

Marriage & Family Life

Super weekend of memories for father, son

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

PENFIELD — Like Opie and Andy Taylor heading off to the fishing hole, Paul and Larry Sciaratta love to attend various athletic events together.

In the summer, Larry coaches his son's Little League team and accompanies him to Rochester Red Wing baseball games.

During the winter months, the Sciarattas enjoy catching a Rochester Amerks hockey game or two. And seeing the Super Bowl.

No, not watching the Super Bowl on TV. Going to the Super Bowl.

And that's where the typical father-son experience becomes transformed into the event of a lifetime.

For the Sciarattas, this meant even more than simply attending the big game. It also involved running around on the Georgia Dome field after Super Bowl XXVIII, and meeting Buffalo Bills players in their hotel rooms.

The manner in which Paul and Larry wound up in Atlanta was pretty unique, too. It wasn't done through a travel-agency's Super Bowl package or by using their life savings to buy tickets from a scalper.

The special weekend was made possible because Paul Sciaratta is a special kid.

Paul, who recently turned 11, was diagnosed at age 6 with Hodgkin's disease, a cancer of the lymph nodes. After nearly a year of intense radiation and chemotherapy treatments and the removal of his spleen, Paul's cancer has since gone into remission.

During this time, Paul and his family became involved with Camp Good Days and Special Times Inc., a non-profit organization which assists children with can-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Larry Sciaratta and his son, Paul, attended Super Bowl XXVIII with the help of the Miami Dolphins Fan Club and Camp Good Days and Special Times.

cer and AIDS as well as their families.

Paul has chosen to remain a part of the association which supported him through more trying times. In fact, although he is one of the youngest members of the Camp Good Days and Special Times Explorer Post, Paul has been elected president of this group, which includes other children battling cancer.

Yet it was not an Explorer Post meeting to which Paul's family brought him when he arrived at the camp's headquarters, located at 1332 Pittsford-Mendon Road in Mendon, the morning of Jan. 24.

Paul had been informed that he would be accepting an award on behalf of Camp Good Days from the Rochester-area Miami Dolphin Fan Club. However, it wasn't a trophy or plaque which camp chairman and founder Gary Mervis then presented to Paul.

"Gary handed me an envelope and said, 'If you're not doing anything this weekend, we have tickets to the Super Bowl.' Then he gave me the tickets," Paul recalled.

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Paul was able to romp on the field of the Atlanta Dome, and to meet Steve Christie and other members of the Buffalo Bills.

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