

LA RABIDA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL LAWN FETE 2010

During Lawn Fete 2010, patient and amateur boxer Tiffany Perez will share her story of conquering severe asthma with the help of a La Rabida physician, Raoul Wolf, MD.

A Patient Contender

Tiffany Perez is a 20 year-old nursing student at Purdue University Calumet, a champion amateur boxer and a severe asthmatic whose attacks once routinely sent her to hospital emergency rooms.

As a child, asthma medications once distorted her delicate features so badly, friends did not recognize her. "I hated myself. I would always cry to my mom about how ugly I looked," a petite Perez, will tell a group of supporters of La Rabida Children's Hospital for its summer fundraiser, Lawn Fete 2010.

Today, the Indiana native revels in the fact that she hasn't had an asthma attack in 10 years under the care of Raoul Wolf, MD, a pediatric pulmonologist at La Rabida.

Perez and her family found Wolf just before her fifth birthday after their family physician surrendered the fight to determine what was creating the toddler's labored breathing. Her doctors were going round after round, mistaking asthma symptoms for pneumonia and rotating Perez in and out of hospitals.

Frustrated with a lack of progress and answers, Perez's physician finally gave up, saying there was no more he could do. A family friend recommended Dr. Wolf who diagnosed severe asthma shortly thereafter.

He prescribed hourly breathing treatments and strong medications, some of which Perez takes today.

She said the drugs help to keep open her airways, and breathed life into a boxing career, which was born out of frustration.

After an eight-day stay in intensive care at the age of 10, Perez decided to stand up for herself against asthma.

Two years later, Perez was fighting another opponent -- in the boxing ring, where she'd seen her brother spar.

Perez and her family are grateful to Dr. Wolf for providing care that has allowed her to compete now for eight years, collecting titles that include 2005 Junior Olympic Champion, and Chicago Golden Glove Champion, Bronze Medalist (four times). She has been featured in RedEye, Chicago area newspaper and United Airlines' magazine, Hemispheres.com

Look for Perez's fancy footwork in the 2012 London games.