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Board hears Raiders debate

American Indians say it is time to drop name; others disagree

By Janice Kayser
Staff Writer

Emotions ran high this week as more than 100 people took turns voicing their opinions on changing the Wauwatosa East High School Red Raider name and logo at a Wauwatosa School Board meeting.

A large crowd showed up at East for the Feb. 13 meeting, scheduled after state Superintendent of Schools Elizabeth Burmaster asked every public school district in the state to drop any logo, mascot or name deemed a racial slur against American Indians.

Many came to the microphone — students, alumni, parents, community members — to speak on the issue. Groans and boos were heard when someone spoke in favor of changing the name or logo, and uproarious applause broke out when someone spoke in

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FYI

Want to watch the board meeting?

- One VHS copy of the Feb. 13 School Board meeting is available for 24-hour checkout from the Fisher Administration Building, 12121 W. North Ave. To reserve, call (414) 773-1010.
- A DVD copy also is available from the Wauwatosa Public Library for 24-hour checkout with a library card.

Embracing hope

Baby awaits transplant that may save his life

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS PHOTO BY MARY CATANESE

El Gonzales-Dobbe holds her son, 3-month-old Tyson, at the family's Wauwatosa home on Feb. 12. Tyson was born with many complications that led to a diagnosis of Di George syndrome, which involves problems with the heart, parathyroid glands and the thymus.

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Staff Writer

It is but one missing part of a chromosome in the highly complex weave of Tyson Dobbe's genetic makeup that has turned his family's world upside down.

After spending a month at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin following his Nov. 10 birth, Tyson came home Dec. 22, just in time to spend Christmas with his family in Wauwatosa.

But today, six weeks later, Tyson lies in a crib at Duke University Hospital in North Carolina, awaiting an experimental transplant procedure his parents hope will save his life.

> *"When we look at how this little guy has fought for his life, things that used to seem so important are not really important."*
> **El Gonzales-Dobbe**
> *on her 3-month old son, Tyson, awaiting a transplant they hope will save his life*

Immune deficient at birth

Tyson John Dobbe was born to parents John Dobbe and Eleuteria Gonzales-Dobbe with a heart defect sometimes connected with an immune deficiency syndrome called Di

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HOW TO HELP

Staff and parents at Washington School are planning a fundraiser to help the family as Tyson Dobbe's lifetime cap for health insurance benefits will likely be met by this year. El, his mother, may not be able to return to work next school year because of Tyson's extraordinary needs. Doctors expect the recuperation period following the transplant could take up to one year.

WHAT: Tyson's Fight: a casino night fundraiser with a disc jockey, silent auction and raffle

WHEN: Friday, April 28

WHERE: Muellner Building at Hart Park, 7300 Chestnut St.

CALL: Ticket prices and places of purchase have not yet been determined but information will be distributed as it becomes available, including through the News-Times. To donate items for the silent auction or raffle, call Washington School teacher Jenni Cannass at (414) 773-1864.

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Baby

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George syndrome.

Since 1991, Eleuteria, known to friends as "El," has been a kindergarten teacher at Washington Elementary School. John, a regional sales manager for General Mills, is well known for his involvement in area youth athletics as a coach and member of the Junior Red Raiders football team board.

With Tyson's birth, the blended family now has five boys.

They were not prepared for Tyson's fragile state, but prayer and support from family and their wide circle of Wauwatosa friends has been an enormous support to the Dobbes, who say they have quickly learned to treasure any moment they get to spend with Tyson.

Tyson's diagnosis is severe

Di George syndrome is the name given when a particular set of things goes wrong during fetal development primarily due to genetic mutations that occur while the baby is still in the womb.

There are varying levels of severity in those diagnosed with Di George syndrome.

Many may go on to live normal lives and never even know they are missing a tiny part of chromosome 22q11.2, although it can show up later as learning disabilities, renal failure, a poor immune system and susceptibility to infections.

Today's genetic testing has allowed researchers to better pinpoint the syndrome.

Tyson is the first baby at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin to be diagnosed with complete Di George syndrome, the most severe kind of case.

His airways are too small and reflux prevents him from keeping any food down. He is on a trachea tube and feeding tube.

And he is missing his thymus gland, needed in early years to produce the cells necessary to fight off infection. As a result, Tyson has no immune system.

Without the groundbreaking thymus gland transplant procedure currently being done at Duke University Hospital, doctors say Tyson's chances of survival would be slim.

"He really has little chance of surviving past two years of age without a thymus transplant. He can't fight off infection," said William Grossman, researcher, doctor and a cofounder of the immune deficiency clinic at the Midwest Children's Cancer Center at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin in Wauwatosa. "With the transplant, he has a 75 percent chance."

Right after birth, doctors noted slight facial abnormalities on Tyson — low set ears, a bulbous nose, smaller mouth and wide-set eyes — all features associated with Di George syndrome.

Family now separated

The Dobbe family has been on pins and needles since Tyson's birth.

El was sent home a few days after delivering Tyson, but she had to leave her newborn behind in the intensive care neonatal unit.

At birth, he weighed 5 pounds; today he weighs over 8 pounds.

"I am just so grateful Children's Hospital is minutes away," El said. "We met so many families who flew in for treatment for their children and they don't have the luxury of staying at home and being with the rest of the family."

El will stay at a Ronald McDonald House near Duke University Hospital during Tyson's transplant and for several months after as he undergoes observation before being released.

After Tyson was born and word of his problems spread, the Washington School community quickly assembled and planned out meal deliveries to the Dobbe home for the next several months.

The Junior Red Raider parents chipped in and bought restaurant gift certificates for the family to use while John is home caring for the boys.

On Sunday, Tyson enjoyed his last weekend in Wauwatosa before leaving on a medically cleared plane the next day for Duke University, accompanied by El and two nurses from Children's Hospital of Wisconsin.

Equipment fills room

The walls of Tyson's cozy bedroom, which he shares with big brother Calvin are covered in Sneetches that El painted herself.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER PHOTO BY MARY CATANESE

Calvin Dobbe (left), 2, and his brother Nathan Spilde, 12, visit with their baby brother, Tyson, at home on Feb. 12.

But the colorful walls, furry stuffed animals and the musical mobile hanging above Tyson's crib are the only hint of normalcy in the little bedroom.

The gravity of Tyson's situation sets in at the sight of the overwhelming amount of medical equipment.

A tangle of tubes and wires feeding into Tyson's tender little body surround his crib — an oxygen tank for his trachea tube, a feeding tube, a special humidifier that hums through the night to heat his oxygen, an apnea monitor and stacks of plastic organizers to hold medical supplies needed by Janice Lyons, their committed daytime nurse who comes to the Dobbe home each day to care for Tyson — are a stark reminder of his fragile state. Visitors must wash their hands and wear surgical masks to prevent any airborne infections from reaching Tyson.

Calvin, 2, sleeps on his toddler bed, just an arm's reach from Tyson's crib.

Calvin loves to be next to his brother whenever he can and he likes to sing to Tyson — mostly the "I Love You" song made famous by the big purple dinosaur known as Barney.

John drove to North Carolina Feb. 12 and will stay through Tyson's operation, then return home to be with their other sons, currently being cared for by John's parents.

And though the entire family plans to head to Duke at spring break to see El and Tyson, Calvin and his other brothers Nathan, 12, Kyle, 12, and Justin, 14, will miss their youngest brother whom they have only had home for two of his short three months of life.

"I miss Ty when he goes to Duke," Calvin says to El.

As will the rest of the family and their circle of friends, who will keep the prayers coming until tiny Tyson comes back home.