

University of Iowa News Release

Sept. 22, 2010

**UI staffer creates 'Hawktivity' to help brother and others coping with cancer**



Chris Offenburger Walsh, a test developer with the University of Iowa College of Education's Iowa Testing Program, writes assessments by day. By night and on weekends, she dons her creative writing cap to produce children's books.

Her latest creation is "Hawktivity," a 22-page activity book that features Herky on the cover and is filled with Hawkeye-themed word searches, crossword puzzles, mazes, math puzzles and coloring pages. The book, Walsh's fourth, invites readers to bring color to its pages and seeks to bring hope to people coping with cancer.

Walsh created the book in honor of her biggest inspiration, brother Chuck Offenburger, 63, who was diagnosed a year ago with small cell non-Hodgkins follicular lymphoma, a cancer of the lymphatic system. The disease has since developed into a very aggressive form of cancer known as large cell non-Hodgkins lymphoma.



Offenburger is probably best known as the award-winning "Iowa Boy" columnist for the Des Moines Register, where he worked for more than 25 years.

"When Chuck found out he had this lymphoma, I just found myself laying in bed at night thinking, OK, what else can I do?" Walsh said. "When I came up with the idea of an activity book, I really had in mind a small paper thing that fundraising teams could sell, and it just kind of blossomed."



The book is available in stores around the state, online at <http://www.activiliciousproductions.com/activitybooks.html> and from Walsh herself. A portion of the proceeds will be donated in Offenburger's name to The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, for which Walsh has been actively fundraising for five years. Among other things Walsh has helped raised team participation money for the society's annual Light the Night Walk, which this year starts at 6 p.m. Oct. 9, at Kinnick Stadium.

Walsh said the book brought together her experience as an educator for 25 years and her longtime loyalty to the Hawkeyes. She searched for a cover idea that would be close to every Hawkeye fan's heart and inspire them to make a difference. She said only one image came to mind.

"When kids think of Hawkeyes, they think of Herky, and I thought, 'If I can't use the fighting Herky, this book just won't work,'" Walsh recalled telling UI officials during the approval process. Walsh got the licensing approval.

Offenburger is currently being treated in Ames, but Walsh said that he will eventually come to the UI Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center's Adult Blood and Marrow Transplantation Program, where he will have a stem cell transplant. Offenburger hopes to use his own stem cells in the procedure, but his sisters are standing by to donate if called upon.

"He's all about, this isn't just happening to him. It's a cause that people need to rally around and get a cure so that families don't have to go through this. I used to hear this and thought I understood," Walsh said. "Now I know I understand the need for research and a cure."

Walsh hopes the activities in the book will resonate among Hawkeye fans of all ages, which is why activities in the book are designed to appeal to elementary age children as well as adults. Because of the book's popularity, Walsh said more have been requested for Iowa State University, the University of Nebraska, University of North Dakota and North Dakota State.



Since the development of "Hawktivity," Walsh has created a company called Activilicious Productions, which will create similar activity books tailored to other universities' sports. The book "Clonetivity," for loyal Iowa State fans, will hit stores within the next two weeks.

For Walsh, the "Activilicious" brand reflects a greater lesson beyond school spirit.

"Sometimes I wish I was still fundraising for people I never knew or had yet to meet," Walsh said. "On the other hand, my brother shows me every day the strength in the human spirit. He is a warrior and that is very good to see and a good lesson for us all."

EDITOR'S NOTE: To arrange an interview with Walsh or for more information, send email to [cita512@aol.com](mailto:cita512@aol.com) or visit her website at <http://www.activiliciousproductions.com>.

STORY SOURCE: University News Services, 300 Plaze Centre One, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-2500

MEDIA CONTACT: Chris Offenburger Walsh, College of Education, 319-335-6302, [mary-walsh@uiowa.edu](mailto:mary-walsh@uiowa.edu); Lois Gray, 319-384-0077, University News Services, [lois-gray@uiowa.edu](mailto:lois-gray@uiowa.edu); Writer: Tiffany Hung