

Maine E. Graduate Fighting Leukemia

*Teens Hopes To
Attend Blood Drive*

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Last March, Peter Fox was feeling exhausted. At first, he chalked it up to his work in Maine East High School's production of "Hairspray."

"We just got off of a weekend show so I just thought it was me needing sleep," the swing choir member said.

But the feeling persisted. He was light headed and during choir practice, Fox fainted. The school nurse took Fox's vitals that were in Fox's words "all messed up."

Fox then went to the Maine East Health Center in the school, staffed with a doctor, (Continued on page 2A)

Peter Fox

(Continued from page 1A) nurse and full lab. There, doctors drew blood and found extremely low red and white blood cell counts. From the school, Fox went to a second independent doctor who confirmed he had leukemia. Fox was admitted to Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge where he is currently resting after treatments.

"Who knows how much he would have pushed himself (if the school health center had not discovered his condition)," his mother, Sue, said.

Fox did not return to the school for classes but did attend them and graduated with the rest of his class.

Fox used a webcam on his laptop to sit in on classes using a Skype video link. Teachers and counselor's took assignments and tests to Lutheran General where he completed them.

"It felt like I was actually there (in class)," Fox said.

His time not spent with studies was used making friends with other teens at the hospital and building model airplanes. In the brief hours outside the hospital, he volunteered much as he did before the diagnosis.

Fox walked in his graduation ceremony, went to prom, and

went to other senior events at the school, but only attended classes via Skype.

A very active student, Fox was a member of the swing choir, performed in theater, played violin in the school orchestra, was in a Civil War and World War II reenactor, a member of the civil air patrol, played golf, helped the athletic department, was a volunteer coach with the Sharks Junior Wrestling program, and was active in the Niles Teen Center.

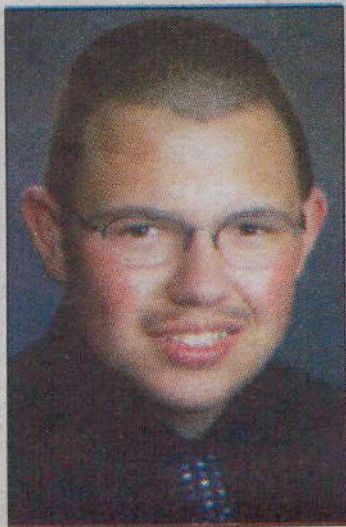
Fox said he would continue volunteering at the teen center and in Maine East's theater department this fall.

That volunteer work has taken on more importance since his diagnosis. Life Source and Be The Match service of Advocate Lutheran General Hospital will hold a blood drive and bone marrow registry screening at the Maine East Athletic Boosters Carnival on Friday and Saturday in Fox's honor.

Fox may be discharged from the hospital Friday after recovering from the fourth of five scheduled chemotherapy treatments, just in time to attend the Maine East carnival. If he isn't fully discharged, he hopes to have permission to go.

"It's looking possible," he said.

Tim O'Connor contributed to this report.



Peter Fox