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NEWS RELEASE

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NORTH DAVIESS TO RECEIVE 2011 BLUE HORSESHOE AWARD TONIGHT

The Indianapolis Colts and the Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. will honor North Daviess High School tonight as the recipient of the 2011 Blue Horseshoe Award. The Blue Horseshoe Award is presented annually in recognition of a high school football program whose acts of service better their community.

Forty-five student-athletes from the North Daviess Cougars football squad will take part in the pre-game national anthem ceremonies and will be honored at halftime of this evening's Indianapolis Colts-Houston Texans game at Lucas Oil Stadium.

The Indianapolis Colts and the IHSAA teamed to launch the statewide program in 2009 inviting IHSAA member football teams to complete community service projects in the off-season. The program offers opportunities for football players to develop as teammates, aid their community, and promote their school.

North Daviess created "Lemonade N' for Ayden," a project to benefit four year-old Ayden Wagler. Ayden has Neurofibromatosis (NF), a progressive disorder that causes tumors to grow in the nervous system.

Cougars head coach Scotty Helms became aware of Ayden and her family's will to fight the disease in the fall of 2010. Ayden had undergone surgery to have her right leg amputated below the knee due to pseudoarthrosis of the tibia, a condition that results from NF. The Cougars banded together to get Ayden a get well card and football signed by each team member. Ayden's father, Jayson, a former North Daviess football player, addressed the team before the 2010 home opener to express his gratitude for the gesture. After Ayden healed from her surgery, the Wagler's came to practice to thank the team. It was then that a bond between Ayden and the Cougars was formed.

On May 1, 2011, the Cougars began a two-week campaign called Lemonade N' for Ayden; they sold t-shirts and set up lemonade stands throughout the community. Although the weather on the day of the event was far from ideal, the North Daviess community came out in full force in support of Ayden, who traveled from stand to stand to talk and take pictures with the team and supporters.

Over the course of the day, Lemonade N' for Ayden raised \$2,000 for the Wagler's to use in their battle against NF.

"I think Ayden coming out actually gave people a great opportunity to witness her strength and gave all of us the courage to battle in times of need," said Helms. "She has truly humbled our football team and coaching staff."

The Cougars have continued their support of Ayden and the Wagler family. Last spring many players made the trip to Cincinnati, Ohio to take part in the Walk to Cure NF. Senior captain Drew Harkness said, "This program has helped our team to realize that we have God-given talents that we need to use, not just for football and school, but to help everyone become better."

The Indianapolis Colts and IHSAA commend the North Daviess football program for their teamwork off the playing field that made Lemonade N' for Ayden a success. These student-athletes have gained an understanding of the power of teamwork when the helmet is off and have witnessed first-hand their impact as leaders in their community.

About the Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. (IHSAA)

Founded in 1903, the purpose of the Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. (IHSAA) is to encourage, regulate and give direction to wholesome amateur interschool athletic competition between its 408 member schools. The Association provides state championship tournament series in 20 sports, 10 for girls and 10 for boys. Approximately 160,000 student athletes participate in IHSAA sports on an annual basis.

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