at the annual Van Miller Hometown Hero Scholarship Fund Golf Classic at Shorewood Country Club in Dunkirk to promote the effort.

"We want to make sure that the 'Cure the Blue' campaign is something equal to the pink program," Edgerson said. "We all know that is one

successful program for women. We just want to copy from that program and be part of a system and get things done.”

Hall of Fame coach Marv Levy, a prostate cancer survivor, Buffalo Bills Alumni Foundation president Ed Rutkowski, who was also on Buffalo's two championship squads, and Lake Shore Savings Bank president and CEO Dan Reininga also spoke at the news conference in support of “Cure for Blue.” Lake Shore Savings Bank, a member of the Independent Bankers Association of New York State, sponsors the campaign — “Cure the Blue” ribbon pins can be purchased for a \$5 donation at all the bank's branches.

“This is a program that I have been looking at for the last five years and trying to gain support from different individuals, businesses and organizations,” Edgerson said to open his comments. “Finally, the inspiration really came last year, so I decided to go ahead and put this project to work with the support from the community.”

Edgerson stressed the importance of prostate cancer detection by way of regular examinations.

“We want to make it a focus and awareness for men to get out and get checked at least once a year at the age of 40,” Edgerson said. “Especially minority males. They need to get checked because they are subject to prostate cancer a lot easier than the general population because of the economic side of it, and also because of eating habits that they have.”

While Rutkowski referred to Edgerson as the poster child of “Cure the Blue,” Edgerson was quick to point out that having someone like Levy, the Bills' coach during their 1990's glory years, as one of the faces of the campaign is extremely beneficial.

“A successful coach who went to the Super Bowl four years in a row — who better to have as an advocate for prostate cancer than coach Marv Levy?” Edgerson said.

Levy was diagnosed during the 1995 season. He then missed some time to undergo surgery and recover.

“There have been great advances made in how you detect and how you prevent and how you cure prostate cancer since that time,” Levy said. “We're talking 20 years ago. There's still a long way to go, though, and we're on the trail.”

Levy saw Edgerson's push as an opportunity to help out.

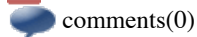
“I am a prostate cancer survivor, and I learned at that time that there had been other former Buffalo Bills who were also that way,” Levy said. “I received great moral support from a lot of those people. I've admired the work that's being done by Ed and Booker. Whenever they ask me to speak up, I'm certainly pleased to do that.

“To raise funds for that, it's a very worthy cause. That's why I'm happy to be part of it.”

Along the lines of Edgerson wanting to make the project prosper like the pink program has, Reininga mentioned that the instrumental figures of “Cure the Blue” are striving to make it a more widely recognized and supported campaign.

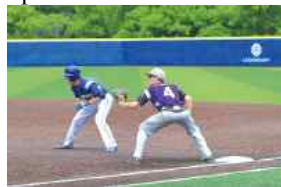
“It's a great opportunity to support an organization like the Bills Alumni Foundation,” Reininga said. “The exciting thing about this is that it's going to be a national campaign at some point. It's very exciting and we're very proud. It's what Lake Shore is all about — putting people first.”(<http://www.curetheblue.com>)

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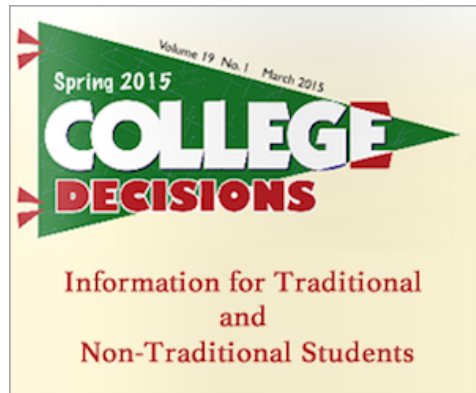
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