

Q & A with Arizona Cardinal David Johnson on Mission 31 Foundation

Written by Ericah Whitmill

Friday, 03 November 2017 15:42 - Last Updated Sunday, 05 November 2017 15:08



Just this year, David Johnson, current running back for the Arizona Cardinals, came up with the idea of an organization that can provide support and resources to seriously ill children and their families. Johnson and his wife, Meghan Brock, was inspired to start this organization when their son DJ was born and had to spend five days in the nursery/NICU. Johnson says, "We were hopeful he would be OK, but as first-time parents, we were still very scared. When you see your baby in pain like that you never want to go through something like that ever again." This made them think of all the other families that were in the same position as them—or families that had it worse. On Dec. 4, Johnson will be hosting the first-annual event, Mission 31: Possible, which is a benefit to raise money for the Mission 31 Foundation and, this year specifically, DJ's Lockers. AFM had the opportunity to talk to Johnson to learn more about the Mission 31 Foundation and the Mission 31: Possible nonprofit event.

AFM: When did you start the Mission 31 Foundation?

DJ: The foundation started this year, and we are so excited to hit the ground running.

AFM: What inspired you to start the foundation?

DJ: The foundation came from wanting to have a positive impact on children's lives. Growing up, my coaches, teachers, and older mentors played a huge role in my life. That is why I went to college to become a physical education/health teacher with a minor in coaching. My intentions were to better children's lives mentally, physically, and emotionally—just like my role models did for me. My wife, Meghan, and I would volunteer at children's hospitals and Ronald McDonald House. We loved the experience we had with the children, seeing them smile and get excited was an amazing feeling. Meghan has always wanted to work on an oncology unit for children. She went to nursing school and her dream job was to work at St. Jude's children's hospital in Tennessee. She has a huge passion to help children as well. This foundation combines our passions in to one amazing cause.

AFM: Why the name Mission 31?

DJ: We wanted to incorporate my jersey number in the title. Then, we wanted a short but powerful word/phrase that would speak to others. One definition of the word "mission" is the calling of a religious organization, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith. Meghan and I felt that the meaning fits our morals and what we want to do with the platform God has given us.

AFM: Can you give me more details about the December event Mission 31: Possible? Where and when is it and what will it entail?

DJ: The event on Dec. 4 will be at the newly remodeled Mountain Shadows resort. Guests will have the chance to mix and mingle with me and my Cardinals teammates. Beginning at 6:30 p.m., supporters and fans will enjoy a cocktail reception full of silent auction items followed by the main event where they will enjoy world-class cuisine, fine wine, and exciting live auctions all to benefit Mission 31 Foundation.

AFM: Where will the money for the Mission 31: Possible event be going?

DJ: The money will be focused toward launching DJ's Locker. These lockers will provide patients and their family members access to electronics during hospital stays. They serve as a source of entertainment, a portal for communication and a diversion during treatment and recovery.

AFM: How can one participate in the foundation or the event?

DJ: Tickets and sponsorships are available at davidjohnson31.org. If you can't attend the event, you can also donate on the website.

AFM: Any programs you have coming up that you can tell us about?

DJ: We will be launching DJ's Locker in the spring. The exact first launch location is still to be determined but will be in a Phoenix-area pediatric hospital or Ronald McDonald House.