

FOLLOWING DAD'S FOOTSTEPS

For some runners, cross-country is a leisure activity, but for Tyler Myers it has a much deeper meaning. When Tyler's father was young, he ran cross-country and encouraged Tyler to follow in his footsteps. When Tyler was in fifth grade, his father passed away. Remembering his dad's encouragement and advice, he joined the cross-country team in his dad's honor.

"I felt that by running, I was preserving his memory," Tyler said.

Tyler recalled the stories his dad had once told him of the community and relationships he found while running, and fortunately, Tyler found that same encouragement from his own team. By running alongside his teammates every day, it created a way for Tyler to find motivation.

"I found some of my best friends, Gabe Janus and Ryan Krick, within the team and we bonded through running," Tyler said.

At Tyler's first race, he was disappointed in himself when he did not race as well as he had hoped to. Because he felt as though he was not living up to his dad's expectations, he began to compare himself, thinking that his father would be disappointed.

"I thought that if I wasn't good, I wouldn't be honoring him," Tyler said.

Tyler soon realized that his father would be proud of him no matter what and stopped comparing himself as a runner and individual. Always wanting to be like his dad, he was able to find a sense of peace through the idea that running would honor him. Although at first Tyler felt his head being consumed with endless thoughts, eventually he was able to feel a sense of comfort within himself. Throughout the races, Tyler learned to differentiate and balance the difference between channeling his dad as he ran versus running for himself.

"Once I realized that I wasn't exactly like him in every way, I didn't have to try so hard to be perfect," Tyler said.

Tyler changed the meaning behind the word dedication. He found motivation in every obstacle and saw hope in a heavy situation. Throughout all of his challenges, Tyler reflected on the conversations they had and memories they shared.

"Every time I feel low, I tell myself, 'I'm doing this for a reason,'" Tyler said.