

# The Heart of a Lyon

## Former Jets lineman talks about the importance of giving back

BY KEN MAHONEY

*When I went to the Rockland Chapter of the New York State Society of CPA's annual networking dinner on November 30, I didn't expect to be blown away. But I was.*

Guest speaker Marty Lyons, the former New York Jets defensive lineman, and member of the famed "sack exchange," surprised us with a full blast of inspiration from the reservoir of his soul. He had told us he'd be talking about teamwork, but instead he chose to go deeper and talk about what he feels is the most important thing in life: giving to others and the faith it inspires.

Lyons has set out to do so much more with his life than just be a successful sports figure or financial broker (his other profession); he is the founder of the Marty Lyons Foundation, a charity that offers wishes and emotional support to terminally ill children and their families. In my involvement with the Make-A-Wish foundation, I have seen my share of heart-touching stories and inspiring miracles. Lyons shared stories about the miracles he's witnessed and the passion and wisdom it's brought into his life.

The secret jewel to winning in the game of life is "to give of yourself, that others may grow," Lyons said. It was his college coach, the famed Paul "Bear" Bryant of the University of Alabama that first told him that upon his completion of college. The message didn't seep in with him until his father died shortly after the end of the 1982 NFL season, he said.

After that harrowing event, many things clicked in his brain and he started to remember that jewel Bryant had left him with. Lyons challenged the audience to try out Bryant's advice and see if it works. He assured us it would; sharing several stories of children he'd seen exhibit bravery beyond anything he ever experienced on the football field.

One story I found very touching was that of a young man who was dying of terminal cancer. He was determined that before he died he would raise \$50,000 to renovate one of the

rooms in the children's hospital. His faith kept him alive for months as he was determined to raise the money. As his health deteriorated, his passion only accelerated.

In the end he made a plea for donations on a local radio station and finally broke the \$50,000 barrier. Later that evening he died. The child believed he'd be going to heaven.

"If you really want to do something, you just do it," Lyons said simply.

He also imparted another moral several times through the speech, that he had learned from a reverend. "He who has much, much is expected," the reverend said.

For me and many others it really was a call to appreciate the love in our lives and to help the community. It made us remember that we are all in this together and that anything is possible. I am sure some in the audience were a little taken aback, not expecting to hear such a spiritually inspiring talk. I heard of many others, however, going home to give their loved ones a warm embrace and think about what more we can do to help those out there in the world who have had it tough.

One good way to give back is through many of the deserving and worthwhile organizations that Rockland Business Digest spotlights in each issue. It's easy for you, your co-workers or your business to participate in Rockland's future: just volunteer, donate, or take part.

In May the Rockland Chapter of NYSSCPA will sponsor a golf outing. To learn more, visit [www.nysscpa.org](http://www.nysscpa.org) or contact Dave Herman ([davecpapc@aol.com](mailto:davecpapc@aol.com) - 845-708-0500) or Michael D. Seidenberg ([seidenbergcpa@aol.com](mailto:seidenbergcpa@aol.com) - 845-639-3183).

*To learn more about the Marty Lyons Foundation visit [www.martylyonsfoundation.org](http://www.martylyonsfoundation.org). RBD*



*December 18th Holiday Party for the wish children. Marty in the center holding a wish child, along with a few current Jets and Ken Schroy, Vice Chairman of MLF, who also played for the Jets with Marty.*