Students put their business skills to work for injured Tulane football player

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Within hours of learning that Tulane football player Devon Walker (SE ’13) had suffered a devastating spinal injury in the Sept. 8 game against Tulsa, Brad Girson (BSM ’13) and Jesse Schwartz (LA ’13) started brainstorming.



Freeman School student Brad Girson (BSM ’13), above, has helped raise nearly $15,000 for injured Tulane football player Devon Walker through the sale of T-shirts. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano.)

“We were sitting in our living room watching the game live, and we saw the injury happen,” recalls Schwartz. “We didn’t know the extent of the injury at the time, but when we found out, we just thought, ‘What can we do?’”

Girson and Schwartz had started a clothing line during their sophomore year, selling custom-designed T-shirts out of their dorm rooms, so it didn’t take long for the business partners to come up with an idea to create a T-shirt with Walker’s name and jersey number to raise funds for the family and rally students around the cause.

“It was kind of naïve,” Girson says. “We walked into President Cowen’s office Monday morning and said, ‘We have an idea to help Devon Walker. Can we meet with President Cowen?’”

Cowen quickly embraced the idea and with his support, the students placed an order for 384 T-shirts to sell at a rally being planned for Walker that Friday afternoon. By Friday morning, they had more than 800 requests for shirts.

“We realized we were dramatically underestimating,” laughs Girson. “We sold out in an hour and a half.”

Girson and Schwartz have since sold more than 1,600 T-shirts, generating nearly $15,000 for the Devon Walker fund, which was established to assist the Walker family with medical bills and other costs.

“Tulane does a really good job of instilling in students the idea of social entrepreneurship and giving back to the community,” says Girson. “When this injury happened, we knew we had to do something.”

The Devon Walker recovery T-shirt is available online through the Tulane bookstore and the Tulane Athletics online store. For more information about Walker’s recovery and ongoing support efforts, visit http://tulane.edu/devonwalker.