

Strongmen compete to support LaViola foundation

BY MIKE MONTEMARANO
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On Saturday, June 17, the Varsity House Gym in Orangeburg, N.Y., hosted the annual Strongman Competition in memory of Old Tappan athlete Michael LaViola.

LaViola was a varsity football player for Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan, prior

to succumbing to a long-fought battle with Soft Tissue Sarcoma, a rare form of cancer appearing most in children and young adolescents. The Strongman Challenge is run each year in LaViola's name as a way of maintaining his legacy, as well as creating a charitable cause in which all donated revenue goes to support both the National Institute of Health on pediatric sarcomas, as well as scholarships for students of Northern Valley High

School.

According to the LaViola Foundation, one scholarship is granted to a football player who best exemplifies Michael's love for the game, and another scholarship is given to a senior student who shows a passion and ambition for life.

This year, over \$10,000 was



Dozens of local athletes took part in the challenge in memory of LaViola.



Surely, they felt these trials in the morning.

raised towards research of pediatric sarcomas, a form of cancer which is far less funded than many others due to its rarity.

Competitors performed grueling feats of strength including the overhead log press, farmer's walk, tractor tire flip and the sandbag carry. The idea of a strongman competition came to the charity's founders when reflecting on the strength of Michael LaViola's character in the face of a devastating illness. Now, fittingly, demonstrations of strength continue LaViola's legacy in the hope that one day cancer will finally be eradicated.

Photos by Murray Bass



Heaving a weighted log over your head is just as hard as it looks.



The tractor tire flip is a staple among strongman competitions.

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A handful of competitors, mostly in high school and college.