



On Sunday March 20th we laced up the skates for the 11th year in a row and tried to keep up with the Alumni of the Detroit Red Wings....we failed yet again. We know this should get old but it doesn't because we all had such a great time getting schooled by the likes of Mickey Redmond, Dennis Hextall, John Ogradnick, Eddie Mio and Bryan Smolinski. Plus we raised a great deal of money and awareness for United Cerebral Palsy of Metro Detroit.

Before we ever arrived at the arena in Hazel Park, every one of our sled hockey players and our Puckster players had been on a mission to raise funds at our SkateWithoutLimits.org website. Just among the event participants over \$10,000 was raised. And did not count our sponsors, our 50/50, Chuck-A-Puck or our auction dollars.

The event itself went off without a hitch. It began with a gritty group of able-bodied, almost sled players taking on the Michigan Sled Dogs, one of the premier sled hockey teams in the world. We were hoping for a closer score than 10-1 but that didn't happen. Patrick Duffy netted the lone sled goal for the UCP Detroit team. Marc Henretta and his team were gracious in victory. Our goalie, Matt Butka, said "I finally got the hang of it just before the final buzzer...we'll get 'em next year."





Next up came the Alumni taking on the Pucksters. We were ready this year. Coach Ron Castorri felt he had the right line combinations and the right attitude to beat the former winged-wheelers. But it was not to be. They lit up goalie Jeff Carter and the Puckster defense for 6 goals in the first period with John Ogrodnick even pointing out the ages of some of the scorers. “like 67 year-old Dennis Hextall.” Of course, the Wings weren’t much easier on goalie Nick Ostrowski when they tallied 4 more in the second. The Pucksters got off to our customary slow start and finished even slower. While we did get goals from Jason Bergeron, Michelle Harmala, Mark Simon, Stewart Nowosad and John Beavers, it was not enough to overcome the tape to tape accuracy of the old-timers (Smolinski and Fenster are younger than 90% of our roster).

Keith Starr was awarded a penalty shot (that play is still under review by Toronto) but did not score on Mio. Late in the game, Emilia Ward (skating for her dad, Mike) found herself alone in front of the net. Everyone was yelling “shoot the puck” – even the Wings. Unfortunately as the puck drifted off her stick, it went directly to an alumni player who promptly went the other way and scored. Ward was followed to bench by former New Jersey Devil, Craig Wolanan who sat down right next to her and had just one question “how did you manage to turn a plus into a minus so quickly?” She told him she played lacrosse not hockey.



All in all, it was a fantastic event and could not have happened without the assistance of so many people. Far too many to thank here. But a couple mentions would be UCP President and CEO, Leslynn Angel and her staff, Chris Moore, Craig Duncan and Frank Connely for all their help before and during the event. Chris Moore was also our top money raiser with Craig Duncan, Mike Ward and Dylan Duncan coming in close behind. Collin Kuss sang a soulful national anthem, and Teddy Fitzmaurice came out to drop the first puck with John Beavers and Mickey and, as always, the delicious pizza, chicken and salad was supplied by Original Romano's compliments of the Mannino family.

Thank you to the many volunteers especially Angie Ward for her help on the auction, Phyllis Shook on Chuck-A-Puck, photographer Ryan Koehler, Communicore for video, UCP board members Andrea Harris-Peguese and her family, Mark Lezotte, Patti Dudek, Susan Fitzmaurice and Teddy, MaryAnn and Jon Greenawalt as well as the entire Adrian Women's Lacrosse team for doing whatever we asked of them!

