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GAME DAY memories
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'Kyle's always been my hero'

Young widow says the slain deputy touched many lives.

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Friday's fundraiser was supposed to be a day of fun.

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The plans included a dunk tank, a live radio broadcast and appearances by local and state community leaders to raise money for a citizen crime-fighting group.

That all changed after Berks County Deputy Sheriff Kyle D. Pagerly was killed Wednesday night in Albany Township.

Organizers quickly decided the fundraiser at the Dairy Queen in Exeter would still be held but the proceeds should benefit Pagerly's young widow, Alecia, who turned out to be the event's focus as well.

In a show of unity and mutual support, Alecia, and other family arrived at the fundraiser together, wearing blue T-shirts emblazoned with the emblem of Pagerly's K-9 unit.

Comforted by family members, Alecia spoke briefly to WEEU radio's Mike Faust about her husband of nearly four years and her sudden loss.

"Kyle's always been my hero," said Alecia, who is pregnant with the couple's first child. "He touched a lot of people's lives."

She also said the support she had received since his death was overwhelming.

Pagerly was fatally wounded in a shootout as he and other members of a joint state police-U.S. marshals fugitive task force were trying to arrest Matthew M. Connor, 25, near the Connor family home on Pine Swamp Road. Pagerly, a 28-year-old Wilson High School graduate, had been deputized as a marshal and was a member of the task force.

Connor, dressed in camouflage, also died in the 8 p.m. shootout, authorities said.

After Pagerly was shot, authorities said, his K-9 partner, a German shepherd about 3 years old named Jynx, tried to drag him by his pants away from danger.

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Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht had said earlier that he intended to give Jynx to Alecia rather than have him retrained to work with another officer.

"He's going to stay with me," Alecia said Friday.

Kyle Pagerly's father, David, also spoke briefly at the fundraiser, saying the family wanted to express gratitude for the outpouring of community support. Since his son was killed, he said, the family has received thousands of messages.

Hamid B. Chaudhry, owner of the Exeter Dairy Queen and one in Kenhorst, said he had spoken to Kyle Pagerly just days earlier at the Kenhorst restaurant, where he was a regular customer.

"I liked him," Chaudhry said. "He was pleasant to be around."

Pagerly, he added, had told him that he planned to be at fundraiser Friday, which originally was supposed to benefit Crime Alert Berks County.

"I said Eric (Sheriff Weaknecht) will be on the dunk tank," said Chaudhry, a member of the Crime Alert board. "He said he'd love to come and dunk him."

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Kyle D. Pagerly's widow, Alecia, is comforted, from left, by her sister, Andrea Bird; Pagerly's mother, Michelle Moyer; and Pagerly's father, David.

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Chaudhry's restaurants donated money, sold food and drinks at half-price Friday and asked customers to donate to the effort.

Local, county and state elected officials poured into the restaurant, dropping checks into a collection box. More than \$5,000 was raised.

All will be turned over to Alecia Pagerly, Crime Alert President Barry E. Rohrbach said.

Meanwhile, Weaknecht's department also is grappling with Wednesday's tragedy. The sheriff said counselors from the marshal's service arrived Friday and would be available to his department through Wednesday when a memorial service for Pagerly will be held in the Sovereign Center.

The sheriff also has received hundreds of emails from law enforcement colleagues and others expressing sympathy and offering support. Among those offering help were Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey and Reading police Chief William M. Heim.

"The outpouring of support is absolutely amazing," Weaknecht said.

Contact Steven Henshaw: 610-371-5028 or shenshaw@readingeagle.com.

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