

Pats' Andruzzi backs teen in cancer fight

Brian Dowling



Former Patriots offensive lineman and cancer survivor Joe Andruzzi attended a spring recital in Sharon benefitting a teen about to start aggressive treatment for a rare cancer.

Andruzzi, attending the recital at the Bilingual Montessori School of Sharon, said he hopes to offer the teen, 18-year-old Isabel Cowell of Franklin, and her family some hope by sharing the story of his treatment — including permanent marks from his chemotherapy — and road to recovery.

“I pull down the collar of my shirt and show them that I have a scar from my port. Most times they have the same scar. It’s a matching tattoo,” Andruzzi told the Herald. “There are little things that click and with a kid and say ‘I was there.’ I show them a pic on my phone when I was bald and pale and fighting for my life.”

“I was there too and now am looking a lot healthier and taking it one day at a time,” he added.

In 2007, Andruzzi was diagnosed with an aggressive form of non-Hodgkin’s Burkitt’s lymphoma that doubled in size in 24 hours. He spent 50 days being treated in the hospital. After his treatment, he started the Joe Andruzzi Foundation to help New England cancer patients and their families.

Cowell, the youngest of three, graduated high school a year ago. She’s about to start her first round of chemotherapy and radiation. Her treatment could last 10 to 12 months.

The recital benefit was held to help Cowell’s family pay for her treatment and manage life at home while her parents take time off work to care for her.