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# Vince Papale Keynote Speaker at 18 Fore Life Banquet

JUNE 05TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

**Vince Papale Keynote Speaker at 18 Fore Life Banquet** **Dexter, Missouri.** The 15<sup>th</sup> annual 18 Fore Life Banquet will highlight those who have been touched by cancer. You will hear inspirational stories of people who battled cancer or were caregivers of those who survived. 18 Fore Life raises funds that are given as Love Offerings in the amount of \$1,000 and in 2013 surpassed \$1 million dollars.

Since the charity's beginnings noted speakers such as "Stormin' Norman" Stewart, Dave Dravecky and Whitey Herzog have addressed a packed Elks Lodge. This year's keynote speaker, Vince Papale of the Philadelphia Eagles promises to be one of the most inspirational in the organization's 15-year history.

Legendary Papale inspired the 2006 Disney movie, "Invincible".

"He is phenomenal and his story is one of incredible inspiration," comment 18 Fore Life founder, Scott Kruse. "It's guaranteed to be one of the best events ever and it will be a very special evening."

Mark Wahlberg played Vince Papale in the movie. Thirty-year-old Papale worked as a substitute teacher and unfortunately gets laid off. Dick Vermeil, the coach, hosts an open try-out in search of football talent. Papale tried out and attended the camp where he performed extremely well and when the camp is over Vermeil was so highly impressed with his performance that he became a walk-on with the

Philadelphia Eagles and the rest is history!

Papale went on to play for the Philadelphia Eagles from 1976 – 1978 then went into

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broadcasting and eventually a career in mortgage banking. He is currently marketing executive and special projects director for Sallie Mae. He is well known for his work with multitude of charities including the Association for Retarded Citizens, the MS Society, the American Heart Association, the Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans, the Spina Bifida Association and in recent years has become identified with Wounded Warrior Project.

Papale has a direct link to cancer as well. He was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2002 and battled back.

Friday night those who attend the 18 Fore Life banquet will hear first hand his inspirational story. Prior to the keynote speaker will be a local love-offering recipient who will tell the story of Gaige Willems. His mother, Misty, will talk about Gaige's battle with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Gaige has battled the disease twice, once at the age of five and again at the age of ten. He is now twelve years old and attends T.S. Hill Middle School.

***What is 18 Fore Life? Here's their story.....*** "In late 1999, a few people got together and thought up the idea of a benefit golf tournament. We wanted to do something good, something simple, and something to genuinely help people in need. The V-Foundation seemed like the perfect charity to donate to. Named after the legendary Coach Jim Valvano, the organization has its own team of doctors who do nothing but research a cure for cancer of all kinds. The V-Foundation has an inspiring motto that fits the spirit of 18 FORE Life as well; "Don't Ever Give Up!"

 /images/2015 Images/Gaige.jpg

"In our "rookie" year, we intended to send all of the money we raised to the V-Foundation. After playing in the golf tournament, a local sponsor asked if we kept any money local. That great question sparked a terrific idea and turned 18 FORE Life into something more than just a simple fundraiser for the V-Foundation. From that day forward, we would still support the V-Foundation, but we would keep the majority of our earnings and give them away locally to families battling cancer in the form of what we call "love offerings". These love offerings, along with a note of hope, love, and encouragement not only the inspiration to

*the families that receive them, but also provide the motivation to an army of volunteers who are constantly working to do more."*

*"Our mission statement is this: 18 FORE Life will get as many people together as possible to play golf and celebrate the gift of life by helping others in need, raising as much money as possible. Jake Barge, Kip Musgrave, my brother, Ben, and I came up with the name and settled on it immediately. Our charity will always be called 18 FORE Life, but now we will always be much more than a golf tournament. In 2005, we began hosting a weekend of good times and great FUNdraising. The festivities are called The Ben Kruse 18 FORE Life Charity Golf Event."*

*"To this day, we have sent over \$20,000.00 to the V-Foundation and over \$600,000.00 to families all over southeast Missouri. Our bowling event, 10 Pins For Ben, has raised over \$30,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in only five years. We are sure that this is only the beginning of the good things that we are going to accomplish through 18 FORE Life."*

Doors open at 4:30 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m. Saturday tee times are 7:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. at the Hidden Trails Country Club with a 4 person scramble, silent auction, and dinner to follow.

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